



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences
Te Kura Kete Aronui

SOCY 202 - POPULAR CULTURE (SISU)

Course Reader: Topics and set readings

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences
Te Kura Kete Aronui

SOCY 202 - POPULAR CULTURE (SISU)
Topics and set readings

WEEK 1 - Introduction to Paper & Topics.

Cohen, B. (2012). Introduction to Part 1. In Cohen, B. Editor (Ed.) *Being Cultural* (pp. 3-4). New Zealand: Pearson. **(Available in electronic format)**

What is Popular Culture?

Cohen (2012). Cultural Studies and Sociology. In Cohen B. Editor (Ed.) *Being Cultural* (pp. 9-20). New Zealand: Pearson. **(Available in e-format)**
Storey, J. (2012). 'Culture' in Cultural Studies. In Cohen B. Editor (Ed.) *Being Cultural* (pp. 21-29). New Zealand: Pearson. **(Available in e-format)**

WEEK 2 - Historical Developments: Industrialisation & Mass Leisure.

Cross, G. (1990). Leisure for the masses. In Cross, G. Editor (Ed.) *A social history of leisure since 1600.* (pp.123-140). US: Venture Publisher
Cross, G. (1990). Participants and spectators: Modernization of sport as leisure. In Cross, G. Editor (Ed.) *A social history of leisure since 1600.* (pp.141-153). US: Venture Publisher

The Mass Culture Debates.

Storey, J. (2015) The 'Culture and Civilization' tradition. In Storey, J. Editory (Ed.) *Cultural theory and popular culture: an introduction.* (p.17-36). US: Routledge
Williams, R (1976) "Culture" and "Masses". In Williams, R. *A vocabulary of culture and society.* (pp. 25-32). London: Fontana

Sport, Mass Entertainment, & Commercialisation.

J.A. Mangan, Hyun-Duck Kim, Angelita Cruz & Gi-Heun Kang (2013). Rivalries: China, Japan and South Korea – Memory, Modernity, Politics, Geopolitics – and Sport, *The International Journal of the History of Sport,* 30:10, 1130-1152. **(Available in e-format)**

WEEK 3 - The Frankfurt School and Beyond.

Kellner, D. (2012) The Frankfurt School and the Culture Industry. In Cohen B. Editor (Ed.) *Being Cultural* (pp. 52-65). New Zealand: Pearson. **(Available in e-format)**
Introduction to part II pp.83-88
Marx, K. (1972) The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof. In Tucker, R. Editor (Ed.) *The Marx-Engels Reader.* (pp.89-95) London: W.W. Norton & Co.
Jameson, F. (1990) Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture. In Jameson, F. *Signatures of the Visible.* (pp. 115-128) London: Routledge

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WEEK 4 - The Cultural Politics Of Globalization.

Lie, R. *What's new about cultural globalization?* (pp.141-155)
Ritzer, J. (1998) Chapter 7: Globalization, McDonaldization and Americanization. In Ritzer, J. *The McDonaldization Thesis: Exploration and Extensions* (pp.81-94). US: Sage Publications.
Rogue Valley Group (2009) What is McDonaldization? *Mcdonalization.com.* Available from: www.mcdonaldization.com

Glocalization.

Anthony Fung (2006). 'Think globally, act locally': China's rendezvous with MTV. *Global Media and Communication* 2006 2: 71.
Fuhua Huang (2013). Glocalisation of Sport: The NBA's Diffusion in China, *The International Journal of the History of Sport,* 30:3, 267-284. **(Available in e-format)**

WEEK 5 - Indigenisation and Cultural Hybridity.

Jeroen de Kloet (2005). Sonic Sturdiness: The Globalization of "Chinese" Rock and Pop, *Critical Studies in Media Communication,* 22:4, 321-338. **(Available in e-format)**
Doobo Shim (2006). Hybridity and the rise of Korean popular culture in Asia *Media Culture Society,* 28: 25.

WEEK 6 - Pop Music.

Bennett, A. (2000) Youth culture and popular music. In Bennett, A.*Popular Music and Youth Culture: Music, Identity and Place.* (pp.34-51) UK: Palgrave McMillan.
Heidi Netz Rupke and Grant Blank (2009). ''Country Roads'' To globalization: Sociological models for understanding American popular music in China. *The Journal Of Popular Culture,* 42(1), 126-146. **(Available in e-format)**

WEEK 7 - Reverse Cultural Flow.

Huaiting Wu and Joseph Man Chan (2007). Globalizing Chinese martial arts cinema: the global-local alliance and the production of Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon. Media, Culture & Society, 29: 195.

Consumerism & Identity.

Reynolds, Consumption, Culture and Change, pp. 211-227. **(Available in e-format)**
Song, Geng and Lee, Tracy K (2012). "New Man" and "New Lad" with Chinese Characteristics? ... *Asian Studies Review,* 36, 3. **(Available in e-format)**

Shopping, Subjectivity & Resistance.

Introduction to part III, pp. 147-150
Jing Wang (2005). Bourgeois bohemians in China? Neotribes and the urban imaginary. *The ChinaQuarterly,* 183, 532-548. **(Available in e-format)**

Disneyfication.

Wasko, J. (2001) Corporate Disney in Action, pp. 184-196
Giroux, H. (2002) Children's culture and Disney's animated films. *What Disney is teaching your children.* (pp.100-135)

WEEK 9 - Stardom & Celebrity Culture.

Rojek, C. (2012) Celebrity. In Cohen, B. Editor (Ed.). *Being Cultural.* (pp. 243-255). New Zealand: Pearson. **(Available in e-format)**

The Politics & Practices of Fandom.

Fiske, J. (1992) The cultural economy of fandom. In Lewis, L. Editor (Ed.). *The Adoring Audience: Fan culture and popular media.* (pp.30-49) US: Routledge.

Jenkins, H. (1992) 'Get a life!' Fans, poachers and nomads.*Textual Poachers.* (pp.9-49). New York: Routledge.

The Sociological Significance of Fan Cultures.

Ling Yang (2009). All for love: The Corn fandom, prosumers, and the Chinese way of creating a superstar. *International Journal of Cultural Studies,* 12: 527

WEEK 10 - Reading the Romance.

Christian-Smith, *Romancing the girl.*

Taylor, A. (2011) 'The urge towards love is an urge towards (un)death': Romance, masochistic desire and postfeminism in the Twilight novels. *International Journal of Cultural Studies. Vol.15* (No.1) pp.1-16.

The Postmodern Praxis of Lady Gaga.

Corona, V. (2013) Memory, monsters, and Lady Gaga. *The Journal of Popular Culture. Vol.46.* (No.4) pp.725-744. **(Available in e-format)**

Fashion & Subculture.

Kawamura, Y. (2006) Japanese teens as producers of street fashion. *Current Sociology. Vol.54.* (No. 5) pp. 784-801.

Antonia Finnane (2005). China on the catwalk: Between economic success and nationalist anxiety. *The China Quarterly,* No. 183, Culture in the Contemporary PRC, pp. 587-608. **(Available in e-format)**

WEEK 11 - Body Art & Body Modification.

Jones, M. (2012) The Body in Popular Culture. In Cohen, B. Editor (Ed.). *Being Cultural* (pp. 193-210). New Zealand: Pearson. **(Available in e-format)**

Irwin, K. (2001) Legitimating the first tattoo: moral passage through informal interaction. *The Society of Symbolic Interaction. Vol.24* (No.1) pp. 49-73. **(Available in e-format)**

WEEK 12

No Reading

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Library
Te Whare Pukapuka

APA Referencing

THIS IS A QUICK GUIDE TO THE APA REFERENCING STYLE (6TH EDITION)

- The American Psychological Association reference style uses the Author-Date format.
- Refer to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.) for more information. Check the Library Catalogue for call number and location(s).
- When quoting directly or indirectly from a source, **the source must be acknowledged in the text** by author name and year of publication.

IN-TEXT

To cite information directly or indirectly, there are two ways to acknowledge citations:
1) Make it a part of a sentence or 2) put it in parentheses at the end of the sentence.

Direct quotation** – use quotation marks around the quote and **include page numbers

1) Cohen and Lotan (2014) argue that "many different kinds of abilities are essential for any profession" (p.151).
2) "Many different kinds of abilities are essential for any profession" (Cohen & Lotan, 2014, p.151).

N.B. See the Library's APA webpage for a quotation of 40 or more words.

***Indirect quotation/paraphrasing/summarising** – no quotation marks*

1) Professional knowledge alone does not make someone a very capable professional (Cohen & Lotan, 2014).
2) According to Cohen and Lotan (2014), professional knowledge alone does not make someone a very capable professional.

N.B. Page numbers are optional when paraphrasing, although it is useful to include them (Publication Manual, p. 171).

Citations from a secondary source

1) Gould's (1981) research "raises fundamental doubts as to whether we can continue to think of intelligence as unidimensional" (as cited in Cohen & Lotan, 2014, pp. 151-152).
2) Intelligence cannot be believed to consist of one single entity any more (Gould, 1981, as cited in Cohen & Lotan, 2014).

N.B. To cite a source you found in another source, you must acknowledge all the authors.

- *The author(s) of the source referred to* — *i.e. Gould, 1981*
- *The author(s) of the work which contains the original source* — *i.e. Cohen & Lotan, 2014*

In the reference list, only the book by Cohen & Lotan should be acknowledged. Do not list Gould.

- At the end of your assignment, you are required to provide the full bibliographic information for each source. References must be listed in alphabetical order by author.

EXAMPLES OF REFERENCES BY TYPE

In a reference list	In-text citation
1. Book with one author King, M. (2000). *Wrestling with the angel: A life of Janet Frame*. Auckland, New Zealand: Viking. ***N.B. The first letter of the first word of the main title, subtitle and all proper nouns have capital letters.***	(King, 2000) *or* King (2000) compares Frame ...
2. Book with two authors Dancey, C. P., & Reidy, J. (2004). *Statistics without maths for psychology: Using SPSS for Windows* (3rd ed.). Harlow, England: Pearson/Prentice Hall. ***N.B. Before "&" between authors, do not forget to put a comma.***	(Dancey & Reidy, 2004) *or* Dancey and Reidy (2004) said... ***When paraphrasing in text, use and, not &.***
3. Book with three to five authors (see Library APA referencing webpage for six or more authors) Krause, K.-L., Bochner, S., & Duchesne, S. (2006). *Educational psychology for learning and teaching* (2nd ed.). South Melbourne, Vic., Australia: Thomson. ***N.B. Use & between authors' names, except when paraphrasing in text. When a work has three, four or five authors, cite all authors the first time, and in subsequent citations include only the first author followed by et al.***	(Krause, Bochner, & Duchesne, 2006) *then* (Krause et al., 2006)

4. **Book or report by a corporate author e.g. organisation, association, government department**	
International Labour Organization. (2007). *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges* (International Labour Conference report). Geneva, Switzerland: Author.	(International Labour Organization, 2007) *or*
N.B. When the author and the publisher are the same, use Author in the publisher field. In text, some group authors may be abbreviated in subsequent citations if they are readily recognisable	(International Labour Organization [ILO], 2007), *then* (ILO, 2007)
5. **Book chapter in edited book**	
Kestly, T. (2010). Group sandplay in elementary schools. In A. A. Drewes & C. E. Shaefer (Eds.), *School-based play therapy* (2nd ed., pp. 257-282). Hoboken, NJ: John Wileys & Sons.	(Kestly, 2010) *or*
N.B. Include the page numbers of the chapter after the book title.	Kestly (2010) compares educational settings of ...
6. **Conference paper online – (see Library APA referencing webpage for alternative formats)**	
Bochner, S. (1996, November). *Mentoring in higher education: Issues to be addressed in developing a mentoring program.* Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Singapore. Retrieved from http://www.aare.edu.au/96pap/bochs96018.txt	(Bochner, 1996) *or* Bochner (1996) illustrates that...
7. **Course handout/Lecture notes** (electronic version)	
Archard, S., Merry, R., & Nicholson, C. (2011). *Karakia and waiata* [Powerpoint slides]. Retrieved from TEPS757-11B (NET): Communities of Learners website: http://elearn.waikato.ac.nz/mod/resource/view.php?id=174650	(Archard, Merry & Nicholson, 2011) ***then subsequently, if 3-5 authors*** (Archard et al., 2011)
N.B. Put format in square brackets - e.g. [PowerPoint slides] [Lecture notes]	
8. **Film – (see Library APA referencing webpage for music and other media)**	
Preston, G. (Director/Producer). (2010). *Home by Christmas* [Motion picture]. New Zealand: Gaylene Preston Production.	(Preston, 2010)
N.B. For films, DVDs or videorecordings use [Motion picture] in square brackets. Give the country of origin and the name of the motion picture studio.	
9. **Journal article**	
Lustig, R. H. (2012). Public health: The toxic truth about sugar. *Nature, 482*(7383), 27-29.	(Lustig, 2012) *or*
N.B. A capital letter is used for key words in the journal title. The journal title and volume number are italicised, followed by the issue number in brackets (not italicised).	Lustig (2012) discredits "sugar as empty calories" (p. 28).
9a. **Journal article** (electronic version) **with no DOI**	
Lustig, R. H. (2012). Public health: The toxic truth about sugar. *Nature, 482*(7383), 27-29. Retrieved from ProQuest Central Database.	(Lustig, 2012)
9b. **Journal article – academic/scholarly with DOI (see also Library APA referencing webpage)**	
Lustig, R. H. (2012). Public health: The toxic truth about sugar. *Nature, 482*(7383), 27-29. http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/482027a	(Lustig, 2012)
10. **Magazine/Newspaper article – popular/trade/general interest**	
Goodwin, D. K. (2002, February 4). How I caused that story. *Time, 159*(5), 69.	(Goodwin, 2002) *or*
N.B. Full date is used if published weekly; month and year if monthly.	Goodwin (2002) defends ...
11. **Magazine/Newspaper article with no author**	
Report casts shadow on biofuel crops. (2007, October 16). *Waikato Times*, p. 21.	("Report Casts Shadow", 2007)
N.B. Article title comes first. In the text, abbreviate title and use double quotation marks. Include p. or pp. before the page number for newspapers, not magazines.	
12. **Personal Communication** (letters, telephone conversations, emails, interviews, private social networking)	
N.B. No reference list entry as the information is not recoverable.	(J. Bär, personal communication, March 19, 2004)
13. **Thesis – Institutional or personal webpage - outside the US**	
Liu, G. (2014). *Improving corporate Internet reporting in China* (Doctoral thesis, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand). Retrieved from http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/2241	(Liu, 2014) *or* Liu (2014) identified ...
14. **Webpage**	
New Zealand Trade and Enterprise. (n.d.). *Agribusiness*. Retrieved from https://www.nzte.govt.nz/en/export/market-research/agribusiness/	(New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, n.d., para. 1)
N.B. (n.d.) = no date. The basic format is: (1) Author (could be organisation), (2) Date (either date of publication or latest update), (3) Title, (4) URL.	***For direct quote, cite the paragraph number in text***

For more web examples e.g. YouTube videos, blogs and Twitter posts see the APA Online Guide
http://www.waikato.ac.nz/library/study/referencing/styles/apa/examples

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APA 文献引用

Library
Te Whare Pukapuka

APA 文献引用格式快解（第六版）。

- 美国心理学会文献引用使用“作者和日期”的引用格式。
- 详细请参考《美国心理协会刊物准则》（第六版）。
  从大学图书馆目录上可以查找到索书号和所在位置。
- 当直接或者间接引用文献，文献来源必须注明作者名和出版年代。如果是直接引用，还必须注明文献所处位置，比如页码或者是段落号。

文中

直接引用– 引用的文献要使用双引号并注明页码。

Samovar and Porter (1997) point out that "language involves attaching meaning to symbols" (p.188).
Alternatively, “Language involves attaching meaning to symbols" (Samovar & Porter, 1997, p.188).

间接引用/用自己的话重述或者改写– 不需要双引号

Attaching meaning to symbols is considered to be the origin of written language (Samovar & Porter, 1997).

注意：改写时可以选择是否添加页码，但是包括了页码会更加有帮助 (刊物准则, p. 171).

二次文献的引文

As Hall (1977) asserts, “culture also defines boundaries of different groups” (as cited in Samovar & Porter, 1997, p. 14).

- 你需要在作业的结尾提供完整的参考文献清单，参考文献必须以作者姓氏的字母顺序来排列。

EXAMPLES OF REFERENCES BY TYPE

In a reference list	In-text citation
1. Book with one author King, M. (2000). *Wrestling with the angel: A life of Janet Frame*. Auckland, New Zealand: Viking. ***N.B. The first letter of the first word of the main title, subtitle and all proper nouns have capital letters.***	(King, 2000) ***or*** King (2000) compares Frame ...
2. Book with two authors Dancey, C. P., & Reidy, J. (2004). *Statistics without maths for psychology: Using SPSS for Windows* (3rd ed.). Harlow, England: Pearson/Prentice Hall. ***N.B. Before “&”between authors, do not forget to put a comma.***	(Dancey & Reidy, 2004) ***or*** Dancey and Reidy (2004) said... ***When paraphrasing in text, use and, not &.***
3. Book with three to five authors (see Library APA referencing webpage for six or more authors) Krause, K.-L., Bochner, S., & Duchesne, S. (2006). *Educational psychology for learning and teaching* (2nd ed.). South Melbourne, Vic., Australia: Thomson. ***N.B. Use & between authors' names, except when paraphrasing in text. When a work has three, four or five authors, cite all authors the first time, and in subsequent citations include only the first author followed by et al.***	(Krause, Bochner, & Duchesne, 2006) ***then*** (Krause et al., 2006)
4. Book or report by a corporate author e.g. organisation, association, government department University of Waikato. (1967). *First hall of residence* (Information series No. 3). Hamilton, New Zealand: Author. ***N.B. When the author and the publisher are the same, use Author in the publisher field.***	(University of Waikato, 1967) ***Some group authors may be abbreviated in subsequent citations if they are readily recognisable.***
5. Book chapter in edited book Helber, L. E. (1995). Redeveloping mature resorts for new markets. In M. V. Conlin & T. Baum (Eds.), *Island tourism: Management principles and practice* (pp. 105-113). Chichester, England: John Wiley. ***N.B. Include the page numbers of the chapter after the book title.***	(Helber, 1995) ***or*** Helber (1995) compares luxury resorts ...

http://www.waikato.ac.nz/library/study/referencing/styles/apa/examples

Feb 2014

6. **Conference paper online -(see Library APA referencing webpage for alternative formats)** Bochner, S. (1996, November). *Mentoring in higher education: Issues to be addressed in developing a mentoring program.* Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Singapore. Retrieved from http://www.aare.edu.au/96pap/bochs96018.txt	(Bochner, 1996) ***or*** According to Bochner (1996) ...
7. **Course handout/Lecture notes** Salter, G. (2007). *Lecture 3: SPLS205-07A* [PowerPoint slides]. Hamilton, New Zealand: University of Waikato. ***N.B. Put format in square brackets - e.g. [PowerPoint slides] [Lecture notes]***	(Salter, 2007)
8. **Film – (see Library APA referencing webpage for music and other media)** Zhang, Y. (Producer/Director). (2000). *Not one less* [Motion picture]. China: Columbia Pictures. ***N.B. For films, DVDs or videorecordings use [Motion picture] in square brackets. Give the country of origin and the name of the motion picture studio.***	(Zhang, 2000)
9. **Journal article – academic/scholarly** (electronic version) **with DOI (see also Library APA referencing webpage)** Hohepa, M., Schofield, G., & Kolt, G. S. (2006). Physical activity: What do high school students think? *Journal of Adolescent Health, 39*(3), 328-336. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2005.12.024 ***N.B. A capital letter is used for key words in the journal title. The journal title and volume number are italicised, followed by the issue number in brackets (not italicised).***	(Hohepa, Schofield, & Kolt, 2006) ***then subsequently, if 3-5 authors*** (Hohepa et al., 2006)
10. **Journal article – academic/scholarly** (electronic version) **with no DOI** Harrison, B., & Papa, R. (2005). The development of an indigenous knowledge program in a New Zealand Maori-language immersion school. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 36*(1), 57-72. Retrieved from ProQuest Education Journals database. ***N.B. Undergraduates: Give the name of the database. Researchers: Give the URL of the journal homepage. e.g. Retrieved from http://ucpressjournals.com/journal.asp?j=aeq***	(Harrison & Papa, 2005) ***or*** Harrison and Papa (2005) recommend ...
11. **Journal article - academic/scholarly** (print version) Gibbs, M. (2005). The right to development and indigenous peoples: Lessons from New Zealand. *World Development, 33*(8), 1365-1378.	(Gibbs, 2005) ***or*** Gibbs (2005) contradicts ...
12. **Journal article - academic/scholarly** (Internet only – no print version) Snell, D., & Hodgetts, D. (n.d.). The psychology of heavy metal communities and white supremacy. *Te Kura Kete Aronui, 1.* Retrieved from http://www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/tkka ***N.B. (n.d.) = no date. For html version only, cite the paragraph number in text***	(Snell & Hodgetts, n.d.) ***or*** Snell and Hodgetts (n.d.) suggest "..." (para. 3)
13. **Magazine article – popular/trade/general interest** Goodwin, D. K. (2002, February 4). How I caused that story. *Time, 159*(5), 69. ***N.B. Full date is used for weekly magazines; month and year for monthly magazines***	(Goodwin, 2002) ***or*** Goodwin (2002) defends ...
14. **Newspaper article –** (Print version) Hartevelt, J. (2007, December 20). Boy racers. *The Press,* p. 3. ***N.B. Include p. or pp. before the page number – for newspapers only, not magazines***	(Hartevelt, 2007)
15. **Newspaper article** (Database like Newztext Plus) **(also see Library referencing webpage for Internet version)** Cumming, G. (2003, April 5). Cough that shook the world. *The New Zealand Herald.* Retrieved from Newztext Plus database.	(Cumming, 2003)
16. **Newspaper article with no author** Report casts shadow on biofuel crops. (2007, October 16). *Waikato Times*, p. 21. ***N.B. Article title comes first. In the text, abbreviate title and use double quotation marks.***	("Report Casts Shadow," 2007)
17. **Personal Communication** (letters, telephone conversations, emails, interviews) ***N.B. No reference list entry as the information is not recoverable.***	(H. Clarke, personal communication, March 19, 2004)
18. **Thesis – Institutional or personal webpage - outside the US** Dewstow, R. A. (2006). *Using the Internet to enhance teaching at the University of Waikato* (Master's thesis, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand). Retrieved from http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/handle/10289/2241	(Dewstow, 2006) ***or*** Dewstow (2006) identified ...
19. **Webpages** (When multiple webpages are referenced, reference the homepage) Statistics New Zealand. (2007). *New Zealand in profile 2007.* Retrieved from http://www.stats.govt.nz ***N.B. Author (could be organisation), date (either date of publication or latest update), document title, date retrieved if contents are likely to change, URL***	(Statistics New Zealand, 2007)

For more web examples e.g. YouTube videos, blogs and Twitter posts see the APA Online Guide

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Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences
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SOCY 202 – For SISU
Popular Culture

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
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WEEK 1

Introduction to Part I

Bruce Cohen

As with any area in the social sciences and humanities, an appropriate starting point for the study of culture should be a critical examination of definitions. This is not only carried out to accurately record the content and boundaries of the area of study but, more importantly in sociology, to highlight the often contested nature of such definitions and, by inference, to begin to problematise the topic. Such an examination often brings to the fore some of the fundamental issues for sociologists in exploring societal interactions and processes. For example, a brief examination of, say, crime or health reveals that rather then being static, neutral and objective categories, such definitions are subject to negotiation by those with the power to define and enforce their views of 'criminal activity' or 'health' and 'illness' on others (including, in this case, the criminal justice system and the health services). The time devoted in this first section to discussing competing definitions of 'culture' and the implications of these definitions is testimony to just how problematic such terminology can be. As I argue in Chapter 1, it is necessary for students within cultural studies to develop what C. Wright Mills calls 'the sociological imagination'. In short, students need to question common-sense and taken-for-granted assumptions about culture and society, while at the same time being able to place information, ideas and theories within their appropriate social and historical contexts. This is demonstrated in my chapter with reference to the industrial revolution and the conservative theorists; the rise of commerce and mass production was seen as not only a threat to 'authentic' culture, but also to the general moral development of society. Cultural conservatives support an elitist definition of culture which demarcates what we now understand as 'high culture' from 'low' (or 'popular') culture.

John Storey extends this discussion in Chapter 2, outlining the challenge to the conservative theorists from Raymond Williams' inclusive, 'social definition' of culture. Through such a definition, culture is redefined to include popular culture texts such as television and film as well as 'elite' texts such as ballet and opera. Noting the influence of semiotics and Gramsci's theory of hegemony on Williams' ideas (and later, on the work of Stuart Hall), Storey's chapter makes the critical point that the fundamental questioning of language and signification by Williams necessarily means that power becomes the primary object of sociological study in cultural studies. This focus on culture and power is developed further in Chapter 3 with David Inglis's investigation of the art world and definitions of 'art'. Drawing on some fascinating historical detail, it is

demonstrated that labels such as 'artist' and 'great works of art' are constructs of early modernity, a reaction by the Romantics to the emergence of industrialisation. As Inglis makes clear in his chapter, this was an attempt by such cultural producers to hold on to their economic and social privileges as the market replaced the traditional system of patronage. Here again we see notions of 'art' and 'high culture' closely tied to privilege and status, as well as the power of those to define and reinforce some cultural artefacts as worthy and others as worthless. Inglis concludes his discussion by reiterating the point that the production and consumption of culture can only be fully understood with reference to the broader social structures and hierarchies within society.

1 CULTURAL STUDIES AND SOCIOLOGY

Early developments and keywords

Bruce Cohen

- Sociology's contribution to the field of cultural studies focuses on the structural processes and conditions of producing and consuming cultural artefacts in a capitalist society.
- Definitions of 'culture' are highly contested; they range from an inclusive definition involving the knowledge, beliefs, customs, values and artefacts of a given society to exclusive definitions which draw on the dichotomy of 'high' and 'low' culture.
- Conservative theorists believe 'culture' to be a static and measurable category; it is argued that forms of 'high' culture — and with them, society as a whole — are in danger of being undermined by the mass-production of forms of 'low' culture which will be eagerly consumed by the masses.
- The work of Raymond Williams seeks to rescue the working class from elitist notions of culture by refocusing cultural studies research in the direction of the everyday practices and lived experience of ordinary people.
- It is concluded that while elitist notions of culture remain dominant in Western society, sociologists need to question these taken-for-granted assumptions and investigate the power relations inherent in such constructions.

Introduction

This chapter introduces students to some of the important issues and terminology which will help to ground the sociological study of cultural studies and popular culture. This includes a discussion of the deeply contested nature of 'culture', a word that Raymond Williams famously described as 'one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language' (1983: 87). Definitions are appropriate starting points for sociological discussion and the chapter takes time to note some of the keywords that are often encountered in the area, such as 'cultural text', 'authenticity' and 'resistance'. Some time is also spent considering the rise of industrial capitalism and mass production in the nineteenth century. It is crucial for students to understand the fundamental social, economic and political changes that resulted from the industrial

revolution and the rise of industrial society. The development of machines and processes which could mass produce items led to the emergence of 'mass culture' (or 'popular culture'). The effects that mass-produced 'culture' had on Western society has formed a key debate within cultural studies between the cultural conservatives (such as Arnold and Leavis) and 'culturalists' such as Williams. This debate is the focus of the second half of this chapter.

Sociology and cultural studies

There are many ways of studying cultural artefacts and behaviour within the arts and humanities. For instance, anthropologists explore the signification of specific cultural practices (such as religious ceremonies) to better understand the collective meanings of a social group or society; in contrast, academics in media studies focus more on the representations highlighted within specific forms of art and culture such as photography, film and music. While different academic disciplines may approach cultural studies with a different emphasis, it should also be acknowledged that there is a lot of cross-over in these study areas and approaches. Sociology's contribution to the field has tended to analyse the structural processes and conditions of producing and consuming cultural artefacts in capitalist society. Within such analysis, emphasis is placed on how ideas about 'culture' are made intelligible and meaningful by different socio-economic groups, as well as the consequences this can have for understanding wider societal processes. In this way, sociology is less concerned with debates over representations of art and culture than with their significance in reproducing social and economic inequalities within society (or, conversely, in challenging and resisting such inequalities through the processes of cultural production and consumption). Fundamentally, sociology questions the taken-for-granted and common-sense assumptions we have about culture. As Giddens (2001: 2) reminds us:

> [s]ociology is the study of human social life, groups and societies ... It teaches us that what we regard as natural, inevitable, good or true may not be such, and that the 'givens' of our life are strongly influenced by historical and social forces.

Therefore, when sociology students approach the study of culture, there is a need to constantly question who is benefiting from certain cultural formations, which notions of culture appear to dominate public discourse, and, in contrast, which voices are marginalised from such debates and for what reasons. At the same time, such discourse and meaning-making always needs to be placed and understood within its particular historical and social context (see Mills 2000). We will now further this discussion by focusing on the competing definitions of 'culture'.

Defining 'culture'

A standard dictionary definition of 'culture' usually draws our attention to the knowledge, beliefs, customs, values and artefacts of a society or of a specific group of people within that society. Oxford Dictionaries Online (2011), for example, defines culture as 'the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society'. This is a common-sense view of culture: people in New Zealand might talk of their 'national culture' and question what ideas, customs and social behaviour define them collectively as 'Kiwis', or specific groups may be referred to as having a separate culture in that society (for example, the 'Pacific Island culture'). Through investigating different ideas, customs and values of 'cultures' we can better understand other nations and peoples; ideas and behaviour which may at first appear quite strange and peculiar to us (such as praying to Mecca five times a day in Saudi Arabia or eating insects in Thailand) can be explained through reference to a range of 'cultural practices'. Such an understanding of 'culture' is typically used in anthropological studies; for example, an early definition from Tylor in 1891 (cited in Billington et al. 1991: 2) stated that culture was 'that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society'. Similarly, for Lewis (1961: 76) culture 'is the integrated system of learned behaviour patterns characteristic of the members of a society. It constitutes the way of life of any given social group.'

- A **cultural text** can be regarded as any physical manifestation of what is considered by a given society as 'culture' (regardless of notions of 'high' or 'low' culture). Thus, in cultural studies, 'text' is not only books or magazines, but all cultural artefacts (including, for example, works of art, YouTube clips, adverts, items of clothing, iPods, posters, television programmes, the *haka*, podcasts, SNS sites, frozen food, football, and so on).

This common-sense notion of culture, however, alerts us to some of the problems inherent in such a broad definition — firstly, it implies that culture can be just about everything in a society, and, secondly, it ascribes a fundamental difference (or 'otherness') to those to which the word is applied, though such differences between people and groups may be more imagined than real. Anthropological studies emerged with the colonial project; it attempted to document and explain to European colonists why other people were not like them (significantly, why other people were not as 'civilised' as European society believed itself to be) (for more on anthropology and colonialism, see for example Lewis 1973). Colonisation then, was supported by beliefs of 'cultural

difference' and an inferiority of other peoples' cultures. Subsequently it was through the attempted annihilation of such opposing attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that colonial powers sought to reinforce their rule. For example, the introduction of Christian religions and a colonial system of education to many parts of the globe and, simultaneously, the forbidding of indigenous communities to speak their native languages or perform their traditional practices instilled the idea that European culture was the one true set of values and beliefs by which all societies should live. Even the introduction of European sporting traditions to the colonies was seen as an important way of instilling indigenous peoples with European values (see Smart, in this volume). Such ideas of disseminating 'cultural imperialism' continue today, for example with Joseph Nye's (2004) notion of 'soft power'. Nye advocates the imposition of American culture (including forms of US popular culture, such as mainstream Hollywood films) on other nations to facilitate the long-term adoption of American values and beliefs. Nye believes that the earlier adoption of such a policy would have fostered better foreign relations and aided the US in the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In fully understanding the common-sense view of culture then, we need to be aware of the historical and political dimensions through which the term has been made meaningful. Language does not develop in a social vacuum, rather it is formed through societal interactions and processes. In Western society, these dynamics are often imbued with power — the interests of some groups become dominant in defining concepts that we then take to be the 'correct' (or common sense) meaning of a given word. This issue becomes clearer when we consider the original use of 'culture' and its adaptation by industrialised societies.

- **Culture** is a highly contested term in cultural studies. It can be broadly defined as 'the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society' (Oxford Dictionaries Online 2011). In contrast, the conservative theorist Matthew Arnold felt that culture was 'the best that has been thought or said in the world' (2009: 6). Such an elitist notion of culture was later challenged by Raymond Williams (1961: 41) who stated that culture should be seen as a whole 'way of life' of different groups of people. The chapters from John Storey and David Inglis that follow this one discuss the definitions of 'culture' and its significance to sociology in further detail.

The word 'culture' comes from the Latin word *colere* (literally meaning 'to cultivate'), and was initially used as a term in agriculture and horticulture (as it still is in biology today) to signify a development or progress of a seed, plant or organism (usually under controlled or measured conditions). Yet by the nineteenth century the word was also associated with the development or improvement of people within society. This idea of 'culture' continues today:

we might, for example, refer to certain people as being 'cultured'; the reason we know that they are 'cultured' is that they regularly visit 'cultural events' such as art galleries and classical concerts, they also read serious literature from authors such as Tolstoy, Shakespeare and Swift. These cultured people, in contrast, avoid 'popular' events such as rock gigs or trips to the local multiplex to watch the latest Hollywood blockbuster — there is no 'culture' in such activities. This concept of the 'cultivated' individual or group forms the central debate over definitions for cultural theorists. As Jenkins et al. (2002: 27) clarify, although 'culture' today,

> can often describe the activities of a generalized people (as in 'Asian American culture'), it has also remained an ideological tool. Here, 'culture' signifies the cultivated or more elite realm of the educated classes as opposed to the debased world of the lower classes, the realm of the popular.

To better understand the debates over this conception of 'culture', it is necessary to outline the historical context and development of ideas which eventually led to the establishment of cultural studies as an academic discipline. The sections that follow establish the arguments of Matthew Arnold and F. R. Leavis as key writers in the cultural conservative tradition; this school of thought is highly critical of the spread of mass culture within society. In contrast, the final section briefly surveys some of the main ideas of Raymond Williams. It will be shown that Williams' alternative conceptualisation of 'culture' has had a lasting effect on cultural studies work, resulting in a heightened focus by cultural theorists on forms of popular culture.

Industrialisation and mass production

The industrial revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries brought about significant and lasting changes in Western society which are still felt today. As the Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm (1968: 13) puts it, '[t]he Industrial Revolution marks the most fundamental transformation of human life in the history of the world recorded in written documents'. Facilitated by new technological processes (such as steam power, metallurgy, and chemical synthesis), industry replaced agriculture as the main source of production. England was the first country to become fully industrialised and, as a result, the economic, social, cultural and political life of the nation changed dramatically. With a change in the social structure of society, social class replaced the traditional feudal hierarchy of peasantry (or 'serfs'), landed aristocracy and the monarchy. The power of the aristocracy began its slow decline, as the economic and political power of the merchant classes (the burgeoning middle class) increased. Peasants were freed from their traditional ties to the land so that they

could move to the cities and work the new machines. From this reorganisation of labour, a solidified working class emerged.

A social class was defined by Karl Marx (1976) as a group of people who had a common relationship to the means of production. In the emerging capitalist society there were two main classes: the industrialists (or 'capitalists') who owned the new means of production, and the working classes (or 'proletariat') who worked the means of production — the proletariat earned their living by selling their labour to the capitalists. According to Marx, the relationship between the two classes is one of fundamental conflict and struggle over power and resources: while the capitalists get richer exploiting the labour of the proletariat, the workers stay relatively poor (see for example Bedggood 2007: 133–4). Marx concluded that until the workers took control of the means of production — through a workers' revolution — this situation would remain unchanged.

- For conservative theorists, the term **popular culture** is an oxymoron. While 'popular' is often used to suggest something 'widely favoured' or 'well-liked', when it is associated with the idea of 'culture', there is a pervading sense of this form of culture being 'low' or 'base' (Williams 1983: 236). This is often contrasted with the supposed merits of forms of 'high culture'. Some major developments in production and forms of popular culture in the last two centuries have included the telegraph (1800s), the mechanised printing press (1810), photography (1820s), the penny press newspapers (1830), film (1878), radio (1900s), television (1925), mobile phones (1973), personal computers (c.1973), and the internet (c.1988).

Following widespread agitation by the working classes and other disenfranchised groups in mid-nineteenth century England, the Reform Bill was passed in 1867. This law doubled the proportion of the population who could vote and enfranchised a large section of the working class (Marcus 1994: 166). In 1870 the Education Act was passed; this saw the introduction of compulsory schooling for the first time. The English working class had gained important concessions from middle class society and was now better educated than ever before. The population could now read and write; a necessity for the continued development of industrial society, but also a concern for many social commentators. The development of the mechanised printing press in the early part of the nineteenth century led to the first mass-produced literature (for example, newspapers and books) in history (McLuhan 1962: 124). The possibility of ordinary people consuming mass-produced products had begun.

Cultural conservatism

Among those concerned at the radical changes caused by industrialisation was school inspector, poet and essayist Matthew Arnold (1822–1888). Outlined in his classic book, *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), Arnold's main concern was for the 'moral' and 'spiritual' future of society; it appeared to him that the very essence of 'civilisation' was under threat from the machines. While industrialisation might have led to more prosperity, the expansion of the British Empire, and the general (if slow) improvement in living conditions of the population, what had happened to the *soul* of society? Despite being a deeply religious man, he was aware that religion could no longer unite people in a society that appeared increasingly profane. With the increasing economic and political power of the middle classes, and the constant clashes with the working classes, Arnold argued that there was no spiritual leadership of the nation; the needs of capital and labour had meant that the previous overarching guiding principles of society had been lost. He famously lambasted the middle classes as 'philistines' and the working classes as 'barbarians' — while the middle classes believed it was 'everyman for himself' (Arnold 1994: 51), the working class were 'beginning to assert and put in practice an Englishman's right to do what he likes' (1994: 52). The long-term result of this lethal concoction, he argued, would be anarchy.

- For a cultural text to be considered **authentic** it has to be 'genuine, natural, true and pure' (Barker 2004: 9). Similar to the conservative theorists, Adorno (see Kellner, this volume) argued that the traditional 'folk culture' of the peasantry — such as folk songs and artisan crafts — was a 'lived' and uncorrupted form of culture; it was therefore 'authentic'. In comparison, the mass-produced culture of industrial society was standardised and formulaic. This 'popular' culture had no intrinsic meaning to it, it was not *of* the people, and was therefore 'inauthentic' culture. Similar to the contested nature of culture, the application of the label 'authentic' to any given text remains problematic in cultural studies — the word is often used to denote the supposed worth of high art and culture at the expense of forms of 'low' (or 'popular') culture.

The solution for Arnold was the education and promotion of culture to the masses; culture should act as the moral and spiritual guide for society. 'Culture' for Arnold was 'the best that has been thought or said in the world' (2009: 6). Arnold felt such culture should possess both a 'high truth' and 'high seriousness' (such as the works of Shakespeare and Milton). He insisted that society needed to be led by an educated intelligentsia who would act as the protectors and promoters of such culture (through identifying what 'the best that

has been thought or said in the world' was, and making it accessible to the masses, including through the education system). Only through culture, 'a study in perfection' (Arnold 1994: 31), would real growth in society be possible. Thus it was argued that only intellectual and emotional development could drive society forward, rather than economic growth and the demands of business.

Arnold's seemingly elitist notions of culture were avidly taken up by writers and literary critics in the late nineteenth century. Although he did not concern himself in his writings with popular culture such as paperback novels and newspapers, the development of photography and film at the end of the century encouraged critics to ruminate on the possible 'distinctions' that society should make between Arnold's 'good' culture and industrial society's 'bad' culture. Cultural critic F. R. Leavis (1895–1978) is the most prominent of writers who followed Arnold's conservative critique of culture, developing his ideas in the twentieth century, witnessing the progression of new forms of popular culture including film, radio and, later, television.

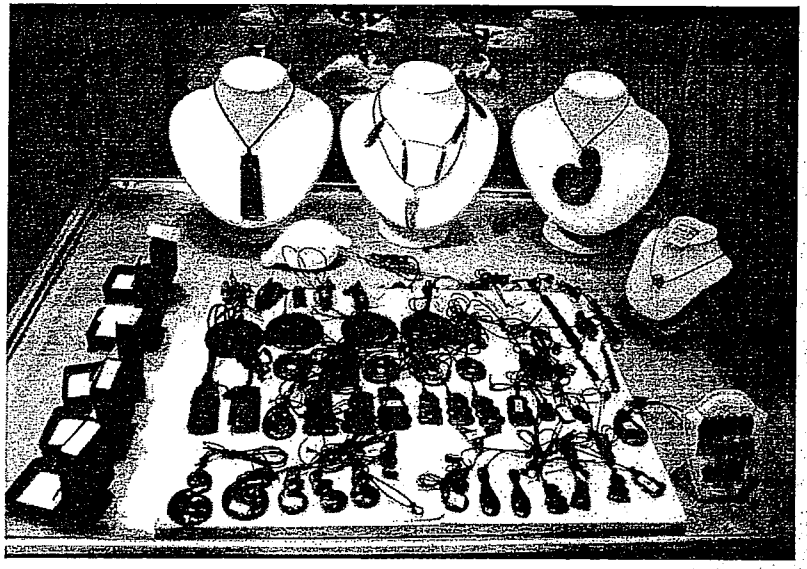


Figure 1.1 Pounamu (jade) jewellery: the commercialisation of folk culture?

Leavis solidified the conservative approach to culture in a number of books including *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture* (1930). Before industrial society, argued Leavis, there had been a golden age of 'organic community' with a 'living culture' (Leavis and Thompson 1933: 1); in the middle ages there was a minority culture of the educated elites, and, in contrast, an authentic, common 'folk culture' of the ordinary people (the peasantry). This 'folk culture' is described by Leavis as folk songs and folk dances, handicraft products, as well as the use of language. This 'old popular culture' (Leavis and Thompson 1933: 2) had something more to it than the mass-produced popular culture that developed with industrial society; it was 'an art of life, a way of living, ordered and patterned, involving social arts, codes of intercourse and a responsive adjustment, growing out of immemorial experience, to the natural environment and the rhythm of the year' (Leavis and Thompson 1933: 1–2). In contrast, industrialisation had relaced such authentic folk culture with 'inauthentic' mass-produced culture (or popular culture) such as newspapers, advertising, paperback novels, photographs, radio, film, television, and popular music. The masses had thus become alienated from their own culture.

Like Arnold, Leavis saw culture and commerce as binary opposites, commerce was the key threat to culture. Here we see the formulation of the high-low culture dichotomy in the conservative theory: mass-produced culture is 'low' culture (or 'popular culture', as it is now more commonly known), this is mediocre, dull, mundane entertainment that can be enjoyed by the uneducated and uncritical 'low-brow' hoards. In contrast, 'high culture' is art, literature, music and intellectual thought which few can create or even appreciate (Leavis particularly referred to the literary works of Dante, Shakespeare, Baudelaire and Hardy as examples of 'high culture'; in contrast, the novels of Charles Dickens and Laurence Sterne were considered as mass-produced and worthless 'low culture' for the masses). Leavis argued that attempts to make culture accessible to the masses (for example, through mass education) had failed, this had led instead to falling standards in society. Following Arnold, Leavis also called for leadership from experts on high culture. Rather than attempting to teach culture to everyone, Leavis argued that society should promote excellence in education, academia and culture for a privileged few. In *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture* he states,

> [i]n any period it is upon a very small minority that the discerning appreciation of art and literature depends: it is (apart from cases of the simple and familiar) only a few who are capable of unprompted, first-hand judgement. They are still a small minority, though a larger one, who are capable of endorsing such first-hand judgement by genuine personal response ... Upon this minority depends our power of profiting by the finest human experience of the past; they keep alive the subtlest and most perishable parts of tradition ... In their keeping ... is the language, the changing idiom upon which fine living depends, and without which distinction of spirit is thwarted and incoherent. By 'culture' I mean the use of such language. (Leavis 1930: 3–4)

In Leavis' view, culture needed to be rescued from commerce, and this could only be successfully achieved by the leadership of a minority capable of adequately appreciating high culture and separating it from low culture. Thus,

for conservative theorists, there is a need to be 'discerning' and 'discriminating' in approaching any cultural text, to be able to assess its real cultural 'worth' for society.

There are two chief criticisms of cultural conservatism that can be highlighted here. First, the work of Arnold and Leavis suggests that culture is a static and measurable category; the canon of high culture can be accurately identified throughout history and will never be subject to the changing tastes or whims of a given society. Drawing on just a few examples we can see that this conceptualisation of culture is problematic. For example, Shakespeare (1564–1616) — arguably the world's most famous playwright and a beacon of high culture for conservative theorists — wrote plays for a mass audience; the work was not considered to be of particular cultural value until his plays were re-evaluated in the eighteenth century. The waltz, jazz music, and Andy Warhol's art are further examples of cultural texts which are now considered a part of high culture while previously all have struggled against claims of being inauthentic or debased forms of culture. Leavis himself later reconsidered his view of Charles Dickens' novels, suggesting they should also be part of the canon of high culture. These examples demonstrate that we cannot divorce the idea of 'culture' from the specific social and historical epochs in which such definitions and distinctions are made. Far from being static then, 'culture' is a fluid category which changes over time. This is why sociologists often refer to culture as being a *social construct*; that is, culture has no intrinsic meaning outside of the wider social and political values which are embedded in such ideas.

A second criticism emerges from the first. Cultural conservatism is unashamedly elitist; according to Leavis, only an educated minority can truly identify and comprehend what 'high culture' is. Yet when we consider that culture is not a static and measurable concept, we then have to ask who decides and who benefits from such definitions of culture. These questions are most effectively answered with reference to unequal power relations within capitalist society; that is, the high-low culture dichotomy privileges the powerful over the powerless in society. In this way definitions of culture can be used, for example, as a discriminatory tool by the bourgeoisie to separate high status leisure activities from the debased and worthless popular entertainment of the masses. As just one example, the author recently attended a presentation at the University of Auckland on opera and oysters (Goldie 2010). The speaker began his talk by stating that *we all know* that we *should* like opera and oysters, we know that they are *good for us*. He then proceeded to outline how people might better climatise themselves to liking both through such behavioural modification techniques as only eating oysters when one is in a good mood and so on. Here we see the reinforcement of bourgeois notions of high culture and a denial of the power relations involved in the establishment of such definitions. In contrast, we can argue that opera and oysters actually have no intrinsic value but have been

imbued with cultural meaning by the middle classes (attending the opera is now a relatively expensive leisure activity, and involves a range of certain social customs and norms more familiar to the middle classes; oysters are a relatively expensive cuisine with a subtle taste, which is not preferred by all). Consequently, there is no reason why we should like opera or oysters, they are *not* intrinsically good for us, however the dominant meaning in capitalist society is that these activities denote such things as class and status, something we are constantly told that we *should* aspire to.

While noting some of the fundamental problems within cultural conservative writings, the above example is salient in demonstrating the ongoing high–low culture dichotomy that continues to be played out in society today. We tend to take such ideas as the 'cultured' individual or a person who has 'no culture' for granted in our common sense understandings of what culture is. This is something that sociologists have for a long time challenged. The origins of such challenges in cultural studies — and indeed the start of formal academic study within the area — can be found in the work of Raymond Williams and his challenge to the elitist conceptions of culture, which will now be outlined.

Raymond Williams and working class culture

The formal beginnings of cultural studies as an academic discipline can be found in the work of Raymond Williams (1921–1988). A committed socialist from a working class background, Williams' cultural analysis departed from cultural conservatism by placing formulations of 'culture' within their wider social and historical contexts. This was a questioning of elitist conceptions of high culture in industrial society, a society based on fundamental inequalities between the owners and workers of the means of production. Fundamentally, within capitalist society, the bourgeoisie have the power to enforce their definition and meaning of 'culture' on the masses. In the famous Marxian phrase, '[t]he ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force' (Marx and Engels 1998: 191). As Garnham (1998: 601) has pointed out, in questioning the 'ruling ideas' on culture, Williams attempted,

> the revalidation of British working class or popular culture against the elite, dominant culture. [His analysis] was situated within the context of a class structure formed by industrial capitalism and an increasingly commercialized system of cultural production, distribution, and consumption.

As Bourdieu was later to note in his book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1984), culture is a site for class distinction in which arbitrary texts become imbued with particular meanings by the ruling classes to

16 Chap1

denote 'good' and 'bad' 'taste'. In contrast to the high–low definitions of the cultural conservatives, Williams suggested a 'social' definition of culture. Instead of culture being 'the best that has been thought or said in the world' (Arnold 2009: 6), 'culture is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour' (Williams 1961: 41). The idea that culture can be 'ordinary' is a key departure from earlier conceptions, and suggests that popular culture — previously considered as 'inauthentic' and 'low brow' — should be taken seriously by academics, both in terms of the production and the consumption of such texts. As Williams (1961: 41–2) further states, an analysis of culture which draws on such a definition,

> is the clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture. Such analysis will include the historical criticism ... in which intellectual and imaginative works are analysed in relation to particular traditions and societies, but will also include analysis of the elements in the way of life that to followers of ... other definitions are not 'culture' at all; the organization of production, the structure of the family, the structure of institutions which express or govern social relationships, the characteristic forms through which members of the society communicate.

- Some disciplines in the humanities are concerned with the study of the **aesthetics** of cultural texts. This is a focus on the question of the art and beauty of a given text. As Barker (2004: 4) has noted, cultural studies in part arose as a critical response to such attempts to universally separate art from non-art, 'good works' from 'bad works', high culture from low culture; sociologists criticise the inherent subjectivity and elitism which informs such a focus on aesthetics. While Raymond Williams (1983: 31–2) understands the emphasis that the philosophy of aesthetics seeks to make, he argues that the result is ultimately damaging as it attempts to displace, exclude, and marginalise the commonplace or the utilitarian in culture.

This analysis of culture then, is one which broadly calls for a sociological analysis of cultural texts, especially the analysis of popular culture within capitalist society. We need to question the taken-for-granted notions of high and popular art and culture within society, and be able to analyse the meanings of such texts with reference to the processes of production and consumption as well as social and economic relations in late modernity. Williams' work laid the foundations for British Cultural Studies (see Lewis and Lewis, in this volume) and continues to be a chief influence on cultural studies research today. The idea that we should, for example, take television soap operas such as *Coronation Street* (1960—present) or *Shortland Street* (1992—present) as seriously as Picasso's paintings, or films on the working class condition such as *A Taste of Honey* (1961) as seriously as Shakespeare's plays, or the working class anger of the Sex Pistols music as seriously as Beethoven, has primarily developed from Raymond Williams' insightful social critique of culture.

- In cultural studies, **resistance** is often conceptualised as active opposition to the culture industry (see Kellner, in this volume). As Barker (2004: 178) remarks, '[h]ere, resistance arises where a dominating culture is seeking to impose itself on subordinate cultures from without. Consequently, resources of resistance are to be located in some measure outside of the dominating culture'. Subcultural activity, for example, can be seen as resistance to dominant consumerist values (see Bennett, in this volume). Likewise, 'cultural jamming' (see Stahl, in this volume) and the establishment of 'knowledge communities' (see Jenkins, in this volume) may also be conceptualised as forms of resistance to the dominant ideology within cultural texts.

Conclusion

To fully understand 'culture' students need to invoke the sociological imagination. This entails a questioning of definitions and distinctions made on the basis of cultural classifications in capitalist society. This chapter has surveyed the beginnings of the study of culture in industrial society by drawing on the important work of the cultural conservatives and Raymond Williams. While elitist notions of 'high' and 'low' (or popular) culture remain dominant in Western society, as sociologists we need to question these taken-for-granted assumptions, and investigate the power relations inherent in such constructions.

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2 'Culture' in Cultural Studies

John Storey

- Cultural studies works with an inclusive definition of 'culture'.
- Cultural studies defines culture as a system of signification organising social practice.
- The principal object of study in cultural studies is the relationship between culture and power.

What is 'culture'?

Cultural studies works with an inclusive definition of culture. That is, rather than study only what Matthew Arnold famously called 'the best which has been thought and said' (2009: 6; see also Leavis 2009), cultural studies is committed to examining what Raymond Williams called 'all forms of signification' (1984: 240). This is a rejection of the Arnoldian/Leavisite mapping of the cultural field into culture/minority culture and anarchy/mass civilisation (see Storey 2009). The first, culture/minority culture — consisting of 'great art' and, crucially, the ability to appreciate 'great art' — demands serious consideration. While the second, anarchy/mass civilisation — supposedly consisting of the remaining degraded mass culture — requires little more than a fleeting sociological glance, remaining long enough to condemn either the culture made *for* the 'masses' or (as in most versions) the culture *of* the 'masses'.

Against the Arnoldian/Leavisite division of the cultural field into the culture/minority culture of an elite and anarchy/mass civilisation of the masses, cultural studies works with a definition of culture developed by Williams. Writing in 1961, he proposed the social definition of culture, in which culture is defined as:

> a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour. The analysis of culture, from such a definition, is the clarification of the meanings and values implicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture ... the characteristic forms through which members of the society communicate. (Williams 2009: 32)

This definition is crucial to the development of cultural studies as an interdisciplinary project for three reasons. First, it 'democratically' broadens the Arnoldian/Leavisite definition of culture, producing a more inclusive definition, in which instead of culture being defined as a body of only 'elite' texts and practices (for example, ballet, opera, the novel, and poetry), it is redefined to include *as* culture: television, cinema, pop music, advertising and so forth. Second, culture as a particular way of life further broadens the definition of culture. So, for example, rather than culture being television as text, culture is embodied in the particular way of life that is involved in, say, the production, circulation, and consumption of television.

In some accounts of the development of cultural studies these two aspects of the social definition are usually noted and the discussion ends there. However, there is a third element in Williams' definition, one I think that is far more important for the intellectual formation of cultural studies than the other two. That is, the connection that is made between culture and signification. The importance of a particular way of life is that it 'expresses certain meanings and values' (Williams 2009: 32). In addition, cultural analysis from the perspective of this definition of culture 'is the clarification of the meanings and values implicit in a particular way of life' (Williams 2009: 32). The emphasis in discussions of this passage is always on a particular way of life, but in my view, the idea of cultures as networks of meanings that are performed and made concrete in practices of everyday life makes a far more significant contribution to cultural studies. Moreover, culture as signification organising social practice is not reducible to a particular way of life; rather it is fundamental to the shaping and holding together of *all ways of life*. This is not to reduce everything to culture as signification, but it is to insist that culture defined in this way should be seen 'as essentially involved in *all* forms of social activity' (Williams 1981: 13).

While there is more to life than signifying systems, it is nevertheless the case that 'it would ... be wrong to suppose that we can ever usefully discuss a social system without including, as a central part of its practice, its signifying systems, on which, as a system, it fundamentally depends' (Williams 1981: 207). In other words, signification is fundamental to all human activities. Sometimes, it is the most important aspect of the activity, at other times it is overshadowed by more functional aspects. Poetry is more obviously about signification in a way that, say, eating appears not to be. However, we know that together with the biological aspects of eating, what and how we eat is organised by signification (there is a culture of food consumption). Moreover, we also know that eating, as a human activity, has a variable history of signifying different things: civilisation, modernity, Westernisation and class difference for example, and that each of these different ways of signifying organised a different social practice of eating (see Montanari 1994). Culture, therefore, as defined by cultural studies is not something restricted to the arts or to different forms of

intellectual production; it is an aspect of all human existence. As Stuart Hall (1997: 2) explains:

> [c]ulture ... is not so much a set of things — novels and paintings or TV programmes and comics — as a process, a set of practices. Primarily, culture is concerned with the production and exchange of meanings — the 'giving and taking of meaning' — between the members of a society or group.



Figure 2.1 Cultural artefacts: a signification of social practice

According to cultural studies, cultures do not so much consist of, say, art objects. Rather, cultures are the shifting networks of signification in which, say, art objects are *made* to exist as meaningful objects. For example, if I pass a name card to someone in China, the polite way to do it is with two hands. If I pass it with one hand, I may cause offence. This is clearly a matter of culture. However, the 'culture' is not really in the materiality of the card or in the gesture of passing, it is in the network of signification that binds together the card and the gesture. In other words, there is not anything essentially polite about passing the card with two hands; using two hands has been made to signify politeness. Nevertheless, there is something very important that we have to notice here: signification is not free floating, it is embodied in a social practice, which can, in turn, produce real material effects (politeness or offence). As Williams (1977: 34) insists, 'signification, the social creation of meanings [is] a practical material activity' Similarly as Karl Marx (1976: 149) observes, 'one man is king only

because other men stand in the relation of subjects to him. They, on the contrary, imagine that they are subjects because he is king'. This relationship works because they share a culture in which such relations are meaningful. Outside such a culture, this relationship would be beyond meaning — difficult to understand and hard to accept as natural. Being a king, therefore, is not a gift of nature (or of God), but something constructed in the networks of signification we call culture; it is culture and not nature (or God) which gives these relations meaning, makes them signify, and, moreover, by signifying they materially organise social practice.

To share a culture — according to this preliminary definition — is to interpret the world, make it meaningful and experience it as meaningful in recognisably similar ways. So-called 'culture shock' happens when we encounter radically different networks of meaning; that is, when our 'natural' or 'common sense' is confronted by someone else's 'natural' or 'common sense'. As we noted earlier, although eating may well be the satisfaction of a biological need, people can easily be shocked and disturbed by how and what people eat in another part of the world — they are shocked and disturbed by what is in effect the culinary culture of another people.

Culture and power

So far I have focused on culture as a system of shared meanings that organise practice. This is more or less how culture tends to be presented in early cultural studies. It is only after the introduction of Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony into cultural studies in the 1970s that cultural studies fully recognises that signifying systems consist of both shared and contested meanings. Moreover, it is when cultural studies embraces the concept of hegemony that it locates culture and power as its principal object of study in cultural studies.

Gramsci (2009: 75) uses hegemony to describe processes of power in which a dominant group does not merely *rule by force* but *leads by consent*: it exerts 'intellectual and moral leadership'. Hegemony involves a specific kind of consensus, a consensus in which a social group presents its own *particular* interests as the *general* interests of the society as a whole; it turns the particular into the general. Hegemony works by the transformation of potential antagonism into simple difference. This works in part through the circulation of signification, meanings that reinforce dominance and subordination by seeking to fix the meaning of social relations. As Williams (1977: 110) explains:

> [hegemony] is a lived system of meanings and values ... It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people ... [It is] in the strongest sense a 'culture' [understood as signification organising social practice], but a culture which has also to be seen as the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes.

In other words, hegemony is a culture that involves the attempt to saturate the social with meanings that support the prevailing structures of power. In a hegemonic situation subordinate groups appear to actively support and subscribe to values, ideals, objectives and so on, which *incorporate* them into the prevailing structures of power: relations of dominance and subordination. However, hegemony, as Williams also observes, 'does not just passively exist as a form of dominance. It has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged' (Williams 1977: 112). Therefore, although hegemony is characterised by high levels of consensus, it is never without conflict; that is, there is always *resistance*. However, for hegemony to remain successful, conflict and resistance must always be channelled and contained — re-articulated in the interests of the dominant (see Hall 2009; Storey 2009).

There are two conclusions we can draw from the cultural studies concept of culture as a system of signification organising social practice. First, although the world exists in all its enabling and constraining materiality outside culture, it is only in culture that the world can be *made to signify*. In other words, signification has a performative effect; it helps construct the realities it appears only to describe.

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1979, 2001, 2009) have had a significant influence on cultural studies. They use the word 'discourse' in much the same way as cultural studies uses the word 'culture'. According to Laclau and Mouffe (2009: 144–45):

> [i]f I kick a spherical object in the street or if I kick a ball in a football match, the *physical* fact is the same, but *its meaning* is different. The object is a football only to the extent that it establishes a system of relations with other objects, and these relations are not given by the mere referential materiality of the objects, but are, rather, socially constructed. This systematic set of relations is what we call discourse.

Cultural studies would mostly call these systematic relations culture. However, both positions share the view that to stress the discursive or the cultural is not to deny the materiality of the real. Again, according to Laclau and Mouffe (2009: 145), the discursive character of an object does not, by any means, imply putting its *existence* into question. The fact that a football is only a football as long as it is integrated within a system of socially constructed rules does not mean that it ceases to be a physical object.

In other words, objects exist independently of their discursive or cultural articulation, but it is only within discourse or culture that they can exist as meaningful objects in meaningful relations. For example, earthquakes exist in the real world, but whether they are:

> constructed in terms of 'natural phenomena' or 'expressions of the wrath of God', depends upon the structuring of a discursive field. What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive condition of emergence. (Laclau and Mouffe 2001: 108)

This way of thinking about culture and/or discourse is obviously not without its critics. Catherine Gallagher, for example, is critical of the cultural studies definition of culture. As she explains:

> [t]he puzzling thing about these writings ... is their almost programmatic refusal to tell us what culture is not. 'Nature' was once its most widely agreed-upon opposite, but since the category of nature is now itself often perceived as culturally created, even that broad distinction has been weakened. (Gallagher 1995: 308)

Yes, nature is a cultural construct, but this does not mean that rivers and mountains do not exist. Williams had been aware of this type of objection since as early as 1961, noting that it makes it:

> impossible for us to assume that there is any reality experienced by man into which man's own observations and interpretations do not enter ... Yet equally, the facts of perception in no way lead us to a late form of idealism; they do not require us to suppose that there is no kind of reality outside the human mind; they point rather to the insistence that all human experience is an interpretation of the non-human reality ... We have to think ... of human experience as both objective and subjective, in one inseparable process ... We create our human world. (Williams 1965: 36, 54)

To argue that culture is best understood as a system of signification organising social practice is not a denial that the material world exists in all its constraining and enabling reality outside signification. As Williams (1979: 67) makes very clear, 'the natural world exists whether anyone signifies it or not'. But what is also absolutely the case is that the material (or the natural) world exists for us — and only ever exists for us — layered and articulated in signification.

The second conclusion we can draw from the cultural studies definition of culture concerns the potential for struggle over meaning. Given that different meanings can be ascribed to the same 'sign' (that is, anything that can be made to signify), meaning-making (that is, the making of culture) is, therefore, always a potential site of struggle...

The making of meaning is always entangled in what Valentin Volosinov (1973) identified as the 'multi-accentuality' of the sign. Rather than being inscribed with a single meaning, a sign can be articulated with different 'accents'; that is, it can be *made to mean* different things in different contexts, with different effects of power. The sign, therefore, is always a potential site of 'differently oriented social interests', and is often in practice 'an arena of ... struggle'. Those with power seek 'to make the sign uni-accentual' (Volosinov 1973: 23): they seek to make what is multi-accentual appear as if it could only ever be uni-accentual.

When 1960s soul band *The Four Tops*, for example, sing 'It's the same old song, but with a different meaning since you've been gone' they illustrate what Volosinov means by the multi-accentuality of the sign. The song tells the story of how words and music that once signified a loving relationship have now been re-articulated to signify only pain and regret. Nothing about the materiality of the song has changed (it's the same old song), but what has changed is the context in which the song is heard and made meaningful (with a different meaning since you've been gone). A new context has produced a new meaning, but the new meaning has a constituting effect: the new context generates a new social practice (sadness, regret, and accompanying forms of behaviour).

In other words (in a less danceable discourse), a text is not the issuing source of meaning but a site where the articulation of meaning (variable meanings) can be produced as it is re-articulated in specific contexts. We continually acknowledge the multi-accentuality of the sign when we describe an interpretation as, for example, a feminist reading, a queer reading, a post-colonial reading, or a post-Marxist reading. In such instances, we implicitly acknowledge that the text in question has been interpreted (or 'made to mean') from the critical perspective of a particular reading practice.

Gender identities are also an example of the multi-accentuality of the sign. Masculinity, for example, has real material conditions of existence (we might call these 'biological') but there are different ways of representing masculinity, different ways of making masculinity signify. Therefore, although masculinity may exist in biological conditions of existence, what it *means*, and the *struggle* over what it means, always takes place *in* culture. This is not simply an issue of semantic difference, a simple question of interpreting the world differently. The different ways of making masculinity mean are not an innocent game of semantics, they are a significant part of a power struggle over what might be regarded as 'normal' — an example of the politics of signification. In other words, it is about who can claim the power and authority to define social reality to make the world (and the things in it) mean in particular ways and with particular effects of power. Therefore, rather than engage in a fruitless quest for the true or essential meaning of something, cultural studies fixes its critical gaze on how particular meanings acquire their authority and power. This makes

culture and power the primary object of study in cultural studies. As Hall (1997: 4) explains:

> [m]eanings [of culture organising social practice] ... regulate and organise our conduct and practices — they help to set the rules, norms and conventions by which social life is ordered and governed. They are ... therefore, what those who wish to govern and regulate the conduct and ideas of others seek to structure and shape.

In other words, meanings have a 'material' existence in that they help organise social practice, they establish norms of behaviour. My examples of masculinities and the passing of name cards in China are both examples of signification organising social practice. Moreover, as Hall indicates, those with power often seek to regulate the impact of meanings on social practice. In other words, dominant modes of making the world meaningful are a fundamental aspect of the processes of hegemony. As Hall (2009: 123) makes clear:

> [t]he signification of events is part of what has to be struggled over, for it is the means by which collective social understandings are created — and thus the means by which consent for particular outcomes can be effectively mobilized.

Conclusion

On the basis of Williams' redefinition of culture, cultural studies have gradually come to define culture as the production, circulation, and consumption of meanings. Moreover, we cannot think of culture as a system of signification organising practice as something which happens after reality has occurred, because it is through culture, as an embedded and embodied signifying system, that the reality of ourselves, the reality of our society, is constituted and contested — and always entangled in relations of culture and power.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

WEEK 2



9

Leisure for the Masses: The Commercialization of Entertainment in the 19th Century

So far we have concentrated on traditional and reforming leisure. Now we mu consider more fully a third, and perhaps the most significant, expression of society's quest for play, commercial entertainment. The business of providing pleasure is surely one of the oldest occupations. What goes by the name of traditional leisure in the seasonal and religious festivals of 17th-century Europ or even colonial and frontier America often centered on the Punch and Judy show or traveling menagerie.

Still, industrialization in the 19th century produced new types of leisu industry. First, the creation of new wealth and technology gave birth to a tast for novelty. The pleasures of the aristocratic spa trickled down to the family fun of the popular resort reached by the railroad. The tradition-bound jugglers and pantomime artists were gradually displaced by the new and more thrilling technological wonder of the amusement park.

Second, leisure was transformed by a new sense of time, pleasure by the hour, weekend, and summer holiday, not the traditional festival or irregula leisure moments of preindustrial society. The institution of the Saturday half-holiday, for example, created a time slot ideal for the emergence of English football and baseball as popular spectator sports. In England, the 1871 Bank Holidays Act not only added Easter Monday, Boxing Day (the day after Chris mas), and Whit Monday to the legal holiday calender of Christmas and Good Friday, but created a new secular summer holiday on the first Monday in August. The gradual emergence of vacation with pay also allowed the democ tization of tourism.

Third capitalist business practices—especially profit maximization, based not on a luxury market but on a mass market with unfettered competition—had a revolutionary impact on leisure services; they created a mass ent tainment industry centralized in the hands of relatively few triumphant corpor tions of national and even international influence.

Many commentators have lamented the coming of mass leisure, just as they have found wanting the era of consumerism in general. It is easy to argue that the entertainment industry has eclipsed traditional popular leisure and subverted the ideals of the play movement and other forms of rational recreation. Critics find in consumer leisure the manipulation of the capitalist-impresario who has created a passive, if easily sated, crowd of pleasure-seekers, deprived of playing any active role in history or even personal development. Pleasure entrepreneurs have created a modern version of "bread and circuses." Traditionalists lament the passing of the old folklore in the modern culture of rootless ignorance of the past; communities formed and refreshed in traditional play have been supplanted by a "lonely crowd" ever seeking new thrills in the glitzy world of superficial fads and the rise and fall of "stars."

These characterizations may ring true; the reader should decide. But we should keep in mind that this commercialization often had origins that were both traditional and reformist. Historically, people's tastes in fun have remained extraordinarily conservative even when repackaged in modern forms, and many have insisted that their pleasures somehow be "improving." Moreover, if such leisure tended toward national and even international uniformity, it also produced a vast variety of alternatives; it had meanings and uses that were not always passive and depersonalizing. Most important perhaps, whatever we think of the entertainment industry in all of its manifestations, a study of its historical origins is helpful for understanding why it generally has triumphed over traditional popular and rational recreation.

This chapter will be the first installment in an exploration of the problem of the history of mass-market leisure. It will cover the nineteenth century through World War I and will lay the foundation for an understanding of the twentieth-century entertainment industry.

Industrialization and Mass Leisure

Leisure did not become a business in the 19th century, but the industrial economy made entertainment a more thorough and different sort of business. Viewed first from the demand side, the key was the growth in personal income and later its fairly wide distribution. The first classes to enjoy and lead the commercialization of leisure were, of course, aristocratic and landed elites. Possessing both income and a culture that valued pleasure more than productivity, the aristocratic residents of London and plantations of the American South created such characteristically modern leisure forms as tourism, urban entertainment districts, and a taste for various fads and fashion (Chapter 4).

By the mid-century, this leisure style penetrated the hard-working and newly rich middle class, who were breaking away from the strictures against pleasure seeking. In both America and Britain, they aped the old landed elite seeking, in part, validation of their new-found status. The children of Puritan

workaholic businessmen of the midcentury had embraced "The Gospel of Relaxation" by the 1850s.[1] The upper middle class joined the aristocracy and royalty in the fashionable "season" at Brighton and other resorts; they modeled their new homes on a similar domestic opulence and elegant dining. American industrialists gathered at the track of Sarasota Springs and the shore at Newport to see and be seen.

The desire for leisure trickled down to skilled and commercial workers, who began to define their status as much by the quality of leisure as by the character of their work. Their early demand for vacations with pay and willingness to make sacrifices for middle-class domestic luxuries is evidence of this trend. The gradual increase in real wages of working people after about 1860 also democratized access to purchased leisure, partly as a function of "Engel's Curve," which describes the tendency of the proportion of family budgets required for necessities to decrease with rising income. The increased share of the pay packet available for pleasure was spent in many ways. For example, in England, the consumption of tea (and sugar) spread broadly to the working classes between 1850 and 1900 (increasing three fold in annual consumption). From the 1860s, the tea shops, which were often first opened by temperance activists, gradually were transformed into commercial chains. Increased opportunity to purchase excursion tickets or admission to music halls reduced the reliance of many working-class people upon alcohol for pleasure. Even beer consumption in Britain dropped from 34 gallons per head in 1875 to 27 gallons by 1914. Other less healthful pleasures like smoking increased by 300 percent in the second half of the century in Britain, especially with the replacement of the pipe with the cigarette after the 1860s.[2]

The revolution in transportation and communications resulted both in new leisure opportunities and in a homogenization of its experience. From the 1830s, the railroad began to conquer time and space. It made distant travel assessable to the middle class and, with the gradual reduction in prices, to time-starved workers. Escape from the city became possible. The steam tram (or streetcar), developed first in America, was brought to England in 1860 by George F. Train, and improved in the mid-1880s with electrification. This vastly eased the movement of workers around the now-sprawling conurbations of London, New York, and many other cities. The tram freed them from exclusive reliance on the neighborhood pub or ethnic fraternal society for leisu and opened their lives to the football or baseball game, the amusement park, an the dance-hall and theater district. The streetcar dominated urban travel until i was replaced by the bus and car in the 1920s.[3]

At the same time, the railroad led to the decline of smaller local fairs. Rural people increasingly traveled to regional urban centers for larger and mor diverse entertainment. The train also made it possible for larger, more commer cialized amusements to spread costs over a wider market. The traditional troup of actors or animal acts were able to extend their circuit; but competition for

audiences also intensified. Their reliance on agents, impresarios, and owners of chains of music halls naturally increased. Audiences enjoyed more diverse and probably superior entertainment, but local traditions began to die out. Cheaper communications via the steam press and newspaper allowed for rapid and mass dissemination of leisure reading and reinforced the trend toward uniformity.

Perhaps the most complex trend was the influence of capitalist business methods. Most fundamentally, the supply of entertainment reflected the common denominator—the market. Often, a leisure business began by offering a locality a traditional entertainment like a menagerie. Then, with success, it expanded its program to accommodate a wider market. This process took many forms: for example, popular amusements such as the circus were reformed to appeal to a middle-class audience of "rational recreationists." By contrast, an originally uplifting leisure activity like the railroad excursion or holiday camp was shorn of its moralizing lectures and austerity to appeal to a wider, more popular market on a strictly commercial basis.

Competition and cost-cutting pressures also transformed the entertainment industry. Vertical and horizontal integration, well known to historians of the corporation, were equally common to the pleasure industry. From the 1820s British breweries acquired pubs in order to guarantee retail markets, and chains of music halls reduced overhead costs. Important also was the development of advertising from the "ballyhoo" of the carnival "spieler" to the elaborate publicity stunts of P.T. Barnum.[4]

The leisure industry was among the first to adopt new technological and business practices such as the installation of the first British electric streetcars in the resort of Blackpool and the rapid diffusion of new building techniques to the Ferris Wheel. Impresarios were often pure entrepreneurs—quick to find and serve a market, sensitive to the fickle amusement seeker, and eager to beat the less-responsive competitor with a new gimmick or new way of cutting costs. Investors in established leisure industries, such as music halls or vaudeville, were the first to feature films in their houses and to abandon the old entertainment when the market warranted it. Even leisure organizations that began as nonprofit were forced to adopt modern business practices in order to provide the range of services demanded by their patrons. This happened to organizers of railroad excursions (for example, Thomas Cook) and to holiday camps.

During the 19th century, leisure industries entered an international market. By the 1860s, organized railroad tours from England to Paris had become possible. And by the end of the century, Americans traveled on fast steamers and trains to London and even to Paris for several weeks of shopping and theater-going. Improved transatlantic communications created an increasingly common Anglo-American leisure world—with exchanges of popular music-hall artists as well as circus and carnival acts. Fads like roller skating and cycling swept both countries almost simultaneously. The birth of the modern

electrified amusement park in the late 1890s was scarcely different on either side of the ocean and the movie industry, when it blossomed after 1896, was closely integrated. If America came to dominate the English-speaking leisure industry by World War I, this dominance only paralleled her economic ascendance in other fields. This "cultural imperialism" was the result of economic dynamics driven by the sheer size of the American market and corporation and the unfettered business civilization that prevailed in the United States. Increasing cultural uniformity and ever-quickening adaptation to technological and market change was the inevitable result of this process. Leisure was torn from its traditional roots in community and history.

The lives of two pioneers of mass-market leisure, the American P. T. Barnum and the Englishman Thomas Cook, may help to illustrate these points. P.T. Barnum was a impresario of amusement in the growing city of New York in the mid-19th century. In his "Museum," he appealed both to the tradition of the rural fair in his display of curiosities and to the quest for respectability in lectures on new scientific invention and wax works of Biblical characters. He tapped the American longing both for culture and for voyeurism in his anatomically-correct statue of Venus. He was an extraordinary promoter. In 1850, Barnum organized a nine-month tour of the "Swedish Nightingale," Jenny Lynd. Through advance publicity and promotional products (Lynd cigars and coats, e.g.), he created a veritable "Lyndomania" that would have made the ad managers behind George Lucas' "Star Wars" films proud. Thomas Cook was a young wood turner and secretary of the South Midland Temperance Association when he decided to organize a railroad excursion from Leicester to a temperance demonstration in Loughborough in the summer of 1841. Unlike the standard third-class ticket, he offered a bargain at one shilling per round trip. Soon he arranged these trips commercially. Cook rented a special train, assumed all the risk, and sold tickets at substantial reductions, making a profit on the volume and low overhead. Gradually his business turned to international tourism.[5]

These leisure impresarios may have encouraged the homogenization of leisure, but age, class, and cultural differences prevailed to assure a diversity of leisure markets. Middle-class reformers persisted in opposing profitable entertainment industries—even if the source of their own wealth was in commercial profit. Higher-class pleasure seekers balked at the invasion of the excursionist or rowdy crowd on a limited budget. And the resort towns, hotels, concert halls, and other businesses dependent upon their trade did their utmost to assure their exclusivity. Most importantly different groups responded to the allure of commercial pleasure in different ways. Perhaps most enthusiastic were youth who found in mass entertainment an escape from parental control and tradition and who were drawn to a setting often deliberately designed for romance and youthful sociability.

Daily and Weekend Entertainments

Mass leisure in the 19th century was snatched in those moments free from work and bought with the odd nickels and pence left from the weekly pay packet. Although literacy was an imperfect skill for many before the 1870s when universal elementary education expanded considerably, the demand for accessible pleasure reading was great throughout the century. The cheap popular press was facilitated by technology (steam press and mechanized bookbinding in the 1840s) and by public policy (e.g., the abolition of taxes on newspapers in England in 1855 and 1861).

In England, popular weekly newspapers by midcentury offered an odd mix of democratic politics and sensational crime news. Especially popular from midcentury were the Sunday papers or weeklies (especially *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* and the *News of the World*) read by workers on Saturday afternoon after dinner or at the barber's on Sundays. *Chamber's Journal* (1832) and George Newnes's *Tit-Bits* (1881) offered a compendium of facts to artisans eager to supplement their sporadic education. As Alfred Harmsworth, publisher of *Answers* (1888) put it: "We are a sort of Universal Information provider. Anyone who reads our paper for a year will be able to converse on many subjects on which he was entirely ignorant. He will have a good stock of anecdotes and jokes and will indeed be a pleasant companion."[6]

The taste for fiction was nearly inexhaustible in England as women and men consumed huge quantities of "chapbooks." These were:

> Paper-covered booklets...embellished with a crude and highly coloured woodcut as a frontispiece. The contents were either lurid, violent, and morbid, or sentimental and spicey. The 'last dying words and confessions' of culprits hung at York, lives of infamous highwaymen and murders, and garbled versions of traditional stories of the Seven Champions of Christendom or Friar Bacon and Dr. Faustus."

Chapbooks represented the remnants of traditional peasant culture that survived until midcentury in urban England. By 1850 they were replaced by the "penny dreadfuls" of Edward Lloyd's *Weekly Miscellany of Romance and General Interest* and George Reynolds's *Miscellany*, which dealt in mysteries and scandals in court and high society. The western made a cult figure out of Kit Carson in America, and Europeans who never traveled to America wrote hundreds of westerns with formula stories of cowboys and Indians.[7]

From the 1830s, William Milder offered cheap reprints of classics by Burns, Byron, and Milton. Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* swept not only America but Britain in the 1850s. In 1848, George Routledge started the Railway Library in London offering, over the next 50 years, 1300 titles,

mostly cheap reprints of Jane Austen and other contemporary novelists. The market for books, however, remained socially upscale. Even in the early 20th century, the poor in England seldom owned any books except perhaps *Old Moore's Almanack;* and fathers sometimes prohibited book reading as a snare of bad habits and laziness.[8]

What attracted the masses was, of course, the popular newspaper. Although many "respectable Englishmen" feared that the removal of the newspaper stamp in 1855 would open the gates to a flood of lurid dailies, most newspapers retained the dullness of *The Times*. Only with the appearance of the *Evening News* (1881) the *Star* (1888) and especially the *Daily Mail* (1896), was the English tabloid press born. In many ways, it was an imitation of the American "yellow press" with its chauvinism mixed with gossip, sports, and crime news.[9]

Soon English publishers discovered the specialty youth and women's market. The respectable *Family Herald* had a circulation of 125,000 by 1849 and offered romantic short stories. We have already encountered the rise of the women's magazine. But pulp fiction for boys, (ancestors of the 20th-century comic book) spread from the 1860s. Edwin Brett led a troupe of popular authors that offered up stories of highwaymen, pirates, and crime to British youth. They were sold in penny weekly installments of eight pages of text illustrated with lurid drawings. Although magazines like *The Boys of England* were full of crude youthful heroics, the Religious Tract Society felt obliged in 1879 to counter them with *The Boy's Own Paper*, which included hobbyist, sport, and nature features. Alfred Harmsworth, the newspaper publisher, branched out into half-penny boy's weeklies featuring "daring deeds set against an imperial backcloth." His weeklies, *The Gem* (1907) and *The Magnet* (1908), made heros of public-school boys among slum dwellers.[10] The girl's literary market was somewhat late to develop, perhaps because, unlike their brothers, girls were burdened with housework and lacked pocket money.[11]

The growth of American popular literature was, if anything, even more rapid. If in 1825 there were no more than 100 magazines in the United States, by 1850, there were about 600; the country witnessed the publication of about 5,000 during that generation. In addition to cheap miscellanies from the 1820s like the *Casket: Flowers of Literature, Wit and Sentiment* and knowledge magazines like *The Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge* (1831), a vast specialized press emerged in *Godey's Lady's Book* and its many imitators. An adolescent and working-class press had much in common with its English counterparts. The production of cheap adventure and romantic "dime novels" was a veritable industry. By 1886, *The New York Tribune*'s sports page revolutionized newspapers. William Randolph Hearst did the same in his string of papers a decade later.[12]

In both countries, the demand for indoor music and "variety" was also insatiable.[13] The variety show had its roots in the informal and often disreputable singing saloons or "free and easies," where drink mixed with singing and

rough male fellowship. Successful publicans or tavern keepers, like Charles Morton of London in 1851, expanded the entertainment part of the business. Still, the admission fee was not for the show but for a drink voucher. In the 1850s, the interior of Morton's Canterbury Hall (London) sat 1,500 and was well lighted with chandeliers. Thomas Wright, a "Journey Man Engineer" from London, noted that the music hall was a:

> Popular place of Saturday night resort with working men, as at them they can combine the drinking of the Saturday night glass and the smoking of the Saturday night pipe, with the seeing and hearing of a variety of entertainments, ranging from magnificent ballets and marvelous scenic illusions to inferior tumbling, and from well-given operatic selections to the most idiotic of the so-called comic songs of the Jolly Dogs Class.[14]

By the 1860s, American entrepreneurs like the New Yorker, Tony Pastor, found that a more respectable audience, including women and family, could be enticed to his "Opera House" on the Bowery by a program of well-known (and publicized) singers, comedians, and animal and acrobatic acts. Sentimental songs about motherhood and rural nostalgia predominated, though the old raucous tradition survived in the double meanings in comedy and the American affection for sharpshooters. In American vaudeville, impresarios at first were willing to hire semi-amateurs who (depending on audience reception) could be signed for lengthy tours or "given the hook." Popular demand for a variety of acts and the development of fast rail and steamboat lines allowed the spread of a number of entertainment circuits so Jenny Lynd would be widely seen in 19th-century America and Britain. Gradually, music halls replaced tables with stalls and eliminated drinking in the hall. Typical was the London Pavilion and other halls built in the new Piccadilly Circus in the 1870s. New regulations, like those imposed by the London County Council in 1889, forced music halls to eliminate offensive gags and songs. By the 1890s, theater owners like B. F. Keith removed the saloon from his New York establishment and successfully controlled his own booking agency complete with a hierarchy of stars. English syndicates bought or built chains of "Empires," "Palaces," and "Hippodromes," "resplendent in red plush, gilt adorned with the bottomy plaster cherubs and busty nymphs, which today epitomize the glories of the late Victorian and Edwardian Music Hall."[15] The historian, Peter Bailey, describes the process:

> As the simple platform of the singing saloons was gradually superseded by the full theatrical apparatus of a stage and proscenium arch, the big halls were encouraged to introduce greater show and theatricality into their programmes—lavish tableaux of famous battle scenes, hundred-strong corps de ballet, troupes of Can-Can dancers from Paris and Blondin cooking omelettes on the high wire.

By the 1890s star singers made phonograph records and Dan Leno, the British comedian, even published a weekly *Comic Journal*.[16]

The public amusements offered to the young were as important. Penny or "gaff" theatres in London flourished between 1830 and 1880. They attracted apprentices, unskilled porters, and office boys, in the odd hour when they could get away from work, with melodramas concerning the latest murder or the execution of the infamous criminal. Because of British laws that controlled popular theater by outlawing dialogue, gaff theatre relied on pantomime, explanatory placards (anticipating silent films), singing, and dancing. Also popular were tight-rope walkers, magicians, and demonstrations of Galvanism (use of electric current to shock a volunteer from the audience).[17] Later in the century, youth in Chicago attended five-cents theaters, which projected slides to tell popular stories of murder and revenge.[18]

A similar crowd was drawn to the dime museums in New York City with their sideshow-like exhibitions of freaks (the dwarf Tom Thumb, a Bearded Lady), panoramas or huge paintings depicting well-known dramatic events, and wax works depicting famous and infamous biblical and historical figures. Incidental to this appeal to the fantastic were moral messages that warned of the terrors of intemperance or the price of crime. Barnum mixed the fake (such as the supposed black nurse of George Washington) with the real (a gallery of giants and dwarfs). His Museum in New York also included the traditional tight-rope walkers, pantomimes, and tumblers. An English equivalent in the 1840s was the Bianchi's Waxworks of Liverpool and the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly, which offered sights of two-headed cows and other freaks. Museums and plebian theatres might also offer "cut-throat dramas," which stressed action, special effects (e.g., railroad collisions) and "women in unmentionables."[19]

By the turn of the century, the dance hall was sweeping American and English towns. By 1910, there were at least 500 public dance halls in New York and many saloons offered floors for dancing. One hundred dance academies provided classes to about 100,000 students a year. They attracted especially the young and, to allure males, they offered women cut-price entry. What most impressed observers was the charged sexual atmosphere. "Tough dancing," with origins in San Francisco brothels, was widely popular from 1905. Couples dancing the "lovers' two-step," "turkey trot," and "bunny hug," "stand very close together, the girl with her hands around the man's neck, the man with both his arms around the girl or on her hips; their cheeks are pressed close together; their bodies touch each other."[20] This behavior, of course, shocked the Victorians and at least suggests the sexual activism of the 1960s. The flashy dance hall dress of working-class females had striking parallels with the fashion of prostitutes. And the "treating" system, made necessary by the lower wages paid young working women, gave males sexual leverage over females. Some became "charity girls" who traded sexual favors for "treats" of drinks, jewelry, and clothes. Still, these young women often were skilled at coaxing men with money into contributing to their costly pleasures without compromise.[21]

New technology in the 1880s and 1890s changed the form but not always the content of such catch-as-catch-can pleasures. Mechanical games and gramophones, offered in penny arcades, hotel lobbies, and amusement parks, were often little different from the pleasures of the museum or penny theater. The peep show or Kenitoscope, introduced by Thomas Edison in 1894, offered the viewer a short show of acrobatics, mock executions, or a lady taking a bath. The emergence of the projected film in 1896 was first just another act in the music hall or vaudeville, not much different from the decades-old arts of pantomime, shadowgraph, puppetry, and magic lanternry. It featured the curiosity of movement, water splashing on a beach or an oncoming train. Some early films offered an improvement on the realism of the panorama, with moving pictures of royalty or other famous people or crude news programs with footage, for example, from the Boar War. The American nickelodeons (specialized movie house first appearing in Pittsburgh in 1905) and English penny cinema offered short programs of 5 to 10-minute films in the back of cigar stores or abandoned shops. Within two years, there were perhaps 10,000 of them in America alone. Often much cheaper than Vaudeville, they attracted the less affluent with action films like the famous *Great Train Robbery*. In America, many appeared in immigrant working class districts where the silent film could be appreciated by non-English-speaking men on their way to or from work. Others appeared along commercial streets or near public transportation, seeking to attract not only single men but also women on shopping trips.

There was no clearer case of the commercialization of leisure than the early development of the film. In its first decade, American producers and distributors were locked in bitter competition. Like the steel and automobile industries of the time, the movie industry sought economic relief in the merger of the largest companies (headed by Thomas Edison and the Biograph Company). They formed the Motion Picture Patent Association and shared rights to film technology in an attempt to create a vertical monopoly, controlling the industry from film stock to projection. A number of independent producers and distributors survived, however, to lead the industry into a new type of entertainment.

In its first decade, the cinema, like the penny gaff or dime museum, was associated with the poor and working classes. Yet again, exhibitors attempted to widen the market. As early as 1907, independent film producers and movie-house owners sought to transform the experience of film by making it more "respectable." They provided, for example, half-price tickets for women and built movie palaces that were plush auditoriums complete with orchestras and uniformed ushers to maintain order. The picture palace drove the nickelodeons and penny cinemas out of business by 1910.

Independents also offered status-conscious audiences "feature-length" films showing, for example, Sarah Bernhardt in the play *Queen Elizabeth* in 1913. Cinema was to be more like the legitimate theater and exhibitors often charged near theater prices for a seat. In 1912, New York businessman Adophe

Zukor organized the Famous Players Film Company (later part of Paramount) to produce feature-length screen plays, like the *Count of Monte Cristo*. In order to attract audiences, independent filmmakers publicized the leading actors, creating the *star*—something Biograph had steadfastly refused to do. The Motion Picture Patents Company was finally declared illegal in 1918, but it had long slipped from prominence because of its unwillingness to adapt to the broadening demand for respectable films. A very similar process occurred in England. By 1914 there were 14 Picturedromes in Birmingham, England, with a capacity of almost 33,000.[22] The film industry became a sort of melange of popular curiosity with roots in the carnival and burlesque and the high-mindedness of the Victorian theater (Chapter 12).

Despite the importance of commercialized public pleasures, the home remained an important focus of leisure and merchants knew it. From mid-century, piano and sheet music trickled down to the artisan class. By 1910, Britons owned two million pianos and supported 47,000 piano teachers. The cult of domesticity, which so pervaded Victorian society on both sides of the Atlantic, was commercialized in the "restoration" of Christmas. A long list of industries were practically created by the mid-19th century celebration of Christmas, including greeting cards and Christmas trees (and decorations). The new custom of showering children with manufactured toys was a commercial boom. By the 1890s, the British had imported Santa Claus from the United States where, since the 1870s, the bearded man had been enthroned in department stores as a inducement to sales.[23] The late Victorian suburb used its lawns to play croquet and its front and backyard gardens to cultivate the hobby of gardening.[24] There emerged a vast market for domestic-centered leisure goods from the camera (advanced in 1888 with the marketing of the Kodak) and phonograph to the table settings for the increasingly more elegant dinner parties of the middle class.[25] Even the respectable worker's Sunday featured an elaborate midday meal.[26]

The Commercial Festival and Tourism

Mass-market leisure offered daily and weekly doses of fun for a routinized world of industrial society; yet the traditional saturnalia of the seasonal fair and festival did not disappear. Rather, these carnivals were transformed by new business methods and technology. For example, ancient fairs like that of St. Giles near Oxford witnessed a tremendous growth in the 19th century. Vendors offered an increased variety of exotic foods and souvenirs, and entertainment and rail services brought throngs in from the countryside.[27] The one-wagon menagerie of colonial America with its "Lyon of Barbary," polar bear, or elephant, and the English circus of Philip Astley with its equestrian acts, gradually gave way to the zoological exhibition and the three-ring circus.[28] This process was the product of steam transportation and the merger. The small

family circuses of America, for example, which emerged in the early 19th century from small towns in New York and New England, gradually gave way to the extravagant boat circuses that plied their trade on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. In the 1850s, the Floating Palace, a sumptuously decorated barge pulled by steam boats, seated 1,800 and offered a standard circus ring. By the 1860s, the wagon menagerie began to be replaced by the railroad circus, which could make transcontinental tours. P.T. Barnum lent his name, made famous by his "Museum" in New York City, to a circus train in 1872. It toured 16 states with its 61 cars. Its official name reveals the scope of its offerings (or claims): "P.T. Barnum's Great Traveling World's Fair Consisting of Museum, Menagerie, Caravan, Hippodrome, Gallery of Statuary and Fine Arts, Polytechnic Institute, Zoological Garden, and 100,000 Curiosities, Combined with Dan Castello's, Sig. Sebastian's and Mr. D'Atelie's Grand Triple Equestrian and Hippodromatic Exposition." Barnum's show merged with its major competitor, Cooper and Bailey, in 1881.[29]

The circus, often suspect to respectable crowds, adopted the language of learning. For example, the English horseman John Ricketts, on a tour in New England in 1795, lent dignity and an aura of culture to his act of tumbling, tightrope walking, and clowning by referring to recent Egyptian expeditions and giving his acts imaginative and "edifying" names like the Egyptian Pyramids or Roman Monuments. The carnival or fun fair was likewise made respectable and expanded in the 19th century.[30]

Perhaps the most dramatic change in the fair occurred in the 1893 Columbia Exposition in Chicago. Its "Midway," a colorful amusement sideshow, stole the crowds from the White City, a Neo-Renaissance complex of educational exhibits. Almost 21.5 million visited the Exposition and most favored the Midway, with its chaotic display of "mosques and pagodas, Viennese streets and Turkish bazaars, South Sea island huts, Irish and German castles, and Indian tepees." The exotica of the four corners of the world were offered to visitors arriving by streetcar. Advertising stressed the educational: foreigners on display "bring their manners, customs, dress, religions, legends, amusements, that we might know them the better." Yet what attracted the throngs was "Little Egypt" dancing the hootchy-kootchy. Dominating the Midway was the Ferris Wheel, a steam-powered disc some 264 feet high that took 20 minutes for one revolution and cost the hefty price of 50 cents a ticket for 2,160 passengers. The Ferris Wheel was quickly imitated in amusement parks from San Francisco to Vienna. The extravagance of pseudo-oriental and Venetian themes were widely copied in amusement centers like Coney Island, Blackpool, England, and San Francisco's "The Chutes." At the same period, electric-powered rides like the switchback (or rollercoaster) and loop the loop attracted the young thrill-seeker.[31]

The amusement park was often located in a seaside or lake setting accessible by train or streetcar from the city. Coney Island was a mere eight

number of English mill towns. The amusement parks provided a magical setting free from the watchful eyes of parents and neighbors. It offered the opportunity for audience and entertainment to merge. Coney Island is a good example. As early as the 1820s, this island south of Brooklyn, New York, had been the location of both an exclusive resort area (Manhattan Beach) and, from the 1860s, a haven for gamblers and swindlers (Norton's Point, on the opposite end of the Island). By the 1890s dance halls and vaudeville, as well as sideshows and penny arcades, attracted a diverse crowd to Central Beach. George Tilyou, among others, attempted to create a more respectable but also popular image at the central beach of the Island. Tilyou's Steeplechase Park (1897), followed by Luna Park (1903), and Dreamworld (1904) offered self-contained amusement centers designed to reassure the respectable but also to offer excitement at five or ten cents a ride. The quest for greater legitimacy led the organizers of Dreamworld to feature "The Creation" and "The End of the Earth" to graphically remind visitors of their Bible lessons. Significantly, Dreamworld was the first park to fail. The picture postcard, just then legalized, became part of the ritual of the visit and a great form of publicity. Coney Island allowed people to subtly break moral codes. The "Barrel of Fun" threw young men and women together; air jets lifted women's skirts; and post cards offered slightly risque themes. Rides were often reminiscent of the new urban elevated trains or electric minecars; but rides like the "Flip-Flap" parodied them with its 25-foot vertical loop.[32] As the historian John Kasson notes:

> Coney Island located its festivity not in time as a special moment on the calendar but in space as a special place on the map. By creating its own version of carnival, Coney Island tested and transformed accustomed social roles and values. It attracted people because of the way in which it mocked the established social order. Coney Island in effect declared a moral holiday for all who entered its gates. Against the values of thrift, sobriety, industry, and ambition, it encouraged extravagance, gaiety, abandon, revelry. Coney Island signaled the rise of a new mass culture no longer deferential to genteel tastes and values, which demanded a democratic resort of its own. It served as a Feast of Fools of an urban-industrial society.[33]

The episodic escape to the amusement park did not satisfy the crowd's taste for novelty. By the end of the century, guided tours of unfamiliar places attracted millions. Yet again, the rich set the pace and, as the masses joined them, conflicts inevitably emerged. In England, the resort and tourism began as aristocratic diversions. The seaside resorts of Brighton, Blackpool, Torquay, and Scarborough attracted the leisure class for lengthy fall and winter seasons. The rich were attracted as much to the assembly hall, where masters of ceremonies organized formal balls and arranged social introductions, as they were

drawn to the health-giving sea. Brighton's early success was due to the patronage of the Prince of Wales, who first arrived in 1783 and graced it with subsequent royal visits, culminating in the building of the Royal Pavilion. In the 1820s, the promenade on the chain pier, the theater, and the Oriental baths were very fashionable even if the royal family gradually lost interest.[34] As an American described the Brighton "season":

> The modes of getting rid of time, which seemed to be the great end and object of all, were various. Some lounged into reading-rooms; some sat down deliberately in shops, to make the most of the little business they were blessed with..... In the afternoon all repaired, by common consent, to walk, ride, or drive along the ramparts by the seaside.[35]

The early-19th century resort in America was not much different. As early as 1825, a booklet, "The Fashionable Tour," identified the passion for travel among the new rich of the American East. Added to the colonial resort of Newport was the spa and racing center at Saratoga Springs, New York. Not only were urban merchants attracted to these resorts, but so were southern planters, at least until sectional conflicts by midcentury caused southern status seekers to find an alternative pecking order in southern resorts like White Sulphur Springs. Besides the snob appeal of just being there and the allure of the race track, Saratoga Springs provided a courting yard for debutantes and eligible bachelors. "The gentlemen whiled away long hours in smoke-filled barrooms over their gin slings, sangarees, sherry cobblers, and wine juleps. The ladies were relegated to the piazza, or possibly allowed an afternoon carriage drive." Inland along the Mississippi River, the steam boat provided a similar lethargic leisure, spiced by the risk of playing with the thousands of professional gamblers at the card table.[36]

Following the laying of rail track, such seaside resorts became accessible to the less affluent, eager for diversion from the cares of trade but unable or unwilling to devote weeks to leisure. The promised benefit of sea air "ozone" on the sooty lungs of the city-dweller, attracted thousands to the ocean coast.

The threat to upper-class exclusivity by the 1860s produced a variety of responses. Some English resorts like Southport and Eastbourne retained their elite status, owing to the control of the beach by two families who keep out panderers to the masses. In resorts like Blackpool and Margate, land holding was fragmented and was thus open to a diverse market. They were abandoned by the classes for new watering holes in Scotland, Ireland and the Continent. Some resorts found that differing "seasons" suited various social strata. And in some resorts, developers assured that portions of the shore were reserved for elite clientele for whom they provided expensive hotels and furnished

apartments.[37] Despite reformers' interest in the wholesome recreation of the popular excursion, middle-class opinion was often more negative, as seen in th following description of day-trippers from London to Hastings in 1857:

> [They] swarm upon the beach, wandering listlessly about with apparently no other aim than to get a mouthful of fresh air. You may see them in groups of three or four: the husband—a pale, overwrought man, dressed in black frock-coat, figured waistcoat and bright blue tie—carried the baby; the wife, equally pale and thin, decked out in her best, labours after with a basket of 'prog' [food]. And then there is generally another child... wandering aimlessly behind. She must bear the burden until church-time is over; and the public houses will be open and a quart of porter in the pewter will be forthcoming and the family will dine *alfresco* on the beach.[38]

Resort town governments attempted to regulate the access of rough trade or gypsy beach vendors and to build family-oriented entertainment cente The scale of enterprise grew with the size of the entertainment. The pier playe a major role in this process. Originally merely a facility for docking steamshi full of excursionists, the pier gradually became the site of the family promenac and inevitably a market of food, drink, and entertainment. Ever sensitive to th pleasure-seeker's quest for novelty, Blackpool made "progress" its motto and rapidly introduced the latest technological wonders. The Blackpool Tower wa built in 1894, a publicity symbol and multipurpose entertainment center designed on the model of the Eiffel Tower. Blackpool introduced electric lightin for its famous Illuminations in the fall and was among the first towns in Britai to have a cinema.[39]

Another development was mass tourism. Educational and pleasure traveling, of course, had been a part of aristocratic life since Elizabethan times The tutored tour of Italy and France was *de rigueur* for the English gentleman. And, of course, the annual migration between city and countryside was part of the aristocratic cycle of "seasons." Still, poor and crime-ridden roads impeded English tourism except along well-worn paths to Bath or Brighton, and these trips took two or three days each way by coach. By 1815, steamboats were available for rides on the Clyde and Thames river. Only in the 1840s did this ritual broaden with the railway excursion.

As we have seen with Thomas Cook, the popular English excursion began as the paternalism of the "improving" business class. Soon it became a commercial venture offering guided tours to busy middle-class and clerical workers who had neither the time nor knowledge to plan educational trips. From 1844, the British government encouraged railway companies to provide cheap third-class tickets, although only in the 1870s did the rails seriously exploit this mass market. Still, from the 1840s, companies provided excursion

rates for weekends and bank holidays. The London Exhibition of 1851 at the Crystal Palace attracted six million, many through excursion trains, and it continued for years to be a center for shows and exhibitions. By 1867, Cook was organizing tours to Paris (for an international exhibition) as well as to the Holy Land; and by the 1880s, Britons of means began to visit Switzerland in the winter (for skiing). Even the British factory worker was taking long weekend holidays aided by savings clubs from the 1870s.[40]

In America also, the railroad revolutionized tourism. The late-19th century resort was also an extension of the railroad. This was true of eastern seaside spots like Atlantic City (a product of a line from Philadelphia in 1852); even the western American National Park was an outgrowth of the railroad. From 1872, tourists entered Yellowstone Park by train and many stayed at the "Old Faithful," a private railroad hotel near the famous geyser. The train created an enforced community of fellow travelers, although railcars, separated by class and purpose, limited unwanted social contact. Linked by ownership to the railroads were large hotels located near train stations. Featuring large formal lobbies (often decorated in pseudo-Renaissance or Oriental themes) and numerous personal services, these hotels were designed for the middle-aged and affluent traveler.[41]

Meanings and Significance of Mass Leisure

Since the early 19th-century, writers have found mass entertainment wanting. Instead of the simplicity of nature, commercial leisure was said to feature shallow showy amusement, mere opportunities to separate customers from their money. Commercial amusements allowed the masses to abandon self-control and the intellect and to surrender to fleeting passion.[42] From Simon Patten to Herbert Marcuse, many critics have claimed that mass leisure only lashes the worker more firmly to the wheel of labor in order to earn the means of further satisfying his craving. Commercial pleasure was the best form of social control.[43] The crowd created by the purveyors of spectator sports, others have argued, only defused social solidarity and created artificial interregional conflicts. The music hall often encouraged crude chauvinism with its jingoistic songs and perpetuated racism with its "nigger minstrels." Professionalization of sport (as we shall see in Chapter 10) led to the downfall of amateur traditions of the early Football Association and baseball. In sum, commercial leisure may be said to have destroyed traditional popular and rational recreation, which became victims of the profit motive and the quest for the lowest common denominator.

There are, however, alternative interpretations of commercialization. For example, we have found that, in many instances, mass leisure was a democratizing of aristocratic play traditions. Merchandisers like Thomas Cook made travel available to the middle-classes in forms fitting their lack of time and

experience. Even the imitation exotica of the amusement park afforded the masses a substitute for the adventure of foreign travel. It is not accidental that many impresarios of fun were democrats and were opposed by snobbish elites.[44]

Mass-market leisure was far more than commercial manipulation. Despite the cynicism of pleasure entrepreneurs like P.T. Barnum, the "masses" had their own leisure agenda when they visited seaside resorts and amusement parks. Blackpool attracted not merely an awed crowd passively lured into a variety of purchased thrills and entertainments. The resort was used by Lancashire families for reunions and the meeting of friends and neighbors.[45] Coney Island provided more than the cheap thrills of electric technology. It offered an opportunity for youthful expression, public affection, the Americanization of immigrant children, a carnivalique release from the conformity and restraint of late Victorian society, and just plain fun. Even penny dreadfuls were a manifestation of working-class aspirations, even if expressed often in vicious and escapist contexts.

Commercial leisure was not always a sharp break from traditional popular or rational leisure. Barnum blended aspects of all three forms of leisure in his museums, musical shows, and circus. The simple desire to seek as wide as market as possible assured an appeal to the reform-minded respectable family. It also meant satisfaction of a lingering affection for traditional anarchism of popular leisure. Blackpool retained its donkey rides and gypsy fortune tellers along with its piers, music halls, and orderly pleasure parks. Even the technological wonder of the Illuminations, with their electric tableaux of exotic images, was a modern adaptation of the colored lanterns of the gardens of 18th-century Vauxhall. Remember, too, the traditional content of the early movies, a more lifelike but no less conservative entertainment than appeared in the penny gaffs and dime museums. Often, leisure entrepreneurs simply borrowed common elements from traditional entertainment and rational recreation and packaged them in profitable businesses.[46] These facts may explain the ultimate dominance of commercial play over the best hopes of the leaders of rational recreation. Entrepreneurs responded quickly to consumer wants even when these desires were sometimes torn from their community roots or their uplifting origins.

This complex relationship between commercial, reforming, and traditional leisure can be further explored in a brief analysis of the emergence of organized sport in the industrializing societies of England and America in the nineteenth century.



10

Participants and Spectators: Modernization of Sport as Leisure

The transformation of modern sport in many ways sums up the complexity of industrial-era leisure. In the ways that competitive physical games changed, we see all the elements of the history of leisure: Rural, often chaotic, games rooted in custom and community combined with status-affirming contests of the elite to epitomize traditional forms of play. The regulated activities of the gymnast and school-boy ball game of the 19th century were common forms of rational recreation. Finally, the professionalization of soccer and baseball and the mass appeal of spectator sports in the late 19th century fully expressed the commercialization of much of public leisure in that period.

Preindustrial Sport: A Review

As we saw in Chapter 3, physical contests between men and animals were integral to play in rural society. Local variations of ball, club, and target games predominated in most preindustrial societies. Major modern ball games (like soccer, rugby, American football, cricket, baseball, and rounders) can be traced in a general way from this mixture of traditional ball games. Only in the 19th century would these games deviate sharply from one another, specializing in kicking or throwing and batting.[1] The undifferentiated character of these games was reflected, also, in mass football contests in rural England. Lacking clear boundaries, restrictions on illegal tactics, referees, and even a clear distinction between players and spectators, these rough, sometimes brutal contests were hardly distinguishable from riots. Sporting "champions" were no more than the local butcher or plough boy whose prowess was seldom recognized beyond the parish or county. Traditional sport was also closely associated with gambling. Athletic contests before 1850 were deeply rooted in agrarian society. Foot races, often involving extra feats of physical strength and endurance, such as runners pushing carts or carrying heavy stones, displayed talents germane to an agrarian society. To be sure, there are numerous examples of competitive

spectator sports long before industrialization. But the games of ancient Greece and even more of Rome were a part of urban life and escape from its tedium and responsibilities that, until the 19th century, few had known.[2]

Traditional plebian recreations, of course, were thwarted by elites. English Kings, like Edward II in 1365, outlawed ball games, bowling, and hurling because they competed with work and were associated (often justly) with crowd disorder. And, as we have seen (Chapter 4), clerical and reform-minded Puritans attacked sport as a threat to Sunday worship and work. Elites, however, participated in socially exclusive sports such as hunting and the mock war of tournaments. For relatively affluent merchant and tradesmen, there was archery, which kings supported as essential for military preparedness until the 17th century. While King Henry VIII forbade laborers from playing games (except at Christmas and in the presence of the master), he tacitly allowed it for the propertied, and Queen Elizabeth enjoyed bearbaiting while her 17th-century successors were fond of skittles and golf.[3]

Following the defeat of the Puritans and the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, well-to-do Englishmen tolerated and even encouraged popular sports. The Whig oligarchy in London accepted the rough play of the masses (probably more than on the European continent) as a worthwhile price for a weak king and army; the landed gentry (mostly Tories) actually patronized village sport.[4]

For the rich, sport was a way to display privilege and status. Many innovations in aristocratic sport can be traced to the landed elite of England, which emerged from the late 17th century with a great deal of local autonomy and prestige. Not only did they own hunting lands and blooded horses, but they developed a rich culture of sporting clubs. A center of this society was Newmarket, a horse track inaccessible to all but those with carriage and horse, from which the races were usually watched.[5]

A similar search for status may explain the southern American planter's fascination with horse racing at Williamsburg (modeled after Newmarket). Colonists imported hundreds of English thoroughbred horses for racing in the 18th century and imitated the English gentry when they founded Jockey Clubs. Even more illustrative was the "revival" of the chivalric tournament in the 1830s as southern knights, announced by trumpets, jousted with lance and armor in front of admiring ladies.[6] In addition to the extravagant attention the rich lavished on their horses, some also indulged in yachting, an expensive hobby dating from the 17th century and revived in the mid-19th century.[7]

While most of these aristocratic sports were rural in origin, in 17th-century capitals, more "civilized" games like tennis emerged. This sport was developed in France by the urban aristocracy and spread to England in Elizabeth's day. Tennis and cricket (a rural sport taken over by the English gentry in the 18th century) came to be characterized by the genteel notions of [illegible] that shaped the modern ideals of

The poor and, in the U.S., even slaves participated in aristocratic sporting culture as horse grooms and jockeys. Spontaneous wagers between gentlemen sometimes involved races between their footmen. The rich bet on boxing contests between their laborers in much the same way as they made wagers on horses or cocks. This aristocratic tradition of patronage of boxing champions continued into the modern era.[9]

Of course, sport had long been commercial. Gamblers promoted boxing and wrestling matches for crowds of both rich and poor gamesters. And professional athletes relied not on a share of the "gate" as entertainers did, but as partners with their wealthy sponsors in any prizes that they could win. In fact, the very centrality of gambling encouraged the "rationalization" of sporting contests in boxing and racing. In the 18th century, race courses were standardized and horses were classified by age in an effort to make the gambler's risks more predictable and to reduce fraud. In English boxing, Jack Broughton introduced a primitive set of rules in 1743 to create a more rational setting for gamblers. The mid-1880s saw another major innovation, the Marquess of Queensbury rules, which introduced the three-minute round, a ban on wrestling, a ten-second knockout, and padded gloves.[10]

Despite the fact that gaming introduced regulations into some sports, in 1800, sports were hardly reformed. Among the elite, traditional athletic contests remained exclusive; the wealthy used plebian contestants largely as playing pieces in games that the rich controlled. This attitude would continue during the development of commercial sport in the 19th century and would color the character of the amateur ethic as well. The games of the poor remained chaotic, community affairs, deeply rooted in local custom. These games, however, would be taken up and "purified" by educational and religious reformers in the 19th century to create most modern ballgames.

Nineteenth-Century Transformation

The key to change was in making sport respectable. Activity that the religious middle classes had associated with gambling, drunkenness, and violence gradually gained legitimacy in the 19th century when sport became equated with character building as well as with physical perfection. A new attitude toward the body emerged. It no longer was understood as merely the source of temptation which had to be disciplined by the mind and spitit, as in the notion of the "flesh" in traditional Judeo-Christian thinking. Instead, the body became an extension of moral power concretely expressed in the display of physical courage. By training the body, the new ideology ran, the individual disciplined the will. Morality continued to mean self-restraint, but it also increasingly implied vitality and action in the "real world," values that could be inculcated in sport.[11] Early in the century, Freidrich Ludwig Jahn had popularized "athleticism." This famous Prussian teacher and nationalist founded the Turner or

and ropes and competitive gymnastic matches had been introduced to many German schools. But, despite encouragement of American disciples in Boston as early as 1826, few schools built gymnasia until much later. England similarly did not embrace the Turner system. German immigrants brought gymnastics with them when they entered American cities in large numbers after 1848. But the movement was ethnically isolated and suffered decline with the assimilation of the second generation. The Caladonian Games, imported by Scottish immigrants to the American northeastern seaboard in 1853, promoted track and field events. From about 1869, the American YMCA began to build gymnasia as well as libraries.[12]

In the Anglo-American world, however, it was not these individual sports that dominated the transformation of middle-class attitudes toward physical games, but the team games. And these group sports emerged not in the athletic club but in elite schools.

Between 1840 and 1860, the doctrine of "muscular Christianity" in the English Public (private boarding) school laid the foundation for a new attitude toward sports in the upper and middle classes. Sports-conscious headmasters of Harrow, Uppingham, and Loretto (more than the famous Thomas Arnold of Rugby school) promoted the ideology of the "healthy mind in a healthy body." From about 1845, these educators outlawed disorderly unsupervised games and blood sports (like the hunting and and killing of frogs), which were ruining the reputations of the schools. Headmasters replaced these rough games with both a far more disciplined educational environment and enthusiastic support for organized sport. By the 1860s, physical games were the core of the curriculum. For H.H. Almond at Loretto School, education was to inculcate, "First—Character. Second—Physique. Third—Intelligence. Fourth—Manners. Fifth—Information." This anti-intellectualism, which condemned the anemic scholar and glorified the "perpetual school boy," dominated the English Public School. In the late 19th century, school boys at Eton devoted from 5 to 7 hours a day to cricket compared to only 4 to 6 hours to study.[13]

But sports were also to promote morality: "Cricket is a game which reflects the character—a game of correct habits, of patient and well-considered practice." In fact, school-boy sports appeared to have largely replaced drinking and disorder. According to the "muscular Christian" writer, Charles Kingsley, the physically fit were less apt to be tempted by indecent thoughts; only on the playing field could the child learn courage, fair play and teamwork. This type of thinking was as influential in America where headmaster, S.R. Caltrop, could write in 1858: "I cannot tell how much physical weakness, how much moral evil we have batted and bowled, and shinnied away from our door; but I do know that we have batted and bowled away indolence and listlessness, and doing nothing, which I believe is the Devil's greatest engine."[14]

Groton, the college preparatory school founded on the British model by the Anglophile New Englander, Endicott Peabody, in 1884, stressed sports, as

More important, however, was that the American colleges and universities also embraced the muscular Christian idea and endorsed athletics as part of the extracurriculum. The American patrician Henry Cabot Lodge went so far as to claim in 1896 that college sports actually inculcated the skills of competition and accountability that were at the root of business success. President Theodore Roosevelt found in the "strenuous" life an antidote to the moral degeneration of modern prosperity and materialism. The threat of self-indulgence and even derangement could be averted only by the self-sacrifice of disciplined, competitive sports.[16]

The growing popularity of sport had still other implications. In the 1870s, in a peculiar adaptation of Darwin's theory of evolution, sport became a means of displaying the "fitness" of the individual to prevail. Athletic prowess also was believed to reveal the superiority of the privileged classes, and the right of the imperial nation to "survive" or, more accurately, to dominate the future "evolution" of the world.

Popular songs and romantic adventure stories published in boys' magazines glorified sports and nationalism:

> The playing fields of England
> All up and down the land,
> Where English boys play English games,
> How bright and fair they stand!
> There each one plays for side, not self,
> And strength and skills employs
> On the playing-fields of England,
> The Pride of English Boys.[17]

Loyalty, engendered at public school and college, was to carry into adult life in the company, regiment, or government office. The English Public Schools used games to help forge a new elite around the new industrial and older landed classes.[17] The association of sport with the propertied and educated affected the emergence of the amateur sporting ideal. To be an amateur meant more than not playing for pay and fair play; it required separation from the plebian element. In fact, the amateur philosophy emerged, in part, as a reaction to the flooding of the working classes into the games that the elite had refined.

The emerging cult of health and amateur sport also appeared outside of the school. The urban Amateur Athletic Movement emerged in both countries after 1860 for the sedentary businessman of the city. Athletic Clubs, united in England in 1880 (and America in 1888) into amateur athletic associations, strove to maintain the elite character of gymnastic and field-and-track sports. Some clubs openly excluded the "mechanic, artisan, or labourer," even though others hired workmen athletes in the heat of competition. Athletic clubs provided a setting for indoor exercise but also were used for business and social

contacts. The American country club, originating in 1882 near Boston, provided similar opportunities. Designed first for cricket and tennis and later for golf, these clubs were exclusive and imitated similar British sports groups (e.g., Wimbledon's All-England Croquet and Lawn-Tennis Club); they allowed "old boys" from elite colleges to continue to play the games they learned in their youth. The amateur-gentleman, of course, was also at the heart of the ideas of Pierre De Coubertin, who founded the modern Olympic Games in the 1890s.[18]

Amateur athleticism guided also the YMCA. It was at the Springfield Massachusetts "Y" that James Naismith invented basketball in 1891. Basketball was designed to provide exercise and competition without the threat of injury common in other ball games. The key was the raised goal or basket, which obliged the player to throw the ball softly in an arc in order to succeed. Its "civilized" character conformed to the amateur ideal.[19]

Those men of the middle classes who sought refuge from the sedentary and competitive environment of urban business were sometimes attracted to hiking and camping. These sports swept Europe and America from the 1870s. A romantic quest for the simplicity and purity of nature combined with a striving for fresh air, physical vigor, and self-reliance. The mountain, which prior to the 19th century had been the object of superstitious fear of evil creatures, became to thousands of "alpinists" a pinnacle to be conquered and a site of invigorating purity. In America, the camping movement was directed primarily toward children. From the late 1870s, clergymen, seeking a wholesome alternative to the dirty, hot streets for slum children, organized primitive camps. Other leaders were headmasters of private schools seeking for their students a retreat for nature study and moral training during the summer recess. Camping gradually became an integral part of the scouting and church summer programs in the urbanized northeast. In Britain, similar efforts of clergymen to offer parishioners wholesome summer outdoor recreation led to the holiday camp movement of the 20th century. These camps catered to adults and, later, to families.[20]

The athletic cult of the late 19th century, however, was usually militantly male. It reaffirmed the doctrine of the vulnerable female, treating her as constitutionally unsuited for vigorous physical activity, and the male's God-given right to chivalric dominance (as well as to a lifetime indulgence in his boyish games). To be sure, in the 1860s, middle-class women were given croquet and in the 1870s, an unstrenuous form of lawn tennis. So central, however, was sport to late Victorian leisure that women could not be totally excluded from the cult of athleticism. They entered it in a gradual process. First, women were offered exercise, promoted as early as 1832 by the founder of American Home Economics, Catherine Beecher, as an antidote to the physical dangers of sedentary life. Then, individual sport became respectable (for example, in such progressive American women's colleges as Vassar in 1875) but only in sex-segregated games. A similar pattern appeared in the girls' public

Despite the elite (male) origins of 19th-century sports, reformers had a "civilizing" mission. In effect, they rationalized the rough, traditional games of the masses and then returned them to the people.[22] In this process too, schools played a major role; unwittingly, they contributed to the emergence of the mass spectator sports of the 20th century. Most generally, this change involved the creation of national rules codified by elite bodies like the (English) Football Association (1863) or the American Bowling Congress (1895). These organizations replaced the muddle of contradictory regulations that customarily governed play in the village or school and made possible contests at the national and even international level. This phenomenon paralleled the nationalization of many other aspects of life in the second half of the 19th century.[23]

Game rules were freed from custom and made subject to the logic of innovation. Like other leisure products, sports became more efficient (especially fast-paced), intelligible, and safe. Rule changes in soccer and American football encouraged individual skill and teamship rather than mass play and the violence that it engendered. Athletes also were encouraged to specialize and train to assure maximization of natural ability in order to meet the increasingly more keen competition. This too paralleled trends in business. Part of this rationalizing process was the emergence of records, which was facilitated especially by the technology of time-keeping when the second hand appeared in the 1860s. The keeping of team and individuals records in cricket and baseball came to resemble modern business accounting. Sport, in effect, underwent a "civilizing process," which parallels a similar decline in personal violence and rise of emotional restraint in many other areas of modern life.[24]

Late 19th-century sport reflected the "improving" values of the middle classes, as well as the stress upon individual competition and nationalism that dominated these social strata. Sport gained support from the reforming middle class because games expressed a new attitude toward the body and promised to discipline the young and blend the upper class with the new industrial classes. Through the amateur ethic, sports gained legitimacy by stressing sport for sport's sake (rather than winning), self-restraint in both victory and defeat, and "fair play" or voluntary acceptance of the rules and chivalrous attitude toward rivals. So powerful were these values that they eventually transformed the games of those lower down the economic and social scale, even if the affluent amateur had misgivings about their "democratization."[25]

The transformation of sport went beyond the conscious values of the reforming middle class. Participation in athletic play was shaped also by complex technological and economic factors. Most basically, modern sport reflected the new urban environment, its restricted space, and even the time constraints of industrial work. The mile-long stretches of land used in medieval football and the hunting forests of the aristocracy largely disappeared with increased population and economic activity. Not only were playing grounds given uniform boundaries, but space-concentrated games like tennis or

Ping-Pong emerged. Time-consuming games like cricket (suitable, perhaps, for the rural cycle of work and festival) declined in favor of far briefer games like football and baseball, which could be integrated into the lives of industrial workers. Invention also bred a number of new physical recreations: among them, the development of the roller skate in 1863, which led a craze among the affluent in the 1870s and 1880s in Australia, Europe, and America. Roller skating rinks offered not only exercise but an arena for courtship and socializing. This was a sport that lacked masculine traditions and thus was open to women. The same was true of the safety bicycle (1887), which replaced various bone-shaking high-wheel cycles. Although expensive (over 100 dollars in the 1890s), the bicycle attracted thousands of middle-class men and women. New business techniques assured the rapid spread of sports fads like tennis and croquet in the 1870s and 1880s to the urban middle class.[26]

The "nationalization of sport" was also a creation of nation-wide networks of railroad and mass communications. Baseball and soccer thrived only after the completion of interregional railroad lines. The prominence of English commerce in world trade explains the globalization of English football in the generation before World War I.

Technology and economic growth contributed also to the rise of the spectator. The city's concentration of people and the advent of rail and streetcar travel made possible the modern sports stadium. Spectators subtly changed from a throng of gamblers to the partisan crowd. Sports wagers hardly disappeared, but rather were increasingly shifted to the football pools and off-site pari-mutuel betting. These activities were too complex and distant from the contest to spark the excitement that fan loyalty engendered. Arguably, it was in the 1880s that the modern spectator emerged. Although only 2,000 watched the English Soccer Cup Finals in 1872, by 1885 the crowd had reached 10,000. It increased to nearly 101,000 by 1901 and to at least 200,000 at the Wembley Cup Final in 1923. Moreover, once the prize or wager declined as a source of financial support for the game, the "gate" became more important. Only in the 1870s did the enclosed stadium with the turnstile (1871) for paying customers become the norm. Admission charges not only made sport a profitable business but it helped to screen access and preserve a sought-after "social tone" of respectability. The crowds not only grew but their character changed as fans identified with the celebrity player and developed passionate loyalties to teams. The fact that early ball clubs were rooted in neighborhoods or colleges made this identification with the team possible.[27]

Another product of industrialization, the mass newspaper, also encouraged "fan" consciousness. Sports journalism created and sustained daily sports mindedness. From 1792, with the English *Sporting Magazine*, sports journalism grew; by the end of the 19th century, there were already 25 sports papers published in London alone. Americans quickly followed in 1819 with the *American Farmer*, which promoted horse racing. Mass-appeal papers like

the *New York Clipper* (1853) and the weekly *Police Gazette* in the 1870s also featured sports journalism. Still, it was only in the last quarter of the 19th century that the sports page became an institution.[28]

Finally, the general bureaucratization of modern life perhaps indirectly encouraged the development of spectator sports. Industrial society placed a premium on orderly, predictable behavior; yet it also stimulated competitive and even aggressive impulses. Together, these pressures may have encouraged the shift (or sublimation) of "excitement" from everyday life to the playing field or viewing stands, providing relief from accumulated tensions.[29]

So far, we have considered three strands of modern sports: a) their traditional roots, b) the middle-class sources of their 19th-century reformation, and c) the impact of technology on sports and the creation of the modern spectator. These trends, however, did not converge into a uniform product. Rather, modern sport revealed complex patterns of 19th-century society, patterns that were products of differing mixtures of reform and tradition and even of contrasting responses to technological change. Sports both democratized and excluded. Not only the professional athlete (and the spectator) but also the affluent amateur embodied sports values. Let us try to understand some of these complexities, first by briefly exploring the origins of several modern British sports and then by comparing and contrasting these games with those of their American cousins.

In the 1830s and 1840s, the English Public School modernized the rough, rural game of football. The rules that shaped the modern game were taken beyond the gates of such schools when "old boys," or alumni, continued to play at the university and in urban clubs. Footballers from different Public Schools found it necessary to codify common regulations; the result was the Cambridge rules of 1848 and eventually a national code which, in 1863, became "Association" (or in its shortened form, soccer) football. Not only did the rules encourage individual ball play (specializing in kicking rather than handling the ball), but in the 1870s officials began to police play (in 1878 armed with a whistle). In 1891, the penalty kick was introduced to control illegal and unsportsmanlike behavior. The game of rural youths had become the sport of gentlemen.

Soon, however, modern football returned to its popular roots. Clergy with Public-School upbringing and imbued with the philosophy of muscular Christianity taught football to parish boys on Saturday afternoons. Other working-class children learned the game in YMCAs, boys' clubs, or schools. Soccer was easily learned with its simple rules and was widely popular because of its premium on agility rather than on brute strength or unusual size. Industrialists, businessmen, or churches organized teams as a wholesome recreational outlet for their young charges. The St. Domingo's Vale New Connection Methodist Sunday School founded a football club that later became Everton, the winner of the Cup Final in 1893. Other early famous teams like Aston Villa and

the Wolverhampton Wanderers began in churches; the Blackburn Rovers and Leicester City started in grammar schools. Employees of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway and Thames Iron Works formed Newton Heath (later Manchester United) and West Ham United.[30]

The professional player gradually emerged from these local teams. The laborer often required financial support to pay for the time lost from work and for long-distances travel to matches. Competitive pressures encouraged play for pay. Local teams bid for the talents of the country's best footballers, especially those from Scotland.

In the 1880s, the amateur elite protested when clubs seeking an edge hired professionals (often clandestinely). The F.A. Cup Final assured that the inherent conflict between the professional and amateur clubs would come to a head because it pitted the best teams in the nation against one another. In 1883, the working-class Blackburn Olympics triumphed over the Old Etonians in the F.A. Cup Final. This victory ended a decade of Public-School dominance. By 1888, a fully professional league was founded with teams from the industrial North and Midlands. The Football Association, however, remained in amateur-gentlemen's hands, and a separate amateur cup competition was established, thus eliminating direct competition between the gentleman player with his prided amateurism and the working-class professional.

By the 1880s and 1890s, football clubs became limited companies with shareholders and boards of directors. Club sponsors built stadiums that attracted mass fan loyalty. By 1891, games near London attracted about 7,000 on Saturday afternoons; within twenty years the figure was 30,000. The local business elites often owned clubs; their patronage fostered good will from working-class fans. At the same time, football competition encouraged inter-urban rivalry. In the larger cities there were several teams, each providing a sense of community in the otherwise impersonal English city.[31]

Still, the professional player remained a modest hero; he earned wages that were scarcely higher than the skilled artisan. A maximum wage (by 1901) and the "retain and transfer" system eliminated competition between teams for the talents of footballers. And, an incipient trade union movement among players was crushed in 1909. The game perhaps lost its playful character, becoming the display of the specialized skills of working professionals. For the player, the difference between sport and work largely disappeared; his dealings with the club ownership were similar to the relationship between worker and factory owner.[32]

Yet many aspects of traditional sports survived the emergence of the modern spectator and professional. Reformers who condemned the "rabble" participants in village football in the 1830s might have complained fifty years later about similarly unruly crowds on the terraces of the new football stadiums. Football was adapted to working-class leisure styles that had little to do with the ethos of the amateur-gentleman. Soccer players stressed team solidarity and a

pragmatic quest for monetary reward for skill. Football crowds displayed noisy partisanship, occasional disrespect for the authority of the referees and club management, and loud festive behavior. Still the "respectable working class" was increasingly drawn into football culture. The turnstile, a policy of segregated seating by ticket prices, security guards, and the practice of fining home clubs that failed to follow rules of order helped to win the support of a family and self-disciplined crowd; even women came out by the end of the century.

If soccer tended to "civilize" traditional football and to overcome social cleavages in English society, rugby had a very different history. About 1841, pupils at Rugby school played a version of football that allowed players to carry the ball and to "hack" (i.e., kick the shins of opponents). Less prestigious schools adopted rugby rather than embraced soccer. These institutions attracted clientele who were less socially secure and perhaps had greater need to prove the "manliness" of their children in a relatively rough sport like rugby. Still, hacking and other expressions of mock war were gradually controlled in a "civilizing" process that paralleled that of soccer.[33]

Like the Football Association, Rugby Football Union emerged from a group of "old boys" clubs in 1871.[34] Rugby, however, was played by a smaller and less influential group and was centered in the south of England. It was not introduced to working classes except in Lancashire and Yorkshire, where socially "open" teams predominated. Professional clubs emerged out of these northern teams in much the same way as they did nationally for soccer. However, southern Rugby clubs were socially exclusive. Perhaps because their members may have been less certain of their social position, they opposed the use of Cup competition to popularize the game. While amateur soccer teams could compromise with the working-class professional club from the industrial north, rugby split in 1895 into an amateur Rugby Union and a professional Rugby League. Rugby remained a relatively insular sport, spreading to the British empire but, unlike soccer, not to most of world.[35]

The social history of cricket reveals still another variation. Cricket was a relatively old game; it was codified in 1787 by the Marylebone Cricket Club and organized around a unique partnership of amateur gentry and lower-status professionals (often hired hands on estates or tradesmen with flexible schedules). For many years, this arrangement produced little social conflict. Gentlemen players were secure in their elite position and professionals knew their place. Lower-status players specialized in bowling (or pitching), a skill long considered a "workaday, at best, guileful craft," while the upper-class amateurs were the batsmen, masters of "the noble, disdainful, at its best, exquisite art."[36]

A century later, incipient professionalization led to County cricket, requiring players to originate from the county teams they played for. Cricket clubs remained organizations of subscribing members and not businesses. Although they, too, relied on admissions charges for expenses, the lack of mass appeal meant that a whole county (larger than the American equivalent) was

required to sustain a team). Still, growing social conflict between the professionals and amateurs by the 1890s led to formal segregation between the two groups, not on different teams but in separate dressing rooms, in separate travel arrangements, and even in the fact that the gentleman-amateur's name was posted with his initials before his surname whereas the professional's initials were posted after.

In an interesting contrast, cricket in Australia became a mass spectator sport. Australia led the industrial world in the introduction of the eight-hour day and the Saturday half holiday. Despite its vast frontiers, Australia was largely an urban society. The result was a cricket game that was redesigned to appeal to mass crowds. Australian cricket was more exciting and competitive than the English version and it certainly tolerated fans who were much more boisterous than those who followed English cricket.[37]

Sport and National Divergence: American Sport in the Light of British Origins

As we have seen, Americans shared much of the British sporting tradition.[38] Immigrants brought traditional British ballgames to the United States and Americans embraced similar complex attitudes toward sports. For Americans, sports could be traditional expression of exclusivity or plebian "anarchy," an agent of moral and social improvement or an entertainment business. Yet Americans profoundly changed British sports—a transformation that reflects important differences between these two societies.

The origins of American baseball is a good place to begin. Much myth surrounds the origins of the "National Game." The legend of its invention in a cowpatch in upstate New York by the civil-war hero, Abner Doubleday, served to associate baseball with rural life and nationalism. In fact, however, the game most likely emerged from English rounders. Its originator probably was a New York City bank clerk, Alexander Cartwright. In 1845, he codified rules (probably derived from a common book on English boys' ball games) for the "Knickerbockers," a club of white-collar employees and tradesmen. By 1858, there was sufficient interest in the game to form the National Association of Base Ball Players, a group whose amateur ethic prohibited play for pay and gambling. By the Civil War, baseball had abandoned the soft ball of rounders (which allowed "soaking" or throwing the ball at the running batter) and adopted the familiar "nine-inning" game.

Why Americans embraced baseball instead of cricket has long interested historians of sport. Cricket was widely played in the northeast, especially among immigrants and Anglophile elites (like members of the Philadelphia Cricket Club). A common view is that Americans preferred the home-grown game, a feeling reinforced by the nationalist upsurge during the Civil War.

Probably more important, baseball (unlike cricket) accommodated both players and crowds by changing rules to shorten, enliven, and balance the game between batter and fielder.[39]

The myth of the democratic roots of baseball did have a ring of truth. Americans, unlike the colonized peoples of India or Australia, had no incentive to adopt cricket, an aristocratic sport of the mother country, in the hope of gaining self-esteem by beating the imperial society at its own game. By contrast, baseball appealed to the native-born and immigrants from places other than England and, unlike cricket, early baseball was completely amateur and lacked the snobbish associations of American cricket. Even the Knickerbockers, who wore respectable brimmed straw hats, were merely white-collar men—not the moneyed elite who embraced cricket in New York City and Philadelphia. By the 1860s, baseball had trickled down to the urban artisan classes. Groups of truckmen, mechanics, and especially voluntary fire departments formed baseball clubs. Rival fire companies (often rooted in ethnic or religious communities) had long indulged in gang-style violence and fighting fires had been a major recreation outlet for young men in pre-Civil-War urban America. Baseball provided an alternative to this violent leisure culture while preserving many aspects of traditional working-class recreations, including group rivalry, gambling, and drinking.[40]

Baseball did not originate in elite schools nor was it disseminated via paternalistic clergy and social workers, as was English football. Rather, its beginnings and growth were more socially fluid. Despite the respectability of the Knickerbockers and the amateurism of the National Association of Base Ball Players, the game had unsavory ties in the generation after the Civil War. Boss William Tweed, the machine politician of Tammany Hall in New York, controlled the "Mutuals," and its successor, the "Giants," were a club owned by a well-known politician with ties to organized crime.[41]

The dynamics of unrestrained competition encouraged professionalization. As early as 1858, New York crowds were willing to pay 50 cents to watch quality baseball games. By 1863, the National Association recognized professional players. In 1869, the Cincinnati Red Stockings, the first completely professional team, proved the disadvantage of the amateur player by defeating all comers in a national tour. The result was the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players (1871), which briefly dominated the commercial game. Players were free to offer their services to the highest bidder and they could take advantage of competition between clubs. Thus, players enjoyed salaries about five times that of the average working man. High player costs and the tendency for the richer clubs to attract the best players weakened the commercial position of "organized baseball." This, plus "hippodroming," the practice of throwing a game for money, diminished public support for baseball in the early 1870s.

2 The 'culture and civilization' tradition

The popular culture of the majority has always been a concern of powerful minorities. Those with political power have always thought it necessary to police the culture of those without political power, reading it 'symptomatically' (see Chapter 6) for signs of political unrest; reshaping it continually through patronage and direct intervention. In the nineteenth century, however, there is a fundamental change in this relationship. Those with power lose, for a crucial period, the means to control the culture of the subordinate classes. When they begin to recover control, it is culture itself, and not culture as a symptom or sign of something else, that becomes, really for the first time, the actual focus of concern. As we noted at the end of Chapter 1, two factors are crucial to an understanding of these changes: industrialization and urbanization. Together they produce other changes that contribute to the making of a popular culture that marks a decisive break with the cultural relationships of the past.

If we take early nineteenth-century Manchester as our example of the new industrial urban civilization, certain points become clear. First of all, the town evolved clear lines of class segregation; second, residential separation was compounded by the new work relations of industrial capitalism. Third, on the basis of changes in living and working relations, there developed cultural changes. Put very simply, the Manchester working class was given space to develop an independent culture at some remove from the direct intervention of the dominant classes. Industrialization and urbanization had redrawn the cultural map. No longer was there a shared common culture, with an additional culture of the powerful. Now, for the first time in history, there was a separate culture of the subordinate classes of the urban and industrial centres. It was a culture of two main sources: (i) a culture offered for profit by the new cultural entrepreneurs, and (ii) a culture made by and for the political agitation of radical artisans, the new urban working class and middle-class reformers, all described so well by E.P. Thompson in *The Making of the English Working Class* (see Chapter 3). Each of these developments in different ways threatened traditional notions of cultural cohesion and social stability. One threatened to weaken authority through the commercial dismantling of cultural cohesion; the other offered a direct challenge to all forms of political and cultural authority.

These were not developments guaranteed to hearten those who feared for the continuation of a social order based on power and privilege. Such developments, it was argued, could only mean a weakening of social stability, a destabilizing of the social

order. It marked the beginning of what Benjamin Disraeli would call the 'two nations' (Disraeli, 1980), and it eventually gave birth to the first political and cultural movement of the new urban working class – Chartism. It is out of this context, and its continuing aftermath, which the *political* study of popular culture first emerges.

Matthew Arnold

The study of popular culture in the modern age can be said to begin with the work of Matthew Arnold. In some ways this is surprising as he had very little to say directly about popular culture. Arnold's significance is that he inaugurates a tradition, a particular way of seeing popular culture, a particular way of placing popular culture within the general field of culture. The tradition has come to be known as the 'culture and civilization' tradition. My discussion of Arnold's contribution to the study of popular culture will focus mainly (but not exclusively) on *Culture and Anarchy* (1867–9), the work that secured, and continues to sustain, his reputation as a cultural critic. Arnold established a cultural agenda that remained dominant in debate from the 1860s until the 1950s. His significance, therefore, lies not with any body of empirical work, but with the enormous influence of his general perspective – the Arnoldian perspective – on popular culture.

For Arnold (1960), culture begins by meaning two things. First and foremost, it is a body of knowledge: in Arnold's famous phrase, 'the best that has been thought and said in the world' (6). Secondly, culture is concerned 'to make reason and the will of God prevail' (42). It is in the 'sweetness and light' of the second claim that 'the moral, social, and beneficial character of culture becomes manifest' (46). That is, 'culture . . . is a study of perfection . . . perfection which consists in becoming something rather than in having something, in an inward condition of the mind and spirit, not in an outward set of circumstances' (48). In other words, culture is the endeavour to know the best and to make this knowledge prevail for the good of all humankind. But how is culture to be attained? According to Arnold, we shall attain it by 'the disinterested and active use of reading, reflection, and observation, in the endeavour to know the best that can be known' (179). Culture, therefore, no longer consists in two things, but in three. Culture is now the means to know the best that has been thought and said, as well as that body of knowledge and the application of that knowledge to the 'inward condition of the mind and spirit' (31). There is, however, a fourth aspect to consider: Arnold insists that culture seeks 'to minister to the diseased spirit of our time' (163). This would appear to be an example of culture's third aspect. However, we are quickly told that culture will play its part 'not so much by lending a hand to our friends and countrymen in their *actual operations* for the removal of certain definite evils, but rather in getting our countrymen to seek culture' (163–4; my italics). This is Arnold's fourth and final definition: culture is the seeking of culture, what Arnold calls 'cultivated inaction' (163). For Arnold, then, culture is: (i) the ability to know what is best; (ii) what is best; (iii) the mental and spiritual application of what is best, and (iv) the pursuit of what is best.

Popular culture is never actually defined. However, it becomes clear when reading through Arnold's work that the term 'anarchy' operates in part as a synonym for popular culture. Specifically, anarchy/popular culture is used to refer to Arnold's conception of the supposedly disruptive nature of working-class lived culture: the political dangers that he believes to be inevitably concomitant with the entry of the male urban working class into formal politics in 1867. The upshot of this is that anarchy and culture are for Arnold deeply political concepts. The social function of culture is to police this disruptive presence: the 'raw and uncultivated . . . masses' (176); 'the raw and unkindled masses' (69); 'our masses . . . quite as raw and uncultivated as the French' (76); 'those vast, miserable unmanageable masses of sunken people' (193). The problem is working-class lived culture: 'The rough [i.e. a working-class political protester] . . . asserting his personal liberty a little, going where he likes, assembling where he likes, bawling as he likes, hustling as he likes' (80–1). Again:

> the working class . . . raw and half developed . . . long lain half hidden amidst its poverty and squalor . . . now issuing from its hiding place to assert an Englishman's heaven born privilege of doing as he likes, and beginning to perplex *us* by marching where it likes, meeting where it likes, bawling what it likes, breaking what it likes (105; my italics).

The context of all this is the suffrage agitation of 1866–7. Arnold's employment of the phrase 'beginning to perplex us' is a clear indication of the class nature of his discourse. His division of society into Barbarians (aristocracy), Philistines (middle class) and Populace (working class) would seem at first sight to defuse the class nature of this discourse. This seems to be supported by his claim that under all 'our class divisions, there is a common basis of human nature' (ibid.). However, if we examine what Arnold means by a common basis, we are forced to a different conclusion. If we imagine the human race existing on an evolutionary continuum with itself at one end and a common ancestor shared with the ape at the other, what Arnold seems to be suggesting is that the aristocracy and middle class are further along the evolutionary continuum than the working class. This is shown quite clearly in his example of the common basis of our human nature. He claims that

> every time that we snatch up a vehement opinion in ignorance and passion, every time that we long to crush an adversary by sheer violence, every time that we are envious, every time that we are brutal, every time that we adore mere power or success, every time that we add our voice to swell a blind clamour against some unpopular personage, every time that we trample savagely on the fallen [we have] found in our own bosom the eternal spirit of the Populace (107).

According to Arnold, it takes only a little help from 'circumstances' to make this 'eternal spirit' triumph in both Barbarian and Philistine. Culture has two functions in

this scenario. First, it must carefully guide the aristocracy and the middle class from such circumstances. Second, it must bring to the working class, the class in which this so-called human nature is said to reside, 'a much wanted principle . . . of authority, to counteract the tendency to anarchy that seems to be threatening us' (82). The principle of authority, as we shall see, is to be found in a strong centralized State.

Why did Arnold think like this? The answer has a great deal to do with the historical changes witnessed by the nineteenth century. When he recommends culture 'as the great help out of our present difficulties' (6), it is these changes he has in mind. The 'present difficulties' have a double context. On the one hand, they are the immediate 'problems' raised by the granting of the franchise to the male urban working class. On the other, they are recognition of a historical process that had been in play from at least the eighteenth century (the development of industrial capitalism). Arnold believed that the franchise had given power to men as yet uneducated for power. A working class which has lost 'the strong feudal habits of subordination and deference' (76) is a very dangerous working class. It is the function of education to restore a sense of subordination and deference to the class. In short, education would bring to the working class a 'culture' that would in turn remove the temptations of trade unionism, political agitation and cheap entertainment. In short, culture would remove popular culture.

Against such 'anarchy', culture recommends the State: 'We want an authority . . . culture suggests the idea of the State' (96). Two factors make the State necessary. First, the decline of the aristocracy as a centre of authority; second, the rise of democracy. Together they create a terrain favourable to anarchy. The solution is to occupy this terrain with a mixture of culture and coercion. Arnold's cultured State is to function to control and curtail the social, economic and cultural aspirations of the working class until the middle class is sufficiently cultured to take on this function itself. The State will operate in two ways: (i) through coercion to ensure no more Hyde Park riots, and (ii) through the instilling of the 'sweetness and light' of culture.

Culture and Anarchy informs its reader that 'education is the road to culture' (209). It is, therefore, worth looking briefly at his vision of education. Arnold does not envisage working-class, middle-class and aristocratic students all walking down the same road to culture. For the aristocracy, education is to accustom it to decline, to banish it as a class to history. For the working class, education is to civilize it for subordination, deference and exploitation. Arnold saw working-class schools (primary and elementary) as little more than outposts of civilization in a dark continent of working-class barbarism: 'they civilize the neighbourhood where they are placed' (1973: 39). According to Arnold, working-class children had to be civilized before they could be instructed. In a letter to his mother, written in 1862, he writes: 'the State has an interest in the primary school as a civilizing agent, even prior to its interest in it as an instructing agent' (1896: 187). It was culture's task to accomplish this. For the middle class, education was something quite different. Its essential function is to prepare middle-class children for the power that is to be theirs. Its aim is to convert 'a middle class, narrow, ungenial, and unattractive [into] a cultured, liberalised, ennobled, transformed middle class, [one to which the working class] may with joy direct its aspirations' (1954: 343).

Arnold (1960) called his various proposals, quoting the Duke of Wellington, 'a revolution by due course of law' (97). What it amounts to is a revolution from above, a revolution to prevent popular revolution from below. It works on the principle that a reform given is always better than a reform taken, forced or won. Popular demands are met, but in such a way as to weaken claims for further demands. It is not that Arnold did not desire a better society, one with less squalor, less poverty, less ignorance, etc., but that a better society could never be envisaged as other than a society in which the new urban middle class were 'hegemonic' (see Chapter 4).

Most of what I have said is a roundabout way of saying that the first grand theorist of popular culture had in fact very little to say about popular culture, except, that is, to say that it is symptomatic of a profound political disorder. Culture is not the main concern of Arnold's work; rather the main concern is social order, social authority, won through cultural subordination and deference. Working-class culture is significant to the extent that it signals evidence of social and cultural disorder and decline – a breakdown in social and cultural authority. The fact that working-class culture exists at all is evidence enough of decline and disorder. Working-class 'anarchy' is to be suppressed by the harmonious influences of culture – 'the best that has been thought and said in the world'.

Many of Arnold's ideas are derived from the Romantic critique of industrialism (see Williams, 1963). One writer in particular seems especially relevant, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Coleridge (1972) distinguishes between 'civilisation' ('a mixed good, if not far more a corrupting influence') and 'cultivation' ('the harmonious development of those qualities and faculties which characterise our humanity') (33). To simplify, Coleridge suggests that civilization refers to the nation as a whole; cultivation is the property of a small minority, whom he calls the 'clerisy'. It is the function of the cultivated clerisy to guide the progress of civilization:

> the objects and final intention of the whole order being these – preserve the stores, and to guard the treasures, of past civilisation, and thus to bind the present to the past; to perfect and add to the same, and thus to connect the present with the future; but especially to diffuse through the whole community, and to every native entitled to its laws and rights, that quantity and quality of knowledge which was indispensable both for understanding of those rights, and for the performance of the duties correspondent (34).

Arnold builds on Coleridge's ideas. Instead of a clerisy, he writes of 'aliens' or 'the remnant'. But the purpose is essentially the same: the mobilization of culture to police the unruly forces of mass society. According to Arnold, history shows that societies have always been destroyed by 'the moral failure of the unsound majority' (1954: 640). Such a reading of history is hardly likely to inspire much confidence in democracy – let alone in popular culture. Arnold's vision is based on a curious paradox; the men and women of culture know the best that has been thought and said, but for whom are they preserving these treasures when the majority is unsound and has always been, and always will be, unsound? The inescapable answer seems to be: for themselves, a self-perpetuating

cultural elite. All that is required from the rest of us is to recognize our cultural difference and acknowledge our cultural deference. Arnold is clear on this point:

> The mass of mankind will never have any ardent zeal for seeing things as they are; very inadequate ideas will always satisfy them. On these inadequate ideas reposes, and must repose, the general practice of the world. That is as much as saying that whoever sets himself to see things as they are will find himself one of a very small circle; but it is only by this small circle resolutely doing its own work that adequate ideas will ever get current at all (364–5).

And again,

> The highly instructed few, and not the scantily instructed many, will ever be the organ to the human race of knowledge and truth. Knowledge and truth in the full sense of the words, are not attainable by the great mass of the human race at all (Arnold, 1960–77: 591).

These are very revealing statements. If the mass of humankind is to be always satisfied with inadequate ideas, never able to attain truth and knowledge, for whom are the small circle working? And what of the adequate ideas they will make current – current for whom? For other small circles of elites? Arnold's small circle would appear to be little more than a self-perpetuating intellectual elite. If they are never to engage in practical politics, and never to have any real influence on the mass of humankind, what is the purpose of all the grand humanistic claims to be found scattered throughout Arnold's work? It would appear that Arnold has been ensnared by his own elitism: and the working class are destined to remain to wallow in 'their beer, their gin, and their fun' (1954: 591). However, Arnold does not so much reject practical politics, as leave them in the safe hands of established authority. Therefore, the only politics that are being rejected are the politics of protest, the politics of opposition. This is a very stale defence of the dominant order. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, his influence has been enormous in that the Arnoldian perspective virtually mapped out the way of thinking about popular culture and cultural politics that dominated the field until the late 1950s.

Leavisism

> For Matthew Arnold it was in some ways less difficult. I am thinking of the so much more desperate plight of culture today (Leavis, 2009: 12).

The influence of Arnold on F.R. Leavis is there for all to see. Leavis takes Arnold's cultural politics and applies them to the supposed 'cultural crisis' of the 1930s. According to Leavis and the Leavisites, the twentieth century is marked by an increasing cultural decline. What had been identified by Arnold as a feature of the nineteenth century, it is argued, had continued and been compounded in the twentieth: that is, the increasing spread of a culture of 'standardisation and levelling down' (Leavis and Thompson, 1977: 3). It is against this process and its results that 'the citizen . . . must be trained to discriminate and to resist' (5).

The work of Leavisism spans a period of some forty years. However, the Leavisite attitude to popular culture was formed in the early 1930s with the publication of three texts: *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture*, by F.R. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public*, by Q.D. Leavis and *Culture and Environment*, by F.R. Leavis and Denys Thompson. Together these form the basis of the Leavisite response to popular culture.

Leavisism is based on the assumption that 'culture has always been in minority keeping' (Leavis and Thompson, 1977: 3):

> Upon the minority depends our power of profiting by the finest human experience of the past; they keep alive the subtlest and most perishable parts of tradition. Upon them depend the implicit standards that order the finer living of an age, the sense that this is worth more than that, this rather than that is the direction in which to go, that the centre is here rather than there (5).

What has changed is the status of this minority. No longer can it command cultural deference, no longer is its cultural authority unchallenged. Q.D. Leavis (1978) refers to a situation in which 'the minority, who had hitherto set the standard of taste without any serious challenge' have experienced a 'collapse of authority' (185, 187). Just as Arnold regretted the passing of 'the strong feudal habits of subordination and deference' (see previous section), Q.D. Leavis is nostalgic for a time when the masses exhibited an 'unquestioning assent to authority' (191).[5] She quotes Edmund Gosse to confirm the seriousness of the situation:

> One danger which I have long foreseen from the spread of the democratic sentiment, is that of the traditions of literary taste, the canons of literature, being reversed with success by a popular vote. Up to the present time, in all parts of the world, the masses of uneducated or semieducated persons, who form the vast majority of readers, though they cannot and do not appreciate the classics of their race, have been content to acknowledge their traditional supremacy. Of late there have seemed to me to be certain signs, especially in America, of a revolt of the mob against our literary masters. . . . If literature is to be judged by a plebiscite and if the plebs recognises its power, it will certainly by degrees cease to support reputations which give it no pleasure and which it cannot comprehend. The revolution against taste, once begun, will land us in irreparable chaos (190).

According to Leavis and Thompson, what Gosse had only feared had now come to pass:

> culture has always been in minority keeping. But the minority now is made conscious, not merely of an uncongenial, but of a hostile environment. . . .

> 'Civilisation' and 'culture' are coming to be antithetical terms. It is not merely that the power and the sense of authority are now divorced from culture, but that some of the most disinterested solicitude for civilisation is apt to be, consciously or unconsciously, inimical to culture (1977: 26).

Mass civilization and its mass culture pose a subversive front, threatening 'to land us in irreparable chaos'. It is against this threat that Leavisism writes its manifestos, and proposes 'to introduce into schools a training in resistance [to mass culture]' (Leavis, 1933: 188–9); and outside schools, to promote a 'conscious and directed effort . . . [to] take the form of resistance by an armed and active minority' (Q.D. Leavis, 1978: 270). The threat of democracy in matters both cultural and political is a terrifying thought for Leavisism. Moreover, according to Q.D. Leavis, 'The people with power no longer represent intellectual authority and culture' (191). Like Arnold, she sees the collapse of traditional authority coming at the same time as the rise of mass democracy. Together they squeeze the cultured minority and produce a terrain favourable for 'anarchy'.

Leavisism isolates certain key aspects of mass culture for special discussion. Popular fiction, for example, is condemned for offering addictive forms of 'compensation' and 'distraction':

> This form of compensation . . . is the very reverse of recreation, in that it tends, not to strengthen and refresh the addict for living, but to increase his unfitness by habituating him to weak evasions, to the refusal to face reality at all (Leavis and Thompson, 1977: 100).

Q.D. Leavis (1978) refers to such reading as 'a drug addiction to fiction' (152), and for those readers of romantic fiction it can lead to 'a habit of fantasying [which] will lead to maladjustment in actual life' (54). Self-abuse is one thing, but there is worse: their addiction 'helps to make a social atmosphere unfavourable to the aspirations of the minority. They actually get in the way of genuine feeling and responsible thinking' (74). For those not addicted to popular fiction, there is always the danger of cinema. Its popularity makes it a very dangerous source of pleasure indeed: 'they [films] involve surrender, under conditions of hypnotic receptivity, to the cheapest emotional appeals, appeals the more insidious because they are associated with a compellingly vivid illusion of actual life' (Leavis, 2009: 14). For Q.D. Leavis (1978), Hollywood films are 'largely masturbatory' (165). Although the popular press is described as 'the most powerful and pervasive de-educator of the public mind' (Leavis and Thompson, 1977: 138), and radio is claimed to be putting an end to critical thought (Leavis, 2009), it is for advertising, with its 'unremitting, pervasive, masturbatory manipulations' (Leavis and Thompson, 1977: 139), that Leavisism saves its most condemnatory tone.

Advertising, and how it is consumed, is Leavisism's main symptom of cultural decline. To understand why, we must understand Leavisism's attitude to language. In *Culture and Environment*, Leavis and Thompson state: 'it should be brought home to learners that this debasement of language is not merely a matter of words; it is a debasement of emotional life, and the quality of living' (1977: 4). Advertising, therefore, is not just blamed for debasing the language, but condemned for debasing the emotional life of the whole language community, reducing 'the standard of living'. They provide examples for analysis (mostly written by F.R. Leavis himself). The questions they pose are very revealing of Leavisism's general attitude. Here is a typical example, an advert for 'Two Quakers' tobacco:

> **THE TOBACCO OF TYPICAL TWIST**
> 'Yes, it's the best I've ever smoked. But it's deuced expensive.' 'What's the tuppence extra? And anyway, you get it back an' more. Burns clean and slow that's the typical twist, gives it the odd look. Cute scientific dodge. You see, they experimented. . . .' 'Oh! cut the cackle, and give us another fill. You talk like an advertisement.' Thereafter peace and a pipe of Two Quakers.

They then suggest the following questions for school students in the fifth and sixth forms:

1 Describe the type of person represented.
2 How are you expected to feel towards him?
3 What do you think his attitude would be towards us? How would he behave in situations where mob passions run high? (16–17)

Two things are remarkable about these questions. First of all, the connection that is made between the advertisement and so-called mob passions. This is an unusual question, even for students of cultural studies. Second, notice the exclusive 'we'; and note also how the pronoun attempts to construct membership of a small educated elite. Other questions operate in much the same way. Here are a few examples:

> Describe the kind of reader this passage would please, and say why it would please him. What kind of person can you imagine responding to such an appeal as this last? What acquaintance would you expect them to have of Shakespeare's work and what capacity for appreciating it? (40).
>
> Pupils can be asked to recall their own observations of the kind of people they may have seen visiting 'shrines' (51).
>
> In the light of the 'Gresham Law', what kind of influence do you expect the cinema to have on general taste and mentality? (114).
>
> What kind of standards are implied here? What would you judge to be the quality of the 'literature' he reads, and the reading he devotes to it? (119).
>
> Why do we wince at the mentality that uses this idiom? (121).
>
> [After describing the cinema as 'cheapening, debasing, distorting']: Develop the discussion of the educational value of cinema as suggested here (144).

It is difficult to see how such questions, rather than encouraging 'discrimination and resistance', would invite anything other than a critically debilitating and self-confirming snobbery.

In a temporary escape from the 'irreparable chaos' of the present, Leavisism looks back longingly to a cultural golden age, a mythic rural past, when there existed a shared culture uncorrupted by commercial interests. The Elizabethan period of Shakespeare's theatre is often cited as a time of cultural coherence before the cultural disintegration of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. F.R. Leavis (1933) writes of Shakespeare belonging 'to a genuinely national culture, to a community in which it was possible for the theatre to appeal to the cultivated and the populace at the same time' (216). Q.D. Leavis (1978), in *Fiction and the Reading Public*, has charted this supposed decline. Her account of the organic relations between populace and cultivated are very revealing: 'the masses were receiving their amusement from above. . . . They had to take the same amusements as their betters. . . . Happily, they had no choice' (85). According to Q.D. Leavis,

> the spectator of Elizabethan drama, though he might not be able to follow the 'thought' minutely in the great tragedies, was getting his amusement from the mind and sensibility that produced those passages, from an artist and not from one of his own class. There was then no such complete separation as we have . . . between the life of the cultivated and the life of the generality (264).

What is interesting about their account of the past is what it reveals about their ideal future. The golden age was not just marked by cultural coherence, but happily for the Leavisites, a cultural coherence based on authoritarian and hierarchical principles. It was a common culture that gave intellectual stimulation at one end, and affective pleasure at the other. This was a mythic world in which everyone knew their place, knew their station in life. F.R. Leavis (1984) is insistent 'that there was in the seventeenth century, a real culture of the people . . . a rich traditional culture . . . a positive culture which has disappeared' (188–9). Most of this culture was, according to Leavisism, destroyed by the changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution. The last remnants of the organic community, however, could still be found in rural communities in nineteenth-century England. He cites the works of George Bourne, *Change in the Village* and *The Wheelwright's Shop*, as evidence of this.[6] In the opening pages of *Culture and Environment*, F.R. Leavis and Thompson (1977) offer a reminder of what had been lost:

> What we have lost is the organic community with the living culture it embodied. Folk songs, folk dances, Cotswold cottages and handicraft products are signs and expressions of something more: an art of life, a way of living, ordered and patterned, involving social arts, codes of intercourse and a responsive adjustment, growing out of immemorial experience, to the natural environment and the rhythm of the year (1–2).

They also claim that the quality of work has also deteriorated with the loss of the organic community. The growing importance placed on leisure is seen as a sign of this

loss. Whereas in the past a worker lived in his or her work, he or she now works in order to live outside his or her work. But as a result of industrialization, the experience of work has deteriorated to such an extent that workers are actually 'incapacitated by their work' (69). Therefore, instead of recreation (re-creating what is lost in work), leisure provides workers with only 'decreation' (a compounding of the loss experienced through work). Given such a situation, it is little wonder that people turn to mass culture for compensation and passive distraction; the drug habit develops and they become junkies addicted to 'substitute living'. A world of rural rhythms has been lost to the monotony and mediocrity of 'suburbanism' (99). Whereas in the organic community everyday culture was a constant support to the health of the individual, in mass civilization one must make a conscious and directed effort to avoid the unhealthy influence of everyday culture. The Leavisites fail to mention, as Williams (1963) remarks, 'the penury, the petty tyranny, the disease and mortality, the ignorance and frustrated intelligence which were also among its ingredients' (253). What we are presented with is not a historical account, but a literary myth to draw attention to the nature of our supposed loss: 'the memory of the old order must be the chief incitement towards a new' (Leavis and Thompson, 1977: 97). But, although the organic community is lost, it is still possible to get access to its values and standards by reading works of great literature. Literature is a treasury embodying all that is to be valued in human experience. Unfortunately, literature as the jewel in the crown of culture, has, like culture, lost its authority. Leavisism, as noted earlier, made plans to remedy this by dispatching cultural missionaries, a small select band of literary intellectuals, to establish outposts of culture within universities to maintain the literary/cultural tradition and encourage its 'continuous collaborative renewal' (Leavis, 1972: 27); and into schools to arm students to wage war against the general barbarism of mass culture and mass civilization. The re-establishment of literature's authority would not of course herald the return of the organic community, but it would keep under control the expansion of the influence of mass culture and thus preserve and maintain the continuity of England's cultural tradition. In short, it would help maintain and produce an 'educated public', who would continue the Arnoldian project of keeping in circulation 'the best that has been thought and said' (now more or less reduced to the reading of works of great literature).

It is very easy to be critical of the Leavisite approach to popular culture. But, as Bennett (1982b) points out,

> Even as late as the mid fifties . . . 'Leavisism' [provided] the only developed intellectual terrain on which it was possible to engage with the study of popular culture. Historically, of course, the work produced by the 'Leavisites' was of seminal importance, constituting the first attempt to apply to popular forms techniques of literary analysis previously reserved for 'serious' works. . . . Perhaps more importantly, the general impact of 'Leavisism' at least as scathing in its criticisms of established 'high' and 'middle brow' culture as of popular forms tended to unsettle the prevailing canons of aesthetic judgement and evaluation with, in the long term, quite radical and often unforeseen consequences (5–6).

In Chapter 3 we shall begin to consider some of these radical and often unforeseen consequences as they appear in the work of Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams.

Mass culture in America: the post-war debate

In the first fifteen or so years following the end of the Second World War, American intellectuals engaged in a debate about so-called mass culture. Andrew Ross (1989) sees 'mass' as 'one of the key terms that governs the official distinction between American/UnAmerican' (42). He argues that, '[t]he history behind this official distinction is in many ways the history of the formation of the modern national culture' (ibid.). Following the Second World War, America experienced the temporary success of a cultural and political consensus – supposedly based on liberalism, pluralism and classlessness. Until its collapse in the agitation for black civil rights, the formation of the counterculture, the opposition to America's war in Vietnam, the women's liberation movement, and the campaign for gay and lesbian rights, it was a consensus dependent to a large extent on the cultural authority of American intellectuals. As Ross points out: 'For perhaps the first time in American history, intellectuals, as a social grouping, had the opportunity to recognize themselves as national agents of cultural, moral, and political leadership' (43). This newly found significance was in part due to 'the intense, and quite public, debate about "mass culture" that occupied intellectuals for almost fifteen years, until the late fifties' (ibid.). Ross spends most of his time relating the debate to the Cold War ideology of 'containment': the need to maintain a healthy body politic both within (from the dangers of cultural impoverishment) and without (from the dangers of Soviet communism). He identifies three positions in the debate:

1. An aesthetic–liberal position that bemoans the fact that given the choice the majority of the population choose so-called second- and third-rate cultural texts and practices in preference to the texts and practices of high culture.
2. The corporate–liberal or progressive–evolutionist position that claims that popular culture serves a benign function of socializing people into the pleasures of consumption in the new capitalist–consumerist society.
3. The radical or socialist position which views mass culture as a form of, or means to, social control.

Towards the end of the 1950s, the debate became increasingly dominated by the first two positions. This reflected in part the growing McCarthyite pressure to renounce anything resembling a socialist analysis. Given limited space, I will focus only on the debate about the health of the body politic within. In order to understand the debate one publication is essential reading – the anthology *Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America*, published in 1957. Reading the many contributions, one quickly gets a sense

of the parameters of the debate – what is at stake in the debate, and who are the principal participants.

Bernard Rosenberg (co-editor with David Manning White) argues that the material wealth and well-being of American society are being undermined by the dehumanizing effects of mass culture. His greatest anxiety is that, 'At worst, mass culture threatens not merely to cretinize our taste, but to brutalize our senses while paving the way to totalitarianism' (1957: 9). He claims that mass culture is not American by nature, or by example, nor is it the inevitable culture of democracy. Mass culture, according to Rosenberg, is nowhere more widespread than in the Soviet Union. Its author is not capitalism, but technology. Therefore America cannot be held responsible for its emergence or for its persistence. White (1957) makes a similar point but for a different purpose. 'The critics of mass culture' (13), White observes, 'take an exceedingly dim view of contemporary American society' (14). His defence of American (mass) culture is to compare it with aspects of the popular culture of the past. He maintains that critics romanticize the past in order to castigate the present. He condemns those 'who discuss American culture as if they were holding a dead vermin in their hands' (ibid.), and yet forget the sadistic and brutal reality of animal baiting that was the everyday culture in which Shakespeare's plays first appeared. His point is that every period in history has produced 'men who preyed upon the ignorance and insecurities of the largest part of the populace . . . and therefore we need not be so shocked that such men exist today' (ibid.). The second part of his defence consists of cataloguing the extent to which high culture flourishes in America: for example, Shakespeare on TV, record figures for book borrowing from libraries, a successful tour by the Sadler's Wells Ballet, the fact that more people attend classical music events than attend baseball games, the increasing number of symphony orchestras.

A key figure in the debate is Dwight Macdonald. In a very influential essay, 'A theory of mass culture', he attacks mass culture on a number of fronts. First of all, mass culture undermines the vitality of high culture. It is a parasitic culture, feeding on high culture, while offering nothing in return.

> Folk art grew from below. It was a spontaneous, autochthonous expression of the people, shaped by themselves, pretty much without the benefit of High Culture, to suit their own needs. Mass Culture is imposed from above. It is fabricated by technicians hired by businessmen; its audience are passive consumers, their participation limited to the choice between buying and not buying. The Lords of kitsch, in short, exploit the cultural needs of the masses in order to make a profit and/or to maintain their class-rule . . . in Communist countries, only the second purpose obtains. Folk art was the people's own institution, their private little garden walled off from the great formal park of their masters' High Culture. But Mass Culture breaks down the wall, integrating the masses into a debased form of High Culture and thus becoming an instrument of political domination (1998: 23).

Like other contributors to the debate, Macdonald is quick to deny the claim that America is the land of mass culture: 'the fact is that the U.S.S.R. is even more a land

of Mass Culture than is the U.S.A' (ibid.). This fact, he claims, is often missed by critics who focus only on the 'form' of mass culture in the Soviet Union. But it is mass culture (not folk culture: the expression of the people; nor high culture: the expression of the individual artist); and it differs from American mass culture in that 'its quality is even lower', and in that 'it exploits rather than satisfies the cultural needs of the masses . . . for political rather than commercial reasons' (24). In spite of its superiority to Soviet mass culture, American mass culture still represents a problem ('acute in the United States'): 'The eruption of the masses onto the political stage [produced] . . . disastrous cultural results' (ibid.). This problem has been compounded by the absence of 'a clearly defined cultural elite' (ibid.). If one existed, the masses could have mass culture and the elite could have high culture. However, without a cultural elite, America is under threat from a Gresham's Law of culture: the bad will drive out the good; the result will be not just a homogeneous culture but a 'homogenized culture . . . that threatens to engulf everything in its spreading ooze' (27), dispersing the cream from the top and turning the American people into infantile masses. His conclusions are pessimistic to say the least: 'far from Mass Culture getting better, we will be lucky if it doesn't get worse' (29).

The analysis changes again as we move from the disillusioned ex-Trotskyism of Macdonald to the liberalism of Ernest van den Haag (1957), who suggests that mass culture is the inevitable outcome of mass society and mass production:

> The mass produced article need not aim low, but it must aim at an average of tastes. In satisfying all (or at least many) individual tastes in some respects, it violates each in other respects. For there are so far no average persons having average tastes. Averages are but statistical composites. A mass produced article, while reflecting nearly everybody's taste to some extent, is unlikely to embody anybody's taste fully. This is one source of the sense of violation which is rationalized vaguely in theories about deliberate debasement of taste (512).

He also suggests another reason: the temptations offered by mass culture to high culture. Two factors must be particularly tempting: (i) the financial rewards of mass culture, and (ii) the potentially enormous audience. He uses Dante as an illustration. Although Dante may have suffered religious and political pressures, he was not tempted to shape his work to make it appeal to an average of tastes. Had he been 'tempted to write for *Sports Illustrated*' or had he been asked 'to condense his work for *Reader's Digest*' or had he been given a contract 'to adapt it for the movies', would he have been able to maintain his aesthetic and moral standards? Dante was fortunate; his talent was never really tempted to stray from the true path of creativity: 'there were no alternatives to being as good a writer as his talent permitted' (521).

It is not so much that mass taste has deteriorated, van den Haag argues, but that mass taste has become more important to the cultural producers in Western societies. Like White, he notes the plurality of cultural texts and practices consumed in America. However, he also notes the way in which high culture and folk culture are absorbed into mass culture, and are consequently consumed as mass culture: 'it is not new nor

disastrous that few people read classics. It is new that so many people misread them' (528). He cannot help in the end declaring that mass culture is a drug which 'lessens people's capacity to experience life itself' (529). Mass culture is ultimately a sign of impoverishment. It marks the de-individualization of life: an endless search after what Freud calls 'substitute gratifications'.[7] The trouble with substitute gratifications, according to the mass culture critique, is that they shut out 'real gratifications' (532–5). This leads van den Haag to suggest that the consumption of mass culture is a form of repression; the empty texts and practices of mass culture are consumed to fill an emptiness within, which grows ever more empty the more the empty texts and practices of mass culture are consumed. The operation of this cycle of repression makes it increasingly impossible to experience 'real gratification'. The result is a nightmare in which the cultural 'masturbator' or the 'addict' of mass culture is trapped in a cycle of non-fulfilment, moving aimlessly between boredom and distraction:

> Though the bored person hungers for things to happen to him, the disheartening fact is that when they do he empties them of the very meaning he unconsciously yearns for by using them as distractions. In popular culture even the second coming would become just another 'barren' thrill to be watched on television till Milton Berle comes on (535).

Van den Haag differs from the 'cultural nostalgics', who use romanticized versions of the past to condemn the present, in his uncertainty about the past. He knows that 'popular culture impoverishes life without leading to contentment. But whether "the mass of men" felt better or worse without mass production techniques of which popular culture is an ineluctable part, we shall never know' (536). Edward Shils (1978) has none of van den Haag's uncertainty. Moreover, he knows that when van den Haag says that industry has impoverished life he is talking nonsense:

> The present pleasures of the working and lower middle class are not worthy of profound aesthetic, moral or intellectual esteem but they are surely not inferior to the villainous things which gave pleasure to their European ancestors from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century (35).

Shils rejects completely

> the utterly erroneous idea that the twentieth century is a period of severe intellectual deterioration and that this alleged deterioration is a product of a mass culture. . . . Indeed, it would be far more correct to assert that mass culture is now less damaging to the lower classes than the dismal and harsh existence of earlier centuries had ever been (36).

As far as Shils can see the problem is not mass culture, but the response of intellectuals to mass culture. In similar fashion, D.W. Brogan (1978), whilst in agreement with much of Macdonald's argument, remains more optimistic. He believes that

Macdonald in being 'so grimly critical of the present America, is too kind to the past in America and to the past and present in Europe' (191). In this way, Macdonald's pessimism about the present is only sustained by his overly optimistic view of the past. In short, he 'exaggerates . . . the bad eminence of the United States' (193).

In 'The middle against both ends', Leslie Fiedler (1957), unlike most other contributors to the debate, claims that mass culture

> is a peculiarly American phenomenon. . . . I do not mean . . . that it is found only in the United States, but that wherever it is found, it comes first from us, and is still to be discovered in fully developed form only among us. Our experience along these lines is, in this sense, a preview for the rest of the world of what must follow the inevitable dissolution of the older aristocratic cultures (539).

For Fiedler, mass culture is popular culture that 'refuses to know its place'. As he explains,

> contemporary vulgar culture is brutal and disturbing: the quasi spontaneous expression of the uprooted and culturally dispossessed inhabitants of anonymous cities, contriving mythologies which reduce to manageable form the threat of science, the horror of unlimited war, the general spread of corruption in a world where the social bases of old loyalties and heroisms have long been destroyed (540).

Fiedler poses the question: What is wrong with American mass culture? He knows that for some critics, at home and abroad, the fact that it is American is enough reason to condemn it. But, for Fiedler, the inevitability of the American experience makes the argument meaningless; that is, unless those who support the argument are also against industrialization, mass education and democracy. He sees America 'in the midst of a strange two-front class war'. In the centre is 'the genteel middling mind', at the top is 'the ironical-aristocratic sensibility', and at the bottom is 'the brutal-populist mentality' (545). The attack on popular culture is a symptom of timidity and an expression of conformity in matters of culture: 'the fear of the vulgar is the obverse of the fear of excellence, and both are aspects of the fear of difference: symptoms of a drive for conformity on the level of the timid, sentimental, mindless-bodiless genteel' (547). The genteel middling mind wants cultural equality on its own terms. This is not the Leavisite demand for cultural deference, but an insistence on an end to cultural difference. Therefore, Fiedler sees American mass culture as hierarchical and pluralist, rather than homogenized and levelling. Moreover, he celebrates it as such.

Shils (1978) suggests a similar model – American culture is divided into three cultural 'classes', each embodying different versions of the cultural: '"superior" or "refined" culture' at the top, '"mediocre" culture' in the middle, and '"brutal" culture' at the bottom (206). Mass society has changed the cultural map, reducing the significance of 'superior or refined culture', and increasing the importance of both 'mediocre' and 'brutal' (209). However, Shils does not see this as a totally negative development: 'It is an indication of a crude aesthetic awakening in classes which previously accepted what was handed down to them or who had practically no aesthetic expression and reception' (ibid.). Like Fiedler, Shils does not shy away from the claim that America is the home of mass culture. He calls America 'that most massive of all mass societies' (218). But he remains optimistic: 'As a matter of fact, the vitality, the individuality, which may rehabilitate our intellectual public will probably be the fruits of the liberation of powers and possibilities inherent in mass societies' (226). As Ross (1989) suggests, in Fiedler's essay, and in the work of other writers in the 1950s and early 1960s,

> the concept of 'class' makes a conditional return after its years in the intellectual wilderness. This time, however, class analysis returns not to draw attention to conflicts and contradictions, as had been the case in the thirties, but rather to serve a hegemonic moment in which a consensus was being established about the non antagonistic coexistence of different political conceptions of the world. Cultural classes could exist as long as they kept themselves to themselves (58).

Cultural choice and consumption become both the sign of class belonging and the mark of class difference. However, instead of class antagonism, there is only plurality of consumer choice within a general consensus of the dangers within and the dangers without. In short, the debate about mass culture had become the terrain on which to construct the Cold War ideology of containment. After all, as Melvin Tumin (1957) points out, 'America and Americans have available to them the resources, both of mind and matter, to build and support the finest culture the world has ever known' (550). The fact that this has not yet occurred does not dismay Tumin; for him it simply prompts the question: How do we make it happen? For the answer, he looks to American intellectuals, who 'never before have . . . been so well placed in situations where they can function as intellectuals' (ibid.), and through the debate on mass culture, to take the lead in helping to build the finest *popular culture* the world has ever known.

The culture of other people

It is easy to be critical of the 'culture and civilization' tradition's approach to popular culture. Given the recent developments in the field of cultural theory, it is almost enough to present a narrative of its approach to condemn it to populist disapproval. However, it must be remembered that from a historical point of view, the tradition's work is absolutely foundational to the project of the study of popular culture in British cultural studies. Furthermore, the impact of the tradition is difficult to overestimate: for more than a century it was undoubtedly the dominant paradigm in cultural analysis. Indeed, it could be argued that it still forms a kind of repressed 'common sense' in certain areas of British and American academic and non-academic life.

Although the 'culture and civilization' tradition, especially in its Leavisite form, created an educational space for the study of popular culture, there is also a real sense in which this approach to popular culture 'actively impeded its development as an area of study' (Bennett, 1982b: 6). The principal problem is its working assumption that popular culture always represents little more than an example of cultural decline and potential political disorder. Given this assumption, theoretical research and empirical investigation continued to confirm what it always expected to find.

> It was an assumption of the theory that there was something wrong with popular culture and, of course, once that assumption had been made, all the rest followed: one found what one was looking for – signs of decay and deterioration – precisely because the theory required that these be found. In short, the only role offered to the products of popular culture was that of fall guy (ibid.).

As we have noted, popular culture is condemned for many things. However, as Bennett points out, the 'culture and civilization' tradition is not noted for its detailed analyses of the texts and practices of popular culture. Instead, it looked down from the splendid heights of high culture to what it saw as the commercial wastelands of popular culture, seeking only confirmation of cultural decline, cultural difference, and the need for cultural deference, regulation and control. It

> was very much a discourse of the 'cultured' about the culture of those without 'culture'. . . . In short, popular culture was approached from a distance and gingerly, held at arm's length by outsiders who clearly lacked any sense of fondness for or participation in the forms they were studying. It was always the culture of 'other people' that was at issue (ibid.).

The anxieties of the 'culture and civilization' tradition are anxieties about social and cultural extension: how to deal with challenges to cultural and social exclusivity. As the nineteenth century receded, and those traditionally outside 'culture' and 'society' demanded inclusion, strategies were adopted to incorporate and to exclude. Acceptance brought into being 'high society' and 'high culture', to be distinguished from society and culture or, better still, mass society and mass culture. In short, it is a tradition that demanded, and expected, two responses from the 'masses' (see Photo 2.1) – cultural and social difference and cultural and social deference. As we shall see (in Chapters 9 and 10), some of the debates around postmodernism may be in part little more than the latest struggle for inclusion in, and exclusion from, Culture (with a capital C), which ultimately is less about texts, and much more about people and their everyday lived cultures.



Photo 2.1 A day trip to Blackpool in the early 1950s. There are . . . no masses; there are only ways of seeing [other] people as masses (Raymond Williams, 1963: 289).

Further reading

Storey, John (ed.), *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, 4th edition, Harlow: Pearson Education, 2009. This is the companion volume to this book. It contains examples of most of the work discussed here. This book and the companion Reader are supported by an interactive website (www.pearsoned.co.uk/storey). The website has links to other useful sites and electronic resources.

Baldick, Chris, *The Social Mission of English 1848–1932*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983. Contains interesting and informed chapters on Arnold and Leavisism.

Bilan, R.P., *The Literary Criticism of F.R. Leavis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979. Although mostly on Leavis as a literary critic, it contains some useful material on his attitude to high and popular culture.

Bramson, Leon, *The Political Context of Sociology*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961. Contains an illuminating chapter on the mass culture debate in America.

Gans, Herbert J., *Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste*, New York: Basic Books, 1974. The book is a late contribution to the mass culture debate in America. It presents a compelling argument in defence of cultural pluralism.

Johnson, Lesley, *The Cultural Critics*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979. Contains useful chapters on Arnold and on F.R. Leavis.

Mulhern, Francis, *The Moment of Scrutiny*, London: New Left Books, 1979. Perhaps the classic account of Leavisism.

Ross, Andrew, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture*, London: Routledge, 1989. An interesting book, with a useful chapter on the mass culture debate in America.

Trilling, Lionel, *Matthew Arnold*, London: Unwin University Press, 1949. Still the best introduction to Arnold.

Waites, Bernard, Tony Bennett and Graham Martin (eds), *Popular Culture: Past and Present*, London: Croom Helm, 1982. A collection of essays on different examples of popular culture. Chapters 1, 4 and 6 address popular culture and the historical context that gave rise to the anxieties of the 'culture and civilization' tradition.

Williams, Raymond, *Culture and Society*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963. The seminal book on the 'culture and civilization' tradition: includes chapters on Arnold and F.R. Leavis.

Chapter 1

Raymond Williams

'Culture' and 'Masses'

Culture

Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. This is so partly because of its intricate historical development, in several European languages, but mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought.

The fw is *cultura*, L, from rw *colere*, L. *Colere* had a range of meanings: inhabit, cultivate, protect, honour with worship. Some of these meanings eventually separated, though still with occasional overlapping, in the derived nouns. Thus 'inhabit' developed through *colonus*, L to *colony*. 'Honour with worship' developed through *cultus*, L to *cult*. *Cultura* took on the main meaning of cultivation or tending, including, as in Cicero, *cultura animi*, though with subsidiary medieval meanings of honour and worship (cf. in English culture as 'worship' in Caxton (1483)). The French forms of *cultura* were *couture*, oF, which has since developed its own specialized meaning, and later *culture*, which by eC15 had passed into English. The primary meaning was then in husbandry, the tending of natural growth.

Culture in all its early uses was a noun of process: the tending *of* something, basically crops or animals. The subsidiary *coulter* – ploughshare, had travelled by a different linguistic route, from *culter*, L – ploughshare, *culter*, oE, to the variant English spellings *culter, colter, coulter* and as late as eC17 culture (Webster, *Duchess of Malfi*, III, ii: 'hot burning cultures'). This provided a further basis for the important next stage of meaning, by metaphor. From eC16 the tending of natural growth was

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From: Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. London: Fontana, 1976.

extended to a process of human development, and this, alongside the original meaning in husbandry, was the main sense until lC18 and eC19. Thus More: 'to the culture and profit of their minds'; Bacon: 'the culture and manurance of minds' (1605); Hobbes: 'a culture of their minds' (1651); Johnson: 'she neglected the culture of her understanding' (1759). At various points in this development two crucial changes occurred: first, a degree of habituation to the metaphor, which made the sense of human tending direct; second, an extension of particular processes to a general process, which the word could abstractly carry. It is of course from the latter development that the independent noun culture began its complicated modern history, but the process of change is so intricate, and the latencies of meaning are at times so close, that it is not possible to give any definite date. Culture as an independent noun, an abstract process or the product of such a process, is not important before lC18 and is not common before mC19. But the early stages of this development were not sudden. There is an interesting use in Milton, in the second (revised) edition of *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (1660): 'spread much more Knowledg and Civility, yea, Religion, through all parts of the Land, by communicating the natural heat of Government and Culture more distributively to all extreme parts, which now lie num and neglected'. Here the metaphorical sense ('natural heat') still appears to be present, and *civility* is still written where in C19 we would normally expect culture. Yet we can also read 'government and culture' in a quite modern sense. Milton, from the tenor of his whole argument, is writing about a general social process, and this is a definite stage of development. In C18 England this general process acquired definite class associations though cultivation and cultivated were more commonly used for this. But there is a letter of 1730 (Bishop of Killala, to Mrs Clayton; cit Plumb, *England in the Eighteenth Century*) which has this clear sense: 'it has not been customary for' persons of either birth or culture to breed up their children to the Church'. Akenside (*Pleasures of Imagination*, 1744) wrote: '... nor purple state nor culture can bestow'. Wordsworth wrote 'where grace of culture hath been utterly unknown' (1805), and Jane Austen (*Emma*, 1816) 'every advantage of discipline and culture'.

It is thus clear that culture was developing in English towards some of its modern senses before the decisive effects of a new social and intellectual movement. But to follow the development through this movement, in lC18 and eC19, we have to look also at developments in other languages and especially in German.

In French, until C18, culture was always accompanied by a grammatical form indicating the matter being cultivated, as in the English usage already noted. Its occasional use as an independent noun dates from mC18, rather later than similar occasional uses in English. The independent noun *civilization* also emerged in mC18; its relationship to culture has since been very complicated. There was at this point an important development in German: the word was borrowed from French, spelled first (lC18) *Cultur* and from C19 *Kultur*. Its main use was still as a synonym for *civilization*: first in the abstract sense of a general process of becoming 'civilized' or 'cultivated'; second, in the sense which had already been established for *civilization* by the historians of the Enlightenment, in the popular C18 form of the universal histories, as a description of the secular process of human development. There was then a decisive change of use in Herder. In his unfinished *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (1784–91) he wrote of *Cultur*: 'nothing is more indeterminate than this word, and nothing more deceptive than its application to all nations and periods'. He attacked the assumption of the

universal histories that 'civilization' or 'culture' – the historical self-development of humanity – was what we would now call a unilinear process, leading to the high and dominant point of C18 European culture. Indeed he attacked what he called European subjugation and domination of the four quarters of the globe, and wrote:

> Men of all the quarters of the globe, who have perished over the ages, you have not lived solely to manure the earth with your ashes, so that at the end of time your posterity should be made happy by European culture. The very thought of a superior European culture is a blatant insult to the majesty of Nature.

It is then necessary, he argued, in a decisive innovation, to speak of 'cultures' in the plural: the specific and variable cultures of different nations and periods, but also the specific and variable cultures of social and economic groups within a nation. This sense was widely developed, in the Romantic movement, as an alternative to the orthodox and dominant '*civilization*'. It was first used to emphasize national and traditional cultures, including the new concept of folk-culture. It was later used to attack what was seen as the 'MECHANICAL' character of the new civilization then emerging: both for its abstract rationalism and for the 'inhumanity' of current industrial development. It was used to distinguish between 'human' and 'material' development. Politically, as so often in this period, it veered between radicalism and reaction and very often, in the confusion of major social change, fused elements of both. (It should also be noted, though it adds to the real complication, that the same kind of distinction, especially between 'material' and 'spiritual' development, was made by von Humboldt and others, until as late as 1900, with a reversal of the terms, culture being material and *civilization* spiritual. In general, however, the opposite distinction was dominant.)

On the other hand, from the 1840s in Germany, *Kultur* was being used in very much the sense in which *civilization* had been used in C18 universal histories. The decisive innovation is G.F. Klemm's *Allgemeine Kulturgeschichte der Menschheit* – 'General Cultural History of Mankind' (1843–52) – which traced human development from savagery through domestication to freedom. Although the American anthropologist Morgan, tracing comparable stages, used 'Ancient *Society*', with a culmination in *Civilization*, Klemm's sense was sustained, and was directly followed in English by Tylor in *Primitive Culture* (1870). It is along this line of reference that the dominant sense in modern social sciences has to be traced.

The complexity of the modern development of the word, and of its modern usage, can then be appreciated. We can easily distinguish the sense which depends on a literal continuity of physical process as now in 'sugar-beet culture' or, in the specialized physical application in bacteriology since the 1880s, 'germ culture'. But once we go beyond the physical reference, we have to recognize three broad active categories of usage. The sources of two of these we have already discussed: (i) the independent and abstract noun which describes a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development, from C18; (ii) the independent noun, whether used generally or specifically, which indicates a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity in general, from Herder and Klemm. But we have also to recognize (iii) the independent and abstract noun which describes the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity. This seems often now the most widespread use: culture is music, literature, painting and sculpture, theatre and film. A Ministry of Culture

refers to these specific activities, sometimes with the addition of philosophy, scholarship, history. This use, (iii), is in fact relatively late. It is difficult to date precisely because it is in origin an applied form of sense (i): the idea of a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development was applied and effectively transferred to the works and practices which represent and sustain it. But it also developed from the earlier sense of process; cf. 'progressive culture of fine arts', Millar, *Historical View of the English Government,* IV, 314 (1812). In English (i) and (iii) are still close; at times, for internal reasons, they are indistinguishable as in Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (1869); while sense (ii) was decisively introduced into English by Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (1870), following Klemm. The decisive development of sense (iii) in English was in lC19 and eC20.

Faced by this complex and still active history of the word, it is easy to react by selecting one 'true' or 'proper' or 'scientific' sense and dismissing other senses as loose or confused. There is evidence of this reaction even in the excellent study by Kroeber and Kluckhohn, *Culture: a Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* [1963, New York: Vintage Books], where usage in North American anthropology is in effect taken as a norm. It is clear that, within a discipline, conceptual usage has to be clarified. But in general it is the range and overlap of meanings that is significant. The complex of senses indicates a complex argument about the relations between general human development and a particular way of life, and between both and the works and practices of art and intelligence. It is especially interesting that in archaeology and in *cultural anthropology* the reference to culture or a culture is primarily to *material* production, while in history and *cultural studies* the reference is primarily to *signifying* or *symbolic* systems. This often confuses but even more often conceals the central question of the relations between 'material' and 'symbolic' production, which in some recent argument – cf. my own *Culture* – have always to be related rather than contrasted. Within this complex argument there are fundamentally opposed as well as effectively overlapping positions; there are also, understandably, many unresolved questions and confused answers. But these arguments and questions cannot be resolved by reducing the complexity of actual usage. This point is relevant also to uses of forms of the word in languages other than English, where there is considerable variation. The anthropological use is common in the German, Scandinavian and Slavonic language groups, but it is distinctly subordinate to the senses of art and learning, or of a general process of human development, in Italian and French. Between languages as within a language, the range and complexity of sense and reference indicate both difference of intellectual position and some blurring or overlapping. These variations, of whatever kind, necessarily involve alternative views of the activities, relationships and processes which this complex word indicates. The complexity, that is to say, is not finally in the word but in the problems which its variations of use significantly indicate.

It is necessary to look also at some associated and derived words. Cultivation and cultivated went through the same metaphorical extension from a physical to a social or educational sense in C17, and were especially significant words in C18. Coleridge, making a classical eC19 distinction between civilization and culture, wrote (1830): 'the permanent distinction, and occasional contrast, between cultivation and civilization'. The noun in this sense has effectively disappeared but the adjective is still quite common, especially in relation to manners and tastes. The important adjective cultural appears to date from the 1870s; it became common by the 1890s. The word

is only available, in its modern sense, when the independent noun, in the artistic and intellectual or anthropological senses, has become familiar. Hostility to the word culture in English appears to date from the controversy around Arnold's views. It gathered force in lC19 and eC20, in association with a comparable hostility to *aesthete*. Its association with class distinction produced the mime-word *culchah*. There was also an area of hostility associated with anti-German feeling, during and after the 1914–18 War, in relation to propaganda about *Kultur*. The central area of hostility has lasted, and one element of it has been emphasized by the recent American phrase culture-vulture. It is significant that virtually all the hostility (with the sole exception of the temporary anti-German association) has been connected with uses involving claims to superior knowledge, refinement (*culchah*) and distinctions between 'high' art (culture) and popular art and entertainment. It thus records a real social history and a very difficult and confused phase of social and cultural development. It is interesting that the steadily extending social and anthropological use of culture and cultural and such formations as sub-culture (the culture of a distinguishable smaller group) has, except in certain areas (notably popular entertainment), either bypassed or effectively diminished the hostility and its associated unease and embarrassment. [...]

Masses

Mass is not only a very common but a very complex word in social description. The masses, while less complex, is especially interesting because it is ambivalent: a term of contempt in much conservative thought, but a positive term in much socialist thought.

Terms of contempt for the majority of a people have a long and abundant history. In most early descriptions the significant sense is of *base* or *low*, from the implicit and often explicit physical model of a society arranged in successive stages or layers. This physical model has determined much of the vocabulary of social description; compare *standing, status, eminence, prominence* and the description of social *levels, grades, estates* and *degrees*. At the same time more particular terms of description of certain 'low' groups have been extended: *plebeian* from Latin *plebs; villein* and *boor* from feudal society. COMMON added the sense of 'lowness' to the sense of mutuality, especially in the phrase 'the common people'. *Vulgar* by C16 had lost most of its positive or neutral senses and was becoming a synonym for 'low' or 'base'; a better derived sense was preserved in *vulgate*. *The people* itself became ambiguous, as in C17 arguments which attempted to distinguish the 'better sort' of people from the *meaner* or *basest*. The grand ratifying phrase, *the people*, can still be applied, according to political position, either generally or selectively.

Terms of open political contempt or fear have their own history. In C16 and C17 the key word was *multitude* [...]. Although there was often reference to *the vulgar* and *the rabble*, the really significant noun was *multitude*, often with reinforcing description of numbers in *many-headed*. There were also *base multitude, giddy multitude, hydra-headed monster multitude* and *headless multitude*. This stress on large numbers is significant when compared with the later development of mass,

though it must always have been an obvious observation that the most evident thing about 'the common people' was that there were so many of them.

Base is an obvious sense, ascribing lowness of social condition and morality. *Idiot* and *giddy* may have originally overlapped, from 'ignorant' and 'foolish' to the earlier sense of *giddy* as 'crazed' (it had signified, originally, possession by a god). But the sense of *giddy* as 'unstable' became historically more important; it is linked with the Latin phrase *mobile vulgus* – the unstable common people, which by lC17 was being shortened to English *mob*. [...]. The common C16 and C17 *multitude* was steadily replaced, from C18, by *mob*, though with continuing support from the usual battery of *vulgar, base, common* and *mean. Mob* has of course persisted into contemporary usage, but it has been since eC19 much more specific: a particular unruly crowd rather than a general condition. The word that then came through, for the general condition, was mass, followed by the masses.

Mass had been widely used, in a range of meanings, from C15, from fw *masse*, F and *massa*, L – a body of material that can be moulded or cast [...] and by extension any large body of material. Two significant but alternative senses can be seen developing: (i) something amorphous and indistinguishable; (ii) a dense aggregate. The possible overlaps and variations are obvious. There was the use in *Othello*: 'I remember a masse of things, but nothing distinctly'. There is the significant use in Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*, on the edge of a modern meaning: 'like so many atoms contributing jointly to this mass of confusion now before us'. Neutral uses of mass were developing in the physical sciences, in painting and in everyday use to indicate bulk. [...] But the social sense can be seen coming through in lC17 and eC18: 'the Corrupted Mass' (1675); 'the mass of the people' (1711); 'the whole mass of mankind' (1713). But this was still indeterminate, until the period of the French Revolution. Then a particular use was decisive. As Southey observed in 1807: 'the levy in mass, the telegraph and the income-tax are all from France'. Anna Seward had written in 1798: 'our nation has almost risen in mass'. In a period of revolution and open social conflict many of the things that had been said, during the English Revolution, about *the multitude* were now said about the mass, and by the 1830s, at latest, the masses was becoming a common term, though still sometimes needing a special mark of novelty. A sense of the relation of the term to the INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION appears to be evident in Gaskell's 'the steam engine has drawn together the population into dense masses' (*The Manufacturing Population of England*, 6; 1833). Moore in 1837 wrote: 'one of the few proofs of good Taste that 'the masses', as they are called, have yet given', and Carlyle, in 1839: 'men ... to whom millions of living fellow-creatures ... are 'masses', mere 'explosive masses for blowing down Bastilles with', for voting at hustings for *us*'. These two examples neatly illustrate the early divergence of implication. Moore picked up the new word in a cultural context, to indicate 'lowness' or 'vulgarity' as distinct from TASTE. Carlyle was aware of the precise historical reference to the revolutionary *levée en masse* but was also sufficiently aware of the established usage in physical science to carry through the metaphor of explosion. He also, significantly, linked the revolutionary usage, which he condemned as manipulative, with the electoral or parliamentary usage – 'voting at hustings for *us*' – which was given the same manipulative association.

The senses are thus very complex, for there is a persistence of the earlier senses (i) and (ii) of mass. Sense (i), of something amorphous and indistinguishable,

persisted especially in the established phrase in the mass, as in Rogers (1820): 'we condemn millions in the mass as vindictive'; or Martineau (1832): 'we speak of society as one thing, and regard men in the mass', where what is implied is a failure to make necessary distinctions. Increasingly, however, though less naturally in English than in either French or German, the positive sense (ii), of a dense aggregate, was given direct social significance, as in the directly comparable *solidarity.* It was when the people acted together, 'as one man', that they could effectively change their condition. Here what had been in sense (i) a lack of necessary distinction or discrimination became, from sense (ii), an avoidance of unnecessary division or fragmentation and thus an achievement of unity. Most English radicals continued to use *the people* and its variations – *common people, working people, ordinary people* – as their primary positive terms, though in lC19 there was a common contrast between the masses and '*the classes*': 'back the masses against the classes' (Gladstone, 1886). Masses and its variants – the broad masses, the working masses, the toiling masses – have continued to be specifically used (at times in imperfect translation) in the revolutionary tradition.

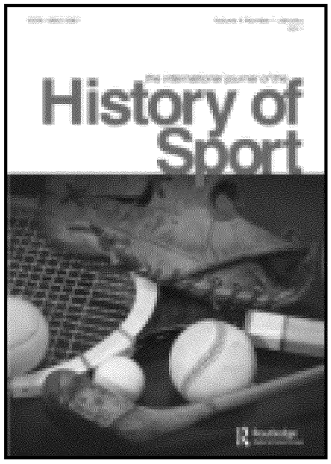
In the modern social sense, then, masses and mass have two distinguishable kinds of implication. Masses (i) is the modern word for *many-headed multitude* or *mob:* low, ignorant, unstable. Masses (ii) is a description of the same people but now seen as a positive or potentially positive social force. The distinction became critical in many of the derived and associated forms. Mass meeting, from mC19, was sense (ii): people came together for some common social purpose (though the derogatory like a mass meeting is significant as a reaction). But sense (i), as in 'there are very few original eyes and ears; the great mass see and hear as they are directed by others' (S. Smith, 1803), has come through in C20 in several formations: mass society, mass suggestion, mass taste. Most of these formations have been relatively sophisticated kinds of criticism of DEMOCRACY, which, having become from eC19 an increasingly respectable word, seemed to need, in one kind of thought, this effective alternative. Mass-democracy can describe a manipulated political system, but it more often describes a system which is governed by uninstructed or ignorant preferences and opinions: the classical complaint against *democracy* itself. At the same time several of these formations have been influenced by the most popular among them: mass production, from USA in the 1920s. This does not really describe the process *of production,* which in fact, as originally on an assembly line, is multiple and serial. What it describes is a process of *consumption,* the mass market, where mass is a variation of sense (i), *the many-headed multitude* but now a *many-headed multitude* with purchasing power. Mass market was contrasted with *quality market,* retaining more of sense (i), but by extension mass production came to mean production in large numbers. The deepest difficulty of C20 uses of mass is then apparent: that a word which had indicated and which still indicates (both favourably and unfavourably) a solid aggregate now also means a very large number of things or people. The sense of a very large number has on the whole predominated. Mass communication and the mass media are by comparison with all previous systems not directed at masses (persons assembled) but at numerically very large yet in individual homes relatively isolated members of audiences. Several senses are fused but also confused: the large numbers reached (*the many-headed multitude* or *the majority of the people*); the mode adopted (*manipulative* or *popular*); the

assumed taste (*vulgar* or *ordinary*); the resulting relationship (*alienated and abstract* or a *new kind of social communication*).

The most piquant element of the mass and masses complex, in contemporary usage, is its actively opposite social implications. To be engaged in mass work, to belong to mass organizations, to value mass meetings and mass movements, to live wholly in the service of the masses: these are the phrases of an active revolutionary tradition. But to study mass taste, to use the mass media, to control a mass market, to engage in mass observation, to understand mass psychology or mass opinion: these are the phrases of a wholly opposite social and political tendency. Some part of the revolutionary usage can be understood from the fact that in certain social conditions revolutionary intellectuals or revolutionary parties do not come from *the people,* and then see 'them', beyond themselves, as masses with whom and for whom they must work: masses as object or mass as material to be worked on. But the active history of the *levée en masse* has been at least as influential. In the opposite tendency, mass and masses moved away from the older simplicities of contempt [...]. The C20 formations are mainly ways of dealing with large numbers of people, on the whole indiscriminately perceived but crucial to several operations in politics, in commerce and in culture. The mass is assumed and then often, ironically, divided into parts again: *upper* or *lower* ends of the mass market; the *better kind* of mass entertainment. Mass society would then be a society organized or perceived in such ways; but, as a final complication, mass society has also been used, with some relation to its earlier conservative context, as a new term in radical and even revolutionary criticism. Mass society, massification (usually with strong reference to the mass media) are seen as modes of disarming or incorporating the *working class,* the *proletariat,* the masses: that is to say, they are new modes of alienation and control, which prevent and are designed to prevent the development of an authentic *popular* consciousness. It is thus possible to visualize, or at least hope for, a mass uprising against mass society, or a mass protest against the mass media, or mass organization against massification. The distinction that is being made, or attempted, in these contrasting political uses, is between the masses as the SUBJECT and the masses as the *object* of social action.

It is in the end not surprising that this should be so. In most of its uses masses is a cant word, but the problems of large societies and of collective action and reaction to which, usually confusingly, it and its derivatives and associates are addressed, are real enough and have to be continually spoken about.

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Rivalries: China, Japan and South Korea – Memory, Modernity, Politics, Geopolitics – and Sport

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Rivalries: China, Japan and South Korea – Memory, Modernity, Politics, Geopolitics – and Sport

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Sport is an effective modern means for revealing a country's political preoccupations and geopolitical concerns. For China, Japan and South Korea, the pre-eminent countries in the recent Asian Games, sport has become a sharp tool for promoting nationalism and national identity. There is a history of bitter rivalry between these countries, not least, due to Japan's occupation of Korea and the Second Sino-Japanese War, the largest Asian war in the twentieth century. Consequently, a prominent characteristic of Korean and Chinese nationalism is anti-Japanese antipathy. This essay examines China–Japan–Korea rivalry through global sports events hosted in Asia during the past decade cumulating in the Guangzhou Asian Games. Here, the focus is on the use of these events as manifestations of resentment and revenge arising out of historic rivalries. This use may well grow in intensity as these nations grow in wealth, confidence and power as the EAST ASIAN EPOCH comes closer. This essay is the first to draw attention to the tripartite politics of sport as confrontation in the region's past, present and future.

Keywords: China; Japan; Korea; sport; confrontation

Part 1

Preliminary Consideration

This is a preliminary consideration of confrontation between three modern East Asian nations expressed through modern sport, and in addition, a brief consideration of South Korea's antagonism to the USA viewed by some Koreans as a Western neo-colonial intrusive power rather than a contributor to its democratic freedom.

The central argument here is that the past historical conflict fuels present confrontation in sport and that this will increase in intensity in future as these countries increase in power, prosperity and confidence and seek to project themselves successfully through modern sport – a powerful medium for self-projection.

Critical Concepts

The term 'nationalism', among other things, can represent statism, racialism and ultra-nationalism associated with a state. The term 'state' here is to be understood as a demarcated territory and its people united over time and by a shared language and culture and a

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sovereign ruling system. 'Statism' here stands for the belief that the power of the state is more important than the freedom of the individual. 'Racialism' may be said to represent here the pursuit of political unity, independence and prosperity of an ethic community. Invoking nationalism to sustain political legitimacy – through sport – the focus of this essay – can be pathological in both intention and outcome. This phenomenon is not unknown in East Asia in the form of 'ultra-nationalism', and this essay is a preliminary explanation of this phenomenon.

In post-war Asia, the relationship between sport and politics has steadily advanced in significance. This is nowhere better illustrated than in the fractious relationship in sport over recent years between the Koreas – North and South following the tragic civil war. However, the political confrontational significance of modern sport in Korea as a pathological manifestation goes back further to the pre-Second World War era of the Japanese imperial oppressor when Korea was a united nation.[1]

The Japanese occupation of Korea furnishes a brutal example of sport as pathological nationalism in the form of sport as a method of conditioning into regimented subjection (see Figure 1).[2] For this reason, among others, it is often argued that sport should be independent of politics. This is a lost cause. Sport is a frequent form of politics. East Asia is no exception to the rule. There is a recent outstanding recent illustration: Beijing 2008 – 'the Geopolitical Games'.[3] Tokyo 1964 and Seoul 1988, incidentally, are not exempt from this rule, albeit to a different practical elemental purpose: Tokyo – the desire to be re-absorbed into the civilised nations of the world following the demise of Japanese Fascism, and Seoul – the desire to make it clear to the nations of the world that South Korea was a new independent and successful nation. Beijing 2008, of course, was an ideological proclamation: Communist China Ascendant and moving impressively and inexorably forwards towards regaining its regional, and perhaps global, status once more as the 'Middle Kingdom'. Guangzhou 2010 was equally a geopolitical proclamation of intent – on this occasion for regional eyes and ears: a reinforcement of the Beijing 2008 message. Brand China was once again marketed through compelling images – this time a 'Glittering Guangzhou' and gold medal of the adorned Chinese athletic.

All states have learnt to utilise modern sports mega-events as political tools. This is now the reality throughout East Asia. It is certainly no secret that sport and politics have been inseparable in the modern era in East Asia as elsewhere.

To return briefly to the consideration of the United Korean nation under Japanese imperial control, Lee Hak-Rae has claimed that the Chosun Sports Council on July 13, 1920, during the early twentieth-century Japanese oppression, was influenced by the national resistance of the March 1st Movement in 1919.[4] He bases this claim on the fact that the annual tournaments between 1929 and 1934 held by the Council were designed to use sport to sustain the people's sense of unity and argues that this demonstrated an attempt to keep alive the oppressed nation's spirit through sport. Nationalism and sport took on a new aspect in the later authoritarian Park Chung-hee regime.[5] Park Chan-seung believes that the dominant feature of the ruthless Park era was statism and claimed that Park's lavish regime combined statism *and* militarism after the Revitalization Reform in October 1972.[6] In the early 1970s, it is a well-known fact that sport was aggressively promoted for political purposes during those years of military dictatorship. Furthermore, significant events during this period, the construction of the Taereung Training Centre, support for the national football team, the Presidential Cup soccer tournament, the emergence of the national gymnastics and physical fitness tests, the creation of professional baseball and football leagues, the Seoul Asian Games and the Seoul Olympics

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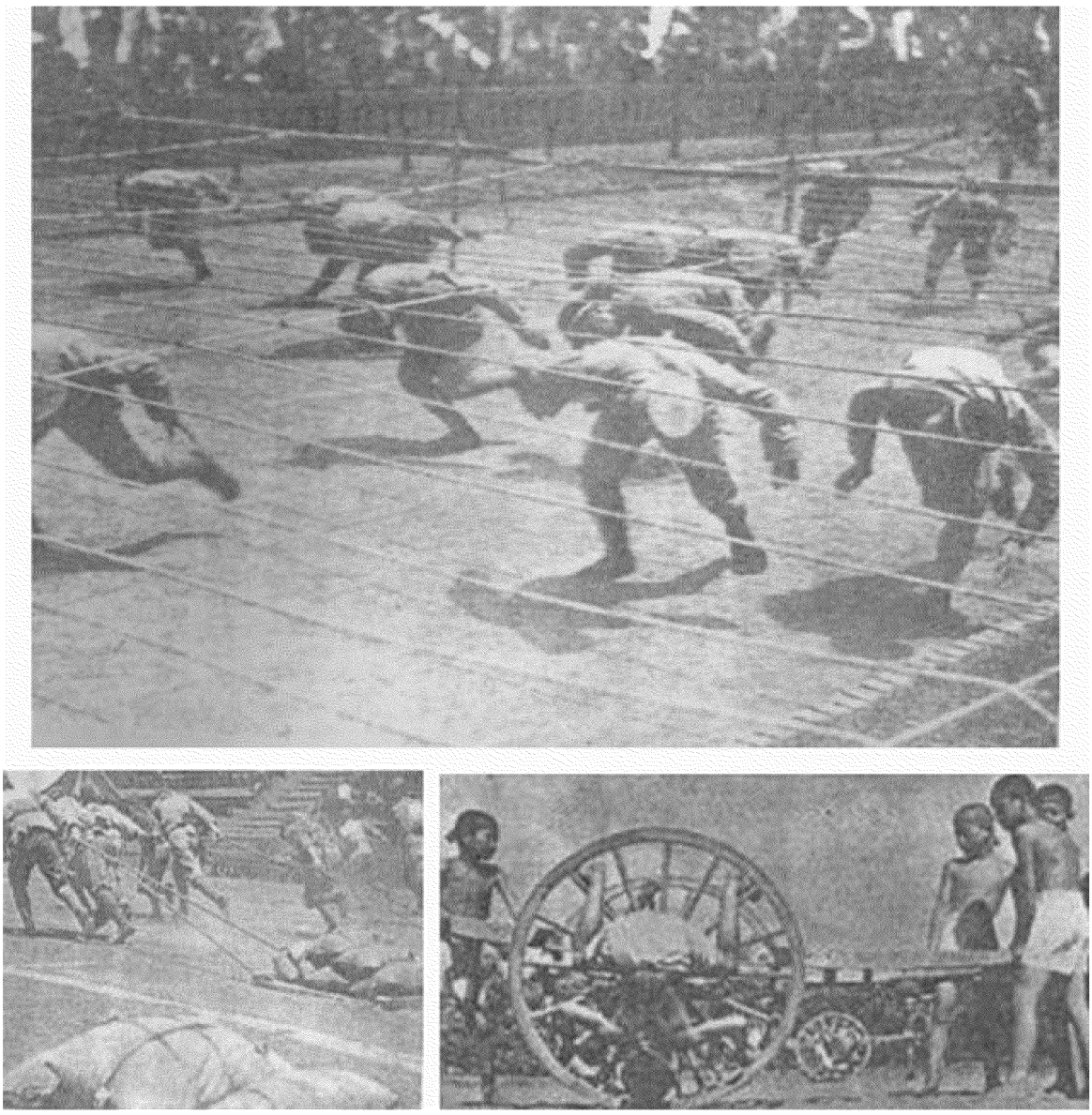


Figure 1. Military related physical activities and training of Korean people during the Japanese colonisation. *Source*: From the collection of Gwang Ok.

during the military regime of Chun Doo-hwan,[7] were the products of dictatorial politicisation.[8]

International performance is frequently regarded as evidence of national superiority and used to demonstrate a nation's powerful political, cultural, social and economic systems. Sport allied to nationalism has been used to not only stress ideological, racial and national superiority, but also on occasion to manifest bitter feelings towards past conquerors and oppressors – arguably nowhere more intensely than in Asia. And the reason, it has been suggested that 'Sport . . . matters more in Asia because the turbulent histories that still the nations there. Historical animosities translate readily into political disputes there'[9] – and these animosities carried over into sport.

The Concept of '(the Complex)'

In psychology, a 'complex' ('ideenkomplex' or 'affect circumplex') is defined at one level as personal resentment towards a specific subject.[10] If a 'sport complex' is to be regarded as a similar mental and emotional state, it can be argued that sport is related in this way to

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communities, nations and races, as well as individuals. The concept of a 'sport complex', it is suggested, can be utilised as an explanatory tool in the specific context of modern sport. Can it be found in East Asia? Does it have a regional identity? Does it overlap with nationalistic, ethnic, political, economic, cultural and historical 'complexes' – superior and inferior? The answer given here is unequivocal. It does. It can be a manifestation of all or some of these things. In the modern East Asia, mega-sports events in particular, at times, chances for clashing political relations are higher than for harmonious ones. They may even be a substitute for ultimate aggression: in short, 'war without weapons'.

'Sports complex' can be an 'inferiority complex' or a 'superiority complex'. Either way, it can be a demonstration of 'covert' or 'overt' racial, ethnic and national animosity. This is not to suggest that success in sport is not a source of apolitical community and individual delight, euphoria and excitement but to recognise and acknowledge that it has both 'bright' and 'dark' potential.

> Sport is a mirror in which nations, men and women and social classes now see themselves. The image is sometimes bright, sometimes dark, sometimes distorted, sometimes magnified. This metaphorical mirror is a source of exhilaration and depression, security and insecurity, pride and humiliation, association and disassociation. As sport has grown to a gargantuous size, progressively replacing religion in its power to excite passion, it has come to loom larger and larger in [people's] lives.[11]

And loomed larger and larger, it must be added, in the calculations of nations in their struggles for status, self-pride and self-image – *and the settling of old political scores.*

Part 2

Colonisation, Postcolonisation, Consequences and Complexes

The postcolonial presence of 'sports complexes' can be usefully examined by focusing on three East Asian nations: China, Japan and South Korea.

South Korea and Japan: Resentment, Revenge and Sport

Despite South Korea's impressive economy, the world's 15th largest economy on the basis of gross domestic product, close nations have even more impressive economic records, namely China and Japan. In the case of Japan, South Korea also arguably has an inferiority complex, linked to some recent state history. Studies of postcolonial Korea invariably refer not only to Japan's direct political colonisation of Korea prior to 1945, but also to the indirect economic 'colonisation' of South Korea following the later civil war between South and North and incidentally to American 'neo-colonialism' in recent years. In consequence, as will be made clear shortly, South Korean resentment towards the three pacific powers is sometimes expressed through the medium of modern sport. Furthermore, China has impacted on Korea throughout its history. Korean resentment towards these three pacific powers as a result today is often expressed through modern sporting opportunities.

The patriotic zeal of South Koreans rises dramatically whenever the nation competes against Japan, the USA and China on sports fields and in sports arenas. A bitter historic legacy in the case of Japan is revealed by symbolic expressions used when South Korea meets Japan: 'Shatter Fuji Mountain', 'Overthrow Japan' and 'Overcome Japan' (Figure 2).

In the 1960s and 1970s, professional boxing, wrestling and soccer provided opportunities for revengeful expressions of postcolonial hostility. Victory was an important part of national self-assertion, satisfaction and recrimination, and revenge made was all the sweet in view of a postcolonial Japanese economic 'imperialism' which replaced the

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Figure 2. Statement of memory: after winning against Japan during the 2006 World Baseball Classic, several Korean players plant flags on the pitcher's mound. *Source*: http://viewfrom103.blogspot.kr/2006/03/world-baseball-classic-will-empire.html

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political variety. The arrival in East Asian of sports mega-events – the Olympic Games, the Asian Games and the Soccer World Cup – has greatly increased opportunities for many of the open display of a legacy of loathing: redemptive moments of national psychological reconstruction.

The decision to hold the 1988 Olympics in South Korea instead of Japan played a crucial role in enhancing the country's sense of distance from Japan's humiliating past oppression. Pride in actually extending this distance reached a new peak when South Korea became host partner with Japan for the Korea–Japan Soccer 2002 World Cup, soared *even higher* then when the South Koreans beat the Japanese in the 2006 and 2009 World Baseball Classic (WBC).[12]

A legacy of loathing is spelt out with emphatic clarity in this frank observation:

> The history of the 2002 World Cup cannot be separated from the history of imperialism in East Asia, albeit that imperialism has characterized not so much the relationship between the West and the East as the relationship between Japan and Korea. For South Korea, there was in the offing a clear opportunity to redress its humiliating past at the hands of Japan and the Japanese.[13]

Finally, it should not be overlooked that South Korea (like China)[14] has past and present territorial grievances with Japan which have inflamed South Korean *sensibilities* – Park

Jung-woo became a South Korean hero in the London 2012 Olympics for political reasons. The footballer in the eyes of his nation scored a spectacular political goal:

> South Korea was pitted against rival Japan in the bronze medal contest. It was a physical match with seven yellow cards drawn on the two teams. After South Korea defeated Japan 2 to nil, Park's teammates celebrated, waving a rather large South Korean flag. But winning was not enough for Park. He took off his jersey and then grabbed a sign and hoisted it over his head for the world to see. The sign read "Dokdo is our land," referring to a territorial dispute over two islets that sit between Korea and Japan in the East Sea (Sea of Japan).[15]

Park's timing was perfect, his impromptu signage followed only hours after the president of South Korea paid a visit to the islands (now occupied by South Korea). The unprecedented visit prompted the government of Japan to recall its ambassador from Seoul. The Japanese national legislature then prepared a rare joint resolution decrying ROK president's actions as an 'illegal landing' on Japanese territory. A letter of protest was presented to the South Korean government, which the ROK refused to open. The Koreans tried to return the letter to the Japanese government, which refused to receive it.[16] His national awards and rewards were nakedly symbolic – informal and formal: The picture of Park holding his Dokdo sign went viral on the web, and the footballer became a national hero. He was selected for his nation's World Cup team for the first time. Coaches, in making the selection, said that he was a strong midfielder who could cover a lot of ground, but from a Korean perspective, how could they not select him? Park was accorded other privileges as well. All men in Korea are required to do military service, but for athletes, an Olympic medal exempts one from such service. Technically, Park had not yet been allowed to receive his bronze medal,[17] but the Korean government accorded him this privilege nonetheless.[18] As it has been put succinctly, when the Koreans play the Japanese, *it is never just about sport*.

In addition, in hosting the Korea–Japan 2002 Soccer World Cup, South Korea ostensibly, and certainly to its own satisfaction, demonstrated to the world its equal status alongside Japan in the Western Pacific. The co-hosting of international events by a developing country and a developed country, and involving a county that had recently conquered other regional countries, provided an immense political lift to South Korean morale, suggesting as it did that South Korea and Japan were for once politically comparable.

The South Korean fierce and unwavering encouragement of the national team was expressed with acute intensity during the two recent World Baseball Championships of 2008 and 2009. The qualifying matches in 2008 were played in Tokyo, and the main rounds in the USA. South Korea beat Japan sparking off frenetic celebrations. Postcolonial patriotic euphoria exploded again throughout South Korea in 2009 with further successes against Japan. Beating Japan at baseball provides an excitement with a unique flavour rooted in the postcolonial paying off of old scores than victory in any other popular sports, such as football or basketball. Judo matches versus Japan in the Olympics and the Asian Games for obvious reasons also tend to have high value attached to them. East beats East at their *own* sport. A measure of the significance to South Korean of victories over Japan may be gauged from media reports. Japanese defeats at the hands of South Koreans in Judo, Volleyball and the Marathon in the 1994 Hiroshima Asian Games were reported as 'The third Sweeping Victory in Hiroshima' referring to earlier military defeat of Japan by Korea in the Japanese invasion of Korea in 1592 (Figure 3).[19]

Both Bong-Ju and Hwang Young-Cho were icons of revenge-realisation representatives of a remembered resolution in a dark moment in Korean history.

Anti-Japanese feelings reached boiling point during the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games. South Korea in a bid to win its first gold medal in the history of Olympic

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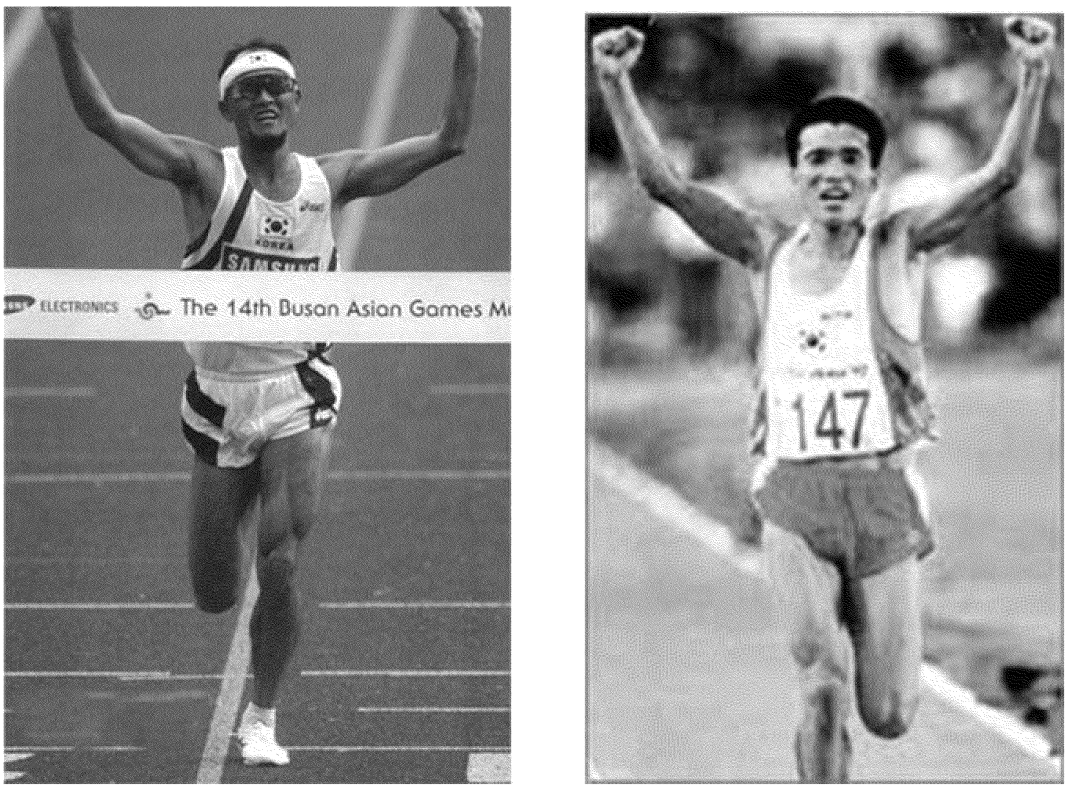


Figure 3. Korean marathon stars, Lee Bong-Ju (left) and Hwang Young-Cho (right), both raised their arms after triumphant gold medal wins in the 14th Busan Asian Games and 1994 Hiroshima Asian Games marathon races, respectively. *Source*: http://image.search.naver.com/search.naver; http://mjse.multiply.com/journal/item/292/Hwang-Young-Cho-A-Run-for-Korea

skating was successful. The taste of victory was made special due to the fact that the rival in the final was Japanese and a former world champion (Figures 4 and 5).[20]

South Korea and the USA: 'Neo-Colonial Resentment'

In South Korea, resentment towards the USA although simmering for decades had rarely been seen openly in sport before the 2002 South Korea–Japan World Cup, although some South Korean spectators had cheered for the former Soviet Russia in a basketball match versus the USA which was considered by many South Korean as a neo-colonial expression of anti-Americanism. In the 2002 South Korea–Japan World Cup, anti-American neo-colonial exasperation was undisguised when South Korea met the USA in the qualifiers in the middle of several contentious domestic issues involving the USA including the presence of the US military,[21] the environmental pollution related to the US Army[22] and above all the deaths of two middle-school students killed accidentally by American soldiers (Figure 6).[23]

The match, which brought matters to a head in a sports encounter, ended in a draw. However, a South Korean team's ceremonial ritual afterwards was interpreted as a satire on the behaviour of the American 'occupier', and the resentment spilled over into sports. The USA had openly become a controversial issue in South Korea.[24] As there were no matches between South Korea and the USA in the main draw, however, further expressions of anti-Americanism did not occur (Figure 7).

Baseball in the future could be the fuse to set off an explosion of further anti-Americanism, especially if South Korea can defeat the USA in the WBC series. To humiliate America, the home of baseball by defeating it at the highest level would be the most complete example of 'putting one over' an increasingly resented 'occupying force',

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Figure 4. Kim Yu Na rejoiced after receiving her score and setting a new world record for both short and free skate programmes. *Source*: http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Olympics/Olympics-blog/2010/0226/Kim-Yuna-record-score-gives-Vancouver-Olympics-their-6.0-moment

its presence seen as new-colonialism by the back door. The wings of the eagle would be momentarily clipped. In this context, it should not be forgotten that baseball above all else, in Japan, is also a potent indirect political assertion vis-à-vis the USA. Japan too feels moments of resentment towards a western conqueror and a once neo-colonial occupier.[25]



Figure 5. Skating rivals Kim Yu Na of Korea and Mao Asada of Japan. *Source*: http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2010/05/10/2010051001297.html

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Figure 6. *Note:* Civil organisation hosts a memorial service for two South Korean teenaged girls who were killed by a US military vehicle on June 13, 2002 in Yangju, Gyeonggi Province. Since then, major candlelight protests have been held in Seoul and large cities nationwide against negotiations for South Korea–United States Free Trade Agreement policies and other administrative policies made by the government. *Source*: http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_national/293278.html

South Korea and China: 'Sports Complex' as Inferiority Complex?

China is viewed uneasily, not unreasonably, by South Korea. Its vast size, its vast population and not least, its momentous economic rise besides which even the South Korean performance seems limp, increasingly produced in the South Korean people ambivalence, admiration and anxiety. In the past, at times, 'the Middle Kingdom' has



Figure 7. Korean soccer players performed a ceremonial dance that was interpreted as a satire against the USA after a goal during the 2002 World Cup qualifying round. *Source*: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4um2LtvjWhE

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directly dominated the Korean nation: 'the peninsula's history – that is, its geography – had too often been bleak. There had always been a more powerful regional player, a nation on a power ascent of its own, eager to dominate Korea'.[26] In regional history that 'player' has been on occasion, China.[27] In future, it may well exert indirect dominance: economic and military. However, South Koreans have feelings of *both* inferiority and superiority. They are aware of their individual higher living standards, greater general personal wealth, wider availability of educational provision especially in higher education facilities and above all perceived advantage in terms of personal freedom due to their democratic political system. Nevertheless, they have 'anti-colonial' moments of fierce exhilaration when they defeat their huge neighbour – in sport. History casts a long shadow.

A salient example: when South Korea's basketball team defeated the Chinese during the basketball finals of the 2002 Pusan Asian Games, the victory was compared to the collapse of the Great Wall.[28] The triumph of the South Korean Yoo Seung-min over a Chinese in the men's singles table tennis final in the 2004 Athens Olympic Games was greeted with national delight tinged with anti-imperial colour. Victories against China in sport represent freedom from the past threat of bondage by the gigantic and powerful China as well as the assertion of a small national over a large nation providing a boost to national morale. Meanwhile, South Korea's successes against China in football help South Koreans to cope with a more general inferiority complex caused by China and allow them a 'postcolonial' and 'anti-colonial' perception that South Korea is bravely facing up to China rather than allowing China to intimidate it (Table 1).

'Given that China promises to be so inordinately powerful and different, it is difficult to resist the idea that in time its rise will herald the birth of a new international order'.[29] In this world order increasingly organised around China, South Korea's success in sports in which China has superior skills, or in a popular global sport such as football, allows South Korea to feel confident that the relationship with China will not be invariably one-sided.

Sport in South Korea can also be understood as South Korea's attempt to strengthen the identity of the nation during the present globalisation. In the global era, it has become commonplace for the concept of a single ethnic nation to weaken in, for importance, for multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism to emerge in many countries and for labour migration

Table 1. Reverse domination: Korea versus China results for the last 20 years.

Year and host country	South Korea	China	Round	Final result
1990 Beijing, China	Win (2-0)	Loss	Preliminary round	South Korea: third place
1994 Hiroshima, Japan		Did not meet		China: second place; South Korea: fourth place
1998 Bangkok, Thailand		Did not meet		China: third place
2002 Busan, South Korea		Did not meet		South Korea: third place
2006 Doha, Qatar		Did not meet		South Korea: fourth place
2010 Guangzhou, China	Win (3-0)	Loss	Round of 16 finals	South Korea: third place

Source: Korea versus China soccer match results for the last two decades sourced from http://www.ocasia.org/Index.aspx.

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Table 2. Korean medal performance in the Asian Games as sources of reassurance.

Year	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Rank
2010	76	65	91	232	2
2006	58	52	82	192	2
2002	96	80	84	260	2
1998	65	46	53	164	2
1994	63	56	64	183	3
1990	54	54	73	181	2

Source: http://www.ocasia.org.

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trends to make crossing borders as common as changing jobs. When globalisation is understood as the process through which a neo-capitalistic world order is constructed with China at its centre, South Korea, which could once again become part of a new Chinese hegemony, will increasingly face challenges to its independence, indirectly if not directly, and thus, face threat to a sense of its own distinctive identity. In an identity crisis like this, the South Korean people are reassured by the achievements and successes of athletes: iconic symbols of nationalism and participate in the process of modern globalisation and the emergence of the new Asiatic world order with more confidence (Table 2).

The recent performances of South Korea athletes in the Guangzhou Asian Games were, therefore, a considerable boost to South Korean confidence vis-a-vis China but also vis-a-vis the other Asian nations. South Korea sent a message in all these countries but especially to its North East neighbour that South Korea can and will stand tall in East Asia: Sport was an assertive symbolic statement of national purpose and intent: intensity of confrontation in sport as capability with a deeper metaphorical meaning.

China and South Korea: Sports Complex as 'Superiority Complex'?

Chinese resentment towards South Korean athletes was witnessed not only at the 2008 Beijing Olympics but also at the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games. Arguably, it has been the outcome of irritation that a small, local nation has had the audacity to challenge the much larger local neighbour. There is not space here to consider fully this Chinese expression of exasperation in all its political moments and all its manifestations – but an incident in Guangzhou will serve as further evidence of extensive, aggressive and even violent Chinese chauvinism.

During the 2010 Asian Games, Yang Shu-chun of Chinese-Taipei was expelled from the Taekwondo competition because she apparently installed two extra sensors on the heel of her socks.[30] The negative reaction to the South Koreans was probably provoked by a Game technician, a South Korean, who discovered the illegal sensors, and the officials from the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF), who were also South Koreans who banned the athlete for 3 months. Her coach also received a 20-month suspension.[31] As a result, Chinese particularly from Chinese Taipei burned South Korean flags, hacked the WTF website and smashed, as well as boycotted, imported products from South Korea in protest at the disqualification of Yang (Figure 8).[32]

There was a precedent for such aggressive behaviour, and serious confrontations related to sports incidents occurred prior to and during the 2008 Beijing Games. Rehearsal footage of the Opening Ceremony was leaked by a broadcasting station in South Korea infuriating the host nation.[33] This incident produced an outburst of ill-feeling towards South Korea, leading to reprehensible actions in various sports venues throughout the

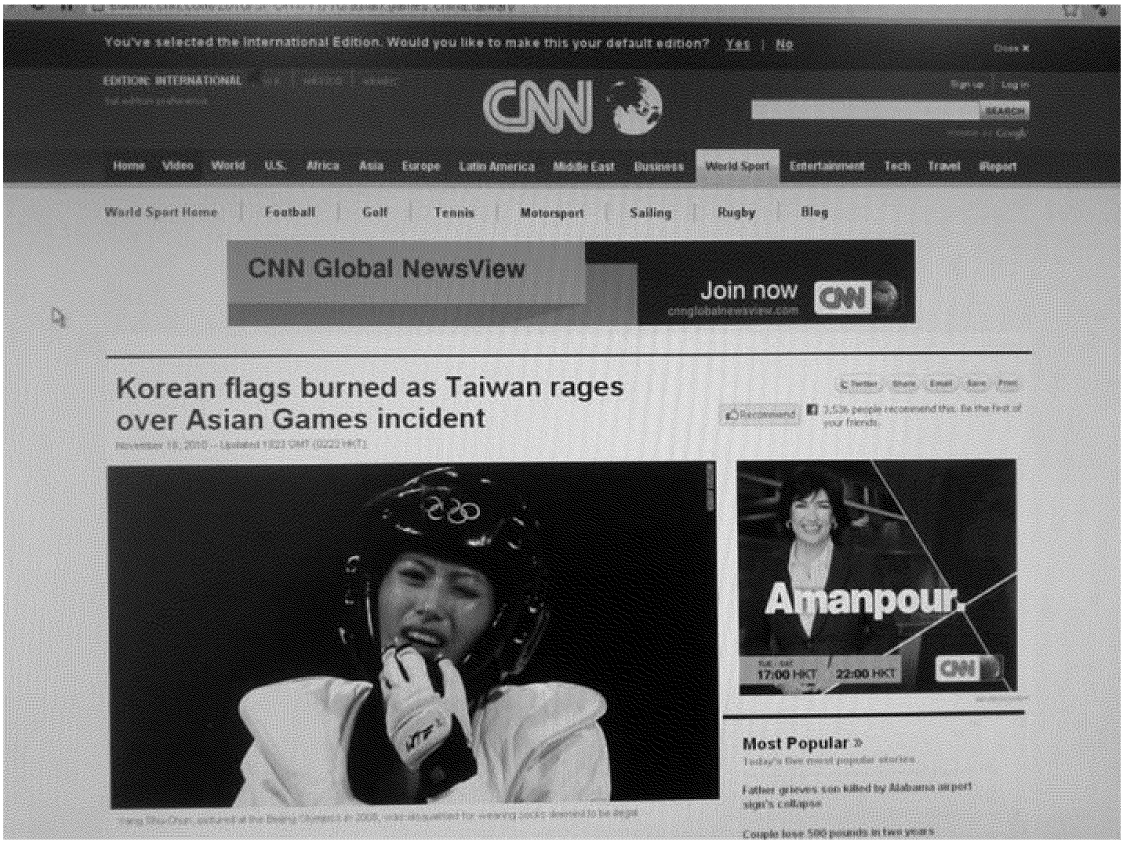


Figure 8. Yang Shu-chun, Cause of Chinese Anti-Korean violence. *Source*: http://www.monster-island.net/2010/11/so-this-is-what-it-feels-like-to-be-on.html

Games. In archery, for example, the South Korean women had to deal with vindictive distractions including whistling blowing and booing from the Chinese spectators.[34] This is merely the tip of the iceberg (Figure 9).[35]

It is perfectly reasonable to suggest that acerbic and sour relations between China and South Korea's longest term have a political dimension. To what *extent* Chinese protests are government inspired and directed must be conjectured, but Chinese support for North Korea – a fellow communist country – in its struggles with South Korea possibly predisposes the Chinese to less than warm feelings towards South Korea and its people: It is unwise to forget history with specific reference to the Korean conflict.

> In fact, Chinese concerns were much broader and were perhaps not very different, *mutatis mutandis*, from those of the United States. If the United States could decide that South Korea was within its security perimeter – in spite of apparently having ruled this out – and send troops to defend a pro-Western government there, might not China, which had given a series of increasingly explicit warnings on the subject, also see North Korea as being within its security perimeter and be willing to defend its interests with force? It seems remarkable in retrospect that so little attempt was made to understand the Chinese position.[36]

Japan and China: Antagonism and Sport

Acts of bitterness between Japan and China expressed at sports venues are well documented in the East Asia media and covered on occasion by the world's media.[37] The historical sources of – China and Japan – a long and deep animosity between the two great East Asia nations are well known, but the Nanjing Massacre is arguably the most powerful and painful memory of many that will not fade in Chinese consciousness.[38] The

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Figure 9. Chinese outbursts against Korea during the 2008 Beijing Olympics. *Source*: http://image.search.naver.com/search.naver

consequence is that whenever a sports event is staged between the two countries, there is always a high probability of expressions of overt hatred. For instance, Chinese fans insultingly booed the Japanese team while their national anthem was being played, burned Japanese flags, shouted profanities and sang patriotic songs during the 2004 Asian Football Cup.[39] They did the same at the East Asian Cup Final in 2008.[40] Between no two other East Asian nations is sport the stimulus to such extreme enmity. Sports meetings between these regional counties, on occasion, appear to fully justify the famous (some say infamous and others say realistic) statement by George Orwell: 'Serious sport has nothing to so with fair play – it is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, and disregard of all the rules!'[41] There is also no sign of rapprochement between the two nations: popular or political (Figures 10 and 11).

The recent tension between China and Japan over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands is yet another – and very recent – example of politics carried over into sport.[42] The Chinese badminton team, for example, cancelled their participation in the Yonex Japan Open in September 2012. This decision was confirmed by the Japan Badminton Association Vice-Chairman, Yoshio Sekine, although he did not elaborate on the reason for the team's withdrawal.[43] The timing was hardly fortuitous (Figure 12).

In the case of the recent Tour of China in September 2012, the race organisers expelled the Japanese Cycling team. In the Tour of Beijing in 2012, the Japanese team was excluded.[44] It is uncertain whether the Chinese organisers themselves purposely ejected the Japanese or whether an influential governmental body instructed them to do so in retaliation to the Japanese government's inflexibility over the islands.[45]

In retaliation for these Chinese actions, the Japanese Figure Skating Team might withdraw from the Grand Prix series event held in Shanghai in November 2012. The Cup of China, which is the third stage of the 2012–2013 ISU Figure Skating Grand Prix season, in November, might not see the presence of the Japanese if the Chinese organisers cannot guarantee their security as a result of the two nations' controversial islands dispute and the rage it provokes in China (Figure 13).[46]

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Figure 10. After the controversial Asian Cup 2004 final match win of Japan against host China 3-1, Chinese soccer fans burned Japanese flags as a sign of protest while others sang anti-Japanese songs and chanted 'Kill! Kill! Kill!'. *Source*: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A40260-2004Aug27.html; http://www.chinaexpat.com/2008/07/28/chinas-soccer-blues.html/

Provocation comes in various guises and disguises. During the Japanese bid for the 2016 Summer Olympics, the Tokyo Bid Committee focused on three elements in order to obtain the support of International Olympic Committee (IOC) officials. They included the close proximities of the sports venues, their impressive existing facilities and ecological

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Figure 11. 2008 East Asian Cup Final between China and Japan. *Source*: http://cn.yimg.com/gallery/sports/20080221073914824974882 4749.jpg

and energy advantages. Although the members of Committee did not openly criticise the 2008 host, there was a clearly implicit criticism of China in the way Japan publicised and promoted their bid by contrasting their country with China and its shortcomings in 2008.[47] Few actions could be more inflammatory given that many consider Beijing 2008 the most spectacular, expensive and successful Games in Olympic history: epideictic in political purpose.

There has been only space here for fragments of evidence regarding the use of sport events between China and Japan as a surrogate as yet for ultimate violent action. And there is no sign that the surrogate will lose its symbolic meaning: Quite the opposite. As China grows stronger in sport as demonstrated so emphatically at Guangzhou in 2010 and Japan grows weaker, the former will become more delighted and the latter more depressed: Both attitudes are catalysts for future confrontation.

There is every possibility that rejoicing will become even louder on the one hand and despair will become even deeper on the other. Without question, sport is as much an agent of disharmony as harmony in international relations binding past, present and future with sport as the glue: Past military defeats, present geographical disputes, future economic unbalance and a nascent geopolitical reorientation of power could eventually result in further open demonstrations of hostility in sports arenas. This hostility will become sharper as the West declines in power and its 'colonial' and humiliations are replaced by an Eastern renaissance and the hegemonic struggle between China and the other nations of the region is once again resumed. There will be no western distractions. The East will face up to the East. And through sport, the Great Global Obsession of the twenty-first century, nations *will assess themselves and their worth* in confrontation with their neighbours in part through their athletes, through medals and through cups. China, Japan and South Korea will engage in regional struggle on sports fields and in sports arenas – with fresh intensity – for national self-confidence, self-pride and self-satisfaction.

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Figure 12. Citizens of both China and Japan carry national flags and protest signs during their respective rallies in front of the Japanese Embassy in China (top picture) and Tokyo (bottom picture) about an island dispute known as the Diaoyu in China while it is called Senkaku in Japan. *Source:* http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2012/08/19/national/chinese-protest-against-japans-arrest-of-activists-who-traveled-to-senkaku-islands/#. UTSbiTBTDMs. http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/2012/09/island-dispute-escalates-strains-between-china-and-japan.html

Part 3

Conclusion: East Confronts East

Memory is as sharp in East Asia as elsewhere in the world and,

> Memory has a special power. Memory, it has been written, resembles a film with sharply focused images, with the set tidily arranged and brightly lit and the script learnt and unchangeable. The memory of war is one of the most significant ways of shaping national identity: images of sacrifice, heroism, mourning and loss provide symbols of unity in suffering, in sadness, in valediction. Sport, and the memory of sport, while of a different order of individual and collective experience, also has the power to shape national identity.[48]

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Figure 13. Political issues carried over to sports. *Source*: http://au.eurosport.com/cycling/china-withdraw-from-japan_sto3428432/story.shtml

And sport itself has a special allure:

> Sharply focused memories of sporting moments – played or watched – are among the most frequently recalled and infrequently forgotten. Such 'poetic' images enjoyed in pensive mood are rooted in particular places and perhaps, above all, in particular things: 'images which are the life of poetry cannot be raised in any perfection but by introducing particular objects.'[49]

More than this, sporting memories give communities the security of belonging. Sport is a powerful means of creating, sustaining and reinforcing imagined communities – making the imagined concrete. It sustains the collectivity in hope and despair, happiness and sadness, pleasure and pain. For many, it has replaced religion as the opium as the masses. This is as true for East Asia as anywhere on earth. But sport has yet another contribution to make to the masses and their rulers – its role in the contemporary shaping of national identity, allegiance *and* antagonism. This cannot be ignored:

> Sport reinforces antagonism bred on memories of 'battles long ago', defeats deep in the past and victories recorded in history books, and as such exacerbates antipathy, fuels hostility and extends dislike. Sport can be sublimated warfare kept alive repeatedly year after year, in 'conflicts without casualties' in national stadiums keeping vivid past conflicts with casualties and perhaps contributing to future conflicts with casualties![50]

And perhaps for this good reason

> the team spirit inherent in all international sports gives scope to a number of truly valuable patterns of social behaviour which are essentially motivated by aggression, and which, in all probability, have evolved under the selection pressure of tribal warfare at the very dawn of culture.[51]

There has been no shortage of statements about sport as an ameliorative means of accord between nations. IOC pronouncements have been replete with them. Indeed, sport is

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frequently depicted as a positive force in international relations, not just in preventing potential conflict but also acting as a means to bring states and their people closer together.[52]

Merely two illustrations:

> Article 11 of UNESCO's 1978 International Charter of Physical Education and Sport reads: Through cooperation and the pursuit of mutual interests in the universal language of physical education and sport, all people will contribute to the preservation of lasting peace, mutual respect and friendship and will thus create a propitious climate for solving international problems' (UNESCO 1978). The Olympic Charter talks of 'building a peaceful and better world' and the Olympic movements' current 'peace through sport' initiative sets out a vision of being able to 'build a better world by promoting the Olympic Truce and using sport to forge friendship among athletes, young people and communities.'[53]

For the sake of balance, it is sensible to see all that

> The 1988 Seoul Summer Olympic Games provides a dramatic depiction of the close relationship between politics, geopolitics and sport. The Games followed decades-long ideological inimicality between democracy and despotism. Korea, North and South, was for a time an ideological crucible of confrontation. Moreover, the Seoul Summer Olympic Games held on the Korea Peninsula – itself a horrific symbol of Cold War conflict – came hard on the heels of two earlier politicised Games: Moscow, 1980 and Los Angeles, 1984, in which only about half 'the Global Village' participated which made a nonsense of the Olympic Movement's ideals of the universality of involvement.[54]

Without any doubt, it is time for a fuller consideration of sport as a means of aggressive confrontation between nations.[55] The discussion here offers evidence for this of fresh substantiality. The argument presented here constitutes an interpellation of possibly too many plots of pontifications.

Reprise: national, political, cultural and emotional animosities expressed through sport have been briefly explored in three East Asian nations: China, Japan and Korea: paradigmatic exemplars in an East Asian setting. A deeper and fuller enquiry is planned for the future. Self-evidently, there is insufficient space available here to do complete justice to the subject.

Concluding Comments

It has been argued that 'The most important function in sport lies in furnishing a safety value for that most indispensable and at the same time most dangerous form of aggression ... collective military enthusiasm!'[56] This may be true but the reverse is equally true throughout history – Asian history and world history sport has been used as a preparation for war.[57] It has also been argued with the best of intentions that 'as the twentieth century devises yet more total means of mass destruction, it is not too fanciful to discern an instinct for self-preservation in the popular passion for representative sport. A kind of warfare perhaps. But war without weapons.' It has earned a rejoinder:

> What is more to the point is that war will continue to serve sport and sport to serve war well beyond the twentieth century. Sport will serve anti-militarism far less well,[58] and provoked an acerbic comment: [The] close and continuing relationship between sport and war should not be hidden behind the pious platitudes of officials, administrators and functionaries of regional and global sports organisations uttered at the reception of another international sports event at which they appear yet again in the majority to clasp each other hands with shining eyes and express their delight at the healing balm of modern sport.[59]

The reality: relationships express as open dislike – even manifest hatred – throughout recent decades have characterised sport involving China, Japan and Korea. This is certainly *part of the story of engagement and this part is a legacy of the past.*

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> In Asia [more particularly East Asia] today, moreover, leaders of nations will refuse to meet with one another because of controversial historical actions or statements. Both China and South Korea's presidents refused to meet with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in 2006 because Koizumi paid respects at Yasukuni Shrine, which is a memorial commemorating Imperial Japan's war dead. A long string of diplomatic disputes over insensitive statements by politicians or because of controversial history textbooks have afflicted Japan–Korea and Japan–China and Korea–China relations. Westerners are often astounded by how much history remains alive in Asia.[60]

And the result,

> Sport acts as an outlet for releasing pent-up historical resentments in ways that cannot be expressed through regular diplomacy. To put it bluntly, Japan's imperial past in Asia causes most former colonies to view every match with Japan as a historical grudge match.[61]

Prophecy is a risky business, especially in history: 'History is not an exam question. It is chaotic, contradictory and complicated.' It has been described as 'messy, unpredictable, contradictory, transitory' and has also been said with succinctness, 'Too often mess is the quiddity of history'.[62] Yet prophecy here will be attempted with the conviction of reasonable certainty: China, Japan and Korea (South) will become more affluent, more confident and on occasion, more combative towards each other in the twenty-first century. Possibly, a portent of things to come is contained in the recent headline of a respected western national newspaper. It announced with reference to the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands stand-off: *Japan and China Heading for Military Clash*.

Below it an East Asian analyst Yang Xuetong stated with regard to the region, 'In terms of the [regional] economy, China and the US are partners . . . in terms of security they are rivals . . . When China narrows the [military] gap it will scare the US!'[63] It will also scare Japan and South Korea. The islands dispute may not result in a military clash – some argue that China is not yet ready and is biding its time: militarily, a still sleeping dragon.

> China has been spending increasing amounts of money on its military, which has been modernized into an impressive fighting force. This is and should be a source of concern to its immediate neighbors and countries with which it has ongoing border disputes. But the build-up of the PLA is not just about having the ability to project force abroad, the Chine regime still thinks of itself as needing to ensure that China is not attacked...And at least as significantly, it also sees having a powerful military as crucial for maintaining control at home . . .[64]

Nevertheless, the islands dispute has heightened tension in the region and is far from finished. As America grows geographically *and* regionally politically weaker, China grows geographically and regionally politically stronger. Japan and South Korea (and other regional nations – not least India) watch with ever increasing anxiety.

Against this backdrop, the Guangzhou Asian Games become a *modern metaphor* for China's increasing wider dominance. *The Middle Kingdom is Reborn*. And against this backdrop, sport will be increasingly one demonstrative means of defining regional nation against regional nation – *psychologically*, as well as politically, economically, culturally and socially: optimistically, a possible surrogate – a war without weapons seen on 'playing fields' not battlefields. Realistically, even on these 'playing fields', one thing will not diminish in the foreseeable future, national antipathy – one nation to the other. Indeed, it may well increase as a wide struggle beyond sport as the Far East develops for resources to sustain new standards of living. That is the prophecy reiterated. Time holds the answer.

> 'The Great Game', in which world powers struggled a century ago for control of oil in Central Asia, may well recur in the coming century. When states are rivals for control of scarce natural resources, military conflicts will be harder to avert.[65]

East Asia, no doubt in due course, will have its local 'Great Game!'

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To conclude with three pronouncements and two questions:

> Civilizations geographically distant from one another might trade amicably with one another, allowing the gradual emergence of an international division of labour. But it was just as possible for one civilization to make war on another, for the same base motives that had actuated man in prehistoric times: to expropriate nutritional and reproductive resources. Historians, it is true, can study only those human organizations sophisticated enough to keep enduring records. But no matter how complex the administrative structure we study, we should not lose sight of the basic instincts buried within even the most civilized men. These instincts were to be unleashed time and again after 1900.[66]

and,

> History does not stop. It continues, as evolving technologies interact with the unalterable human animal and old conflicts are given new twists. Governments may be better informed than they have ever been, but they are not any wiser and if politicians and their advisers believed the boom could go on forever it was because they had lost any sense of history.[67]

and again,

> The War of the Worlds remains science fiction. The War of the World is, however, historical fact. Perhaps, like Wells' story, ours will be ended abruptly by the intervention of microscopic organisms like the avian influenza virus, which could yet produce a worse mutation and pandemic than that of 1918. Until that happens, however, we remain our own worst enemies. We shall avoid another century of conflict only if we understand the forces that caused the last one – the dark forces that conjure up ethnic conflict and imperial rivalry out of economic crisis, and in doing so negate our common humanity. They are forces that stir within us still.[68]

Will global sport via the Olympic Games and the like, and regional sport via the Asian Games and the like stimulate, repress or be the forces that stir within us still? Is this a rhetorical question?

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Notes

1. Kim, *Research on Korean Nationalism*, 54–55.
2. Lee, "What is Nationalism," 3–13.

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3. Lee, "Minjokjueui and Nationalism," 100–103.
4. Park, "Relationship," 94–95.
5. Lee, "Korean Sport History," 243–262.
6. Park, "The Origin of Stateism," 199–246.
7. Chung, "The Return," 125–145.
8. Ibid.
9. Cha, *Beyond the Final Score,* 23.
10. Song, "Sport and Politics," 131.
11. Mangan, *Prologue, Sport in Europe*.
12. Although Korea did not win the championships in both occasions, the fact that they won more games 2-1 in 2006 and only lost during the 2009 final match was considered "victories" for the whole nation.
13. Close and Askew, "Globalization and Football."
14. See Cha, "'Winning is Not Enough'." Cha's essay is an incisive comment on the politics of sport in the region. His *Beyond the Final Score: The Politics of Sport in Asia* is equally penetrating.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Withheld by the IOC for violating the Olympic spirit and infringing the ruling on political statements.
18. Cha, "'The Asian Games and Diplomacy'."
19. In the Marathon event, two Koreans won the gold and bronze medals courtesy of Hwang Young-Cho and Kim Jae-Ryong, respectively, while Japan got the silver. Similarly in Judo, from the seven gold medals won by South Korea, six of them battled against Japanese judokas.
20. South Korea's Kim Yun Na won her first Winter Olympic Games gold medal and also the first medal in figure skating for the country. She received the highest scores in both the short and free skate programmes defeating Mao Asada of Japan who landed second place.
21. Paik, "Korean Village Could be First."
22. *Green Korea United*. Accessed October 24, 2012. http://green-korea.tistory.com/52
23. *ROK Drop*, "GI Flasback: The 2002 Armored Vehicle Accident." June 13, 2008. http://rokdrop.com/2008/06/13/gi-myths-the-2002-armored-vehicle-accident/
24. Koh, Andrews and White, "Beyond the Stadium," 315–329.
25. In the space available in this essay, this issue will be left for another occasion and another essay.
26. Mangan and Ok, "Seoul'88 – Media, Politicians, Public," 22.
27. China's invasion of Korea happened during the Qing Empire in 1627 and 1637.
28. The Korean basketball squad won against China via overtime and their first Asian Games championship in 20 years. The team managed to win the game even with the powerhouse Chinese players led by walking "Great Wall" centres Yao Ming, Menk Bateer and Wang Zhizhi.
29. Jacques, *When China Rules the World*, 16.
30. *The China Post*. "Asian Games Marred by Controversy." November 18, 2010. http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2010/11/18/280379/p1/Asian-Games.htm
31. Arirang, "Taiwan Calls for Restraint."
32. CNN, "Korean flags burned"; Mack, "Taekwon-NO! Controversy."
33. Chang, A. "Some Secrets out about Olympics Opening Ceremony" (*USA Today*, July 31, 2008). http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/sports/olympics/beijing/2008-07-31-opening-ceremonies-leak_N.htm
34. *The Korea Times*. "Anti-Korean Sentiment Seoul, Beijing Should Boost Understanding and Friendship." August 21, 2008. http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinon/2008/08/202_29759.html
35. At the baseball stadium, the Japanese team received loud cheers, whereas the Korean opponents were greeted with jeers by the Chinese fans who watched the game. The same thing happened at the women's table tennis competition.
36. Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations*, 92.
37. Zhe, T. "Take Soccer Back to School, Says 'Godfather' of Beijing Soccer" (*China Daily*, August 21, 2011). http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/sports/2011-08/21/content_13157472.htm
38. See Gendercide, http://www.gendercide.org/case_nanking.html.

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39. See "Anti-Japanism at sporting events," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Japanese_sentiment_in_China.
40. Ibid.
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45. VeloNation, "Japanese riders and Personnel out."
46. A. Himmer, "Figure Skating: Japan Considers Cup of China Pullout" (*Reuters*, September 23, 2012). http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/23/us-figure-skating-japan-china-idUSBRE88M04D20120923
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48. Mangan, *Militarism, Sport, Europe*.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Bridges, *The Two Koreans*.
53. See UNESCO, "International Charter."
54. Mangan and Ok, "Seoul'88 – Media, Politicians, Public," 27–28.
55. In the case of Asia, Victor Cha is obligatory reading, especially his writings mentioned earlier.
56. Ibid., 281.
57. Ibid., 283.
58. In the case of Asia, Victor Cha is obligatory reading, especially his writings mentioned earlier.
59. Ibid., 824.
60. Cha, "Winning is Not Enough," 9–10.
61. Ibid.
62. Mangan, *Prologue, Sport in Europe*.
63. *The Daily Telegraph*, September 20, 2012, 22.
64. Wasserstrom, *China in the 21st Century*, 17–18.
65. Gray, *False Dawn*, 218.
66. Ferguson, "The War of the World," XIV.
67. Gray, *False Dawn*, XII.
68. Ferguson, *The War of the World*, 64.

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WEEK 3

4 The Frankfurt School and the Culture Industry

Douglas Kellner

- The Frankfurt School developed an interdisciplinary social theory combining sociology, psychology, cultural studies and political economy to produce a Critical Theory of contemporary society.
- The Frankfurt School's ideology and cultural criticism critiqued the key functions of culture and ideology within contemporary capitalist societies.
- The dialectics of culture mean that culture could be both a force of social conformity and opposition.
- The Frankfurt School critiqued mass culture and the culture industry, as well as aesthetic reflections on the emancipatory potential of high art.
- Within the context of critical social theory, the Frankfurt School offers approaches to the study of culture and communication which engage the political economy of culture and communication, the analysis of texts, and the study of audience reception.

Introduction

The term 'Frankfurt School' refers to the work of members of the *Institut für Sozialforschung* (Institute for Social Research) which was established in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1923 as the first Marxist-oriented research centre affiliated with a major German university. Under its director, Carl Grünberg, the institute's work in the 1920s tended to be empirical, historical and oriented towards problems of the European working class movement.

Max Horkheimer became director of the institute in 1930, and gathered around him many talented theorists, including Erich Fromm, Franz Neumann, Herbert Marcuse and T. W. Adorno. Under Horkheimer, the Institute sought to develop an interdisciplinary social theory that could serve as an instrument of social transformation. The work of this era was a synthesis of philosophy and social theory, combining sociology, psychology, cultural studies and political economy in order to produce a Critical Theory of society, hence the Frankfurt group were subsequently identified as 'critical theorists'. The inner circle of the group were radicals and Jews; thus, with the rise of Hitler and fascism in Germany, these

intellectuals emigrated to the US in 1934. They initially set up an Institute at Columbia University, but later dispersed, with many going to the West Coast and others returning to Germany after the Second World War.

The Frankfurt School's analyses of the functions of culture, ideology, and the mass media in contemporary societies constitute one of its most valuable legacies. The critical theorists excelled as critics of both so-called 'high culture' and 'mass culture' while producing many important texts in these areas. Their work is distinguished by the close connection between social theory and cultural critique, and by their ability to contextualise culture within social environments and struggles. In particular, their theory of culture was bound up with analysis of the dialectic of Enlightenment (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972). Culture — once a refuge of beauty and truth — was falling prey, they believed, to tendencies toward rationalisation, standardisation, and conformity which they saw as a consequence of the triumph of the instrumental rationality that was coming to pervade and structure ever more aspects of life. Thus, while culture once cultivated individuality, it was now promoting conformity, and was a crucial part of 'the totally administered society' that was producing 'the end of the individual' (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972).

Their analysis of the fate of culture in modernity was part and parcel of the Frankfurt School's pessimism concerning the rise of the totally administered society in its fascist, democratic state capitalist, and state communist forms. Yet the group continued to privilege culture as an important, and often overlooked, source of social knowledge, as well as a potential form of social criticism and opposition. As Adorno (1967: 30) once wrote:

> [t]he task of [cultural] criticism must be not so much to search for the particular interest-groups to which cultural phenomena are to be assigned, but rather to decipher the general social tendencies which are expressed in these phenomena and through which the most powerful interests realize themselves. Cultural criticism must become social physiognomy. The more the whole divests itself of all spontaneous elements, is socially mediated and filtered, is 'consciousness', the more it becomes 'culture'.

This passage points both to the Frankfurt School's critical theory position that administered culture was coming to play ever more fundamental roles in social production and reproduction, and to the position that analysis of culture can provide crucial insights into social processes. Critical theory thus assigned a central role to cultural criticism and ideology critique precisely because of the key functions of culture and ideology within contemporary capitalist societies. This focus on culture — which corresponded to some of the Institute members' deepest interests — took the form of a systematic inquiry into the different types, forms, and effects of culture and ideology in contemporary capitalist societies. These ranged from

theoretical reflections on the dialectics of culture (which are the ways in which culture could be both a force of social conformity and opposition), to critiques of mass culture and aesthetic reflections on the emancipatory potential of high art.

Dialectics of culture

In addition to pioneering attempts to develop a sociology of literature, the Institute was among the first to apply the Marxian method of ideology critique to the products of mass culture. Whereas critical theorists like Horkheimer and Marcuse rarely analysed artefacts of mass culture, others like Adorno and Lowenthal developed both global theories and critiques, while carrying out detailed studies of what they came to call the 'culture industry'. Adorno began the Institute critique of mass culture in his 1932 article *On the Social Situation of Music* (Adorno 1978), and he continued it in a series of studies of popular music and other forms of mass culture over the next decades (see Buck-Morss 1977). Adorno initially criticised popular music production for its commodification, rationalisation, fetishism, and reification of musical materials — thus applying the key neo-Marxist social categories to culture — as well as the 'regression' in hearing produced by popular music. The framework for his critique was thus the Institute theory of the spread of rationalisation and reification into every aspect of social life and the resultant decline of the individual.

A remarkable individual on the margins of the Frankfurt group, Walter Benjamin, contested the tendency to sharply separate 'authentic art' from mass culture and to valorise one at the expense of the other. For Benjamin (1969), mechanical reproduction (his term for the processes of social rationalisation described by Adorno and others in the Institute) robbed high art of its 'aura' — that is, the aesthetic power of the work of art related to its earlier functions in magic and religious cults — and undermined its status as a spiritual object in the religions of art celebrated in movements like Romanticism or in ideals such as 'art for art's sake'. In these cases, the 'aura' of the work derived from its supposed authenticity, its uniqueness and individuality. In an era of mechanical reproduction, however, art appeared as commodities like other mass-produced items, and lost its special power as a transcendent object — especially in mass-produced objects like photography and film with their photo negatives and techniques of mass reproduction. Benjamin experienced this process — which he believed to be irreversible — ambivalently:

> [f]or the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual. To an even greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility. From a photographic negative, for example, one can make any number of prints; to ask for the 'authentic' print makes no sense. Yet the instant the criterion of

function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice — politics. (Benjamin 1969: 224)

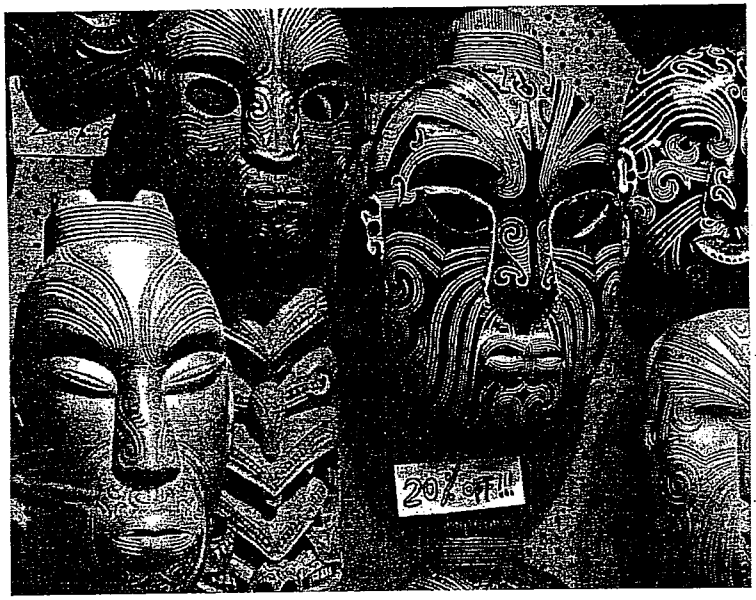


Figure 4.1 Mechanised reproduction: a threat to the 'authenticity' of cultural artefacts

While Adorno tended to criticise precisely the most mechanically mediated works of mass culture for their standardisation and loss of aesthetic quality — and celebrate those works that most steadfastly resisted commodification and mechanical reproduction — Benjamin saw progressive features in high art's loss of its auratic quality and its becoming more politicised. Such art, he claimed, assumed more of an 'exhibition value' than a cultic or religious value, and thus demystified its reception. Furthermore, he believed that the proliferation of mass art — especially through film — would bring images of the contemporary world to the masses and would help raise political consciousness by encouraging scrutiny of the world, as well as by bringing socially critical images to millions of spectators. Benjamin (1969: 236) wrote that:

> [b]y close-ups of the things around us, by focusing on hidden details of familiar objects, by exploring commonplace milieus under the ingenious guidance of the camera, the film, on the one hand, extends our comprehension of the necessities which rule our lives; on the other hand, it manages to assure us of an immense and unexpected field of action. Our taverns and our metropolitan streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories appeared to have us locked up hopelessly. Then came the film and burst this prison-world asunder by the dynamite of the tenth of a second, so that now, in the midst of its far-flung ruins and debris, we calmly and adventurously go traveling.

Benjamin claimed that the mode of viewing film broke with the reverential mode of aesthetic perception and awe encouraged by the bourgeois cultural elite who promoted the religion of art. Montage in film, its 'shock effects,' the conditions of mass spectatorship, the discussion of issues which film viewing encouraged, and other features of the cinematic experience, produced, in his view, a new sort of social and political experience of art which eroded the private, solitary, and contemplative aesthetic experience encouraged by high culture and its priests. Against the contemplation of high art, the 'shock effects' of film produce a mode of 'distraction' which Benjamin believed makes possible a 'heightened presence of mind' and cultivation of 'expert' audiences able to examine and criticise film and society (Benjamin 1969: 237–41).

In some essays on popular music, and later in his famous studies (with Max Horkheimer) of the culture industry, Adorno attempted to provide a critical response to Benjamin's optimistic appraisal of the socially critical potential of popular art. In a 1938 essay, *On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening*, Adorno analysed in detail the various ways that music performers, conductors, instruments, technical performance, and the arrangement of works were fetishised, and how this signified the ways that exchange-value was predominating over use-value in musical production and reception — thus pointing again to how capitalism was able to control aspects of life once resistant to commercial concerns. In Adorno's (1982: 281) words:

> [t]he works which are the basis of the fetishization and become cultural goods experience constitutional changes as a result. They become vulgarized. Irrelevant consumption destroys them. Not merely do the few things played again and again wear out, like the Sistine Madonna in the bedroom, but reification affects their internal structure. They are transformed into a conglomeration of irruptions which are impressed on the listeners by climax and repetition, while the organization of the whole makes no impression whatsoever.

In this situation, musical listening regresses to mere reaction to familiar and standardised formulas (Adorno 1982: 285), which increase social conformity and domination. Regression closes off

> the possibility of a different and oppositional music. Regressive, too, is the role which contemporary mass music plays in the psychological household of its victims. They are not merely turned away from more important music, but they are confirmed in their neurotic stupidity, quite irrespective of how their musical capacities are related to the specific musical culture of earlier social phases. The assent to hit songs and debased cultural goods belongs to the same complex of symptoms as do those faces of which one no longer knows whether

> the film has alienated them from reality or reality has alienated them from the film, as they wrench open a great formless mouth with shining teeth in a voracious smile, while the tired eyes are wretched and lost above. Together with sport and film, mass music and the new listening help to make escape from the whole infantile milieu impossible. The sickness has a preservative function. (Adorno 1982: 287)

Adorno's infamous attack on jazz should be read in the context of his theory of musical fetishism and regression (1967: 119). For Adorno, the often faddish taste for jazz also exhibited features of fetishism, reification, and regression that he observed in other forms of popular music. Contrary to popular belief, Adorno argued, jazz was as standardised, commercialised, and formulaic as other kinds of popular music and encouraged cultural conformity (to dominant models, tastes and so forth) in its devotees as much as other forms of mass culture. Its seeming spontaneity and improvisation are themselves calculated in advance and the range of what is permissible is as circumscribed as in clothes or other realms of fashion.

Adorno and Horkheimer also attempted to counter Benjamin's optimistic appraisal of the progressive elements of film through the critique of Hollywood film production. Film in the culture industry was organised like industrial production and utilised standardised formulas and conventional production techniques to mass-produce films for purely commercial — rather than cultural — purposes. Films reproduced reality as it was and thus helped individuals to adjust and conform to the new conditions of industrial and mass society: 'they hammer into every brain the old lesson that continuous friction, the breaking down of all individual resistance, is the condition of life in this society. Donald Duck in the cartoons and the unfortunate in real life get their thrashing so that the audience can learn to take their own punishment' (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972: 138). Finally, films 'are so designed that quickness, powers of observation, and experience are undeniably needed to apprehend them at all; yet sustained thought is out of the question if the spectator is not to miss the relentless rush of facts. Even though the effort required for his response is semi-automatic, no scope is left for the imagination. Those who are so absorbed by the world of the movie — by its images, gestures, and words — that they are unable to supply what really makes it a world, do not have to dwell on particular points of its mechanics during a screening. All the other films and products of the entertainment industry which they have seen have taught them what to expect; they react automatically' (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972: 126–27).

During the late 1930s and the 1940s when Adorno was developing his critique of popular music (and culture), he was working with Paul Lazarsfeld on some of the first academic studies of the communications industry, and thus was being exposed to some of the more debased and commercialised forms of popular music (Adorno 1969). Yet while the Frankfurt School theorists generally criticised mass culture, they did not surrender the belief in the emancipatory potential of high culture. Each

important essay titled 'The Affirmative Character of Culture', Herbert Marcuse (1968) provides a dialectical analysis of bourgeois high culture and the ways in which it is both a vehicle of emancipation and of mystification of existing social reality. In his view, culture provides a higher compensatory realm for escape and diversion from the cares of everyday life, as well as a refuge which preserves higher ideals and claims to freedom, happiness, and a better life denied in the existing organisation of society. Hence, bourgeois culture is 'affirmative' of higher cultural ideals which provide both ideological and potentially critical and emancipatory functions.

Many later analyses of 'high culture' within the Frankfurt School preserved this tension, seeing both regressive and progressive elements within the aesthetic dimension. Yet the group tended to ascribe the higher, more progressive functions of culture to 'art' (namely, 'high culture') and its more debased ideological functions to mass culture. 'Authentic art' for Critical Theory contained a preserve of both individuality and happiness, as well as a source of critical knowledge. Further, an 'element of resistance is inherent in the most aloof art. Resistance to the restraints imposed by society, now and then flooding forth in political revolution, has been steadily fermenting in the private sphere' (Horkheimer 1972: 274). Horkheimer (1972: 275) argued that art resists incorporation in the existing society while providing standards and ideals which can criticise its limitations:

> works of art — objective products of the mind detached from the context of the practical world — harbor principles through which the world that voice them appears alien and false. Not only Shakespeare's wrath and melancholy, but the detached humanism of Goethe's poetry as well, and even Proust's devoted absorption in ephemeral features of *mondanité*, awaken memories of a freedom that make prevailing standards appear narrow-minded and barbarous. Art, since it became autonomous, has preserved the utopia that evaporated from religion.

Horkheimer celebrates the classics of bourgeois high culture as 'authentic art'. With the advance of industrialism and mass society, however, the private sphere and the individual to which bourgeois art appealed have become steadily menaced, as has the family which provided a sphere of intimacy and support. With the rise of industrial society, the family in turn loses its power and 'even well-to-do parents educate their children not so much as their heirs as for a coming adjustment to mass culture' (Horkheimer 1972: 276). At this point, Horkheimer (1972: 277–78) presents a critique of mass culture that will characterise the Institute's work:

> [t]he gradual dissolution of the family, the transformation of personal life into leisure and of leisure into routines supervised to the last detail, into the pleasures of the ball park and the movie, the best seller and the radio, has brought about the disappearance of the inner life.

Long before culture was replaced by these manipulated pleasures, it had already assumed an escapist character. Men had fled into a private conceptual world and rearranged their thoughts when the time was ripe for rearranging reality. The inner life and the ideal had become conservative factors. But with the loss of his ability to take this kind of refuge — an ability that thrives neither in slums nor in modern settlements — man has lost his power to conceive a world different from that in which he lives. This other world was that of art.

Mass culture for the Institute merely reproduced the status quo and thus helped to reproduce personality structures which would accept the world as it is. High culture, by contrast, is conceptualised as at least a potential force of enlightenment and emancipation. For Adorno, however, only the most radically avant-garde works could provide genuine aesthetic experience. Against the false harmonies of kitsch and affirmative art, Adorno defended the 'de-aestheticization' (*Entkunstung*) of art, its throwing off of the false veils of harmony and beauty in favour of ugliness, dissonance, fragmentation, and negation which he believed provided a more truthful vision of contemporary society, and a more emancipatory stance for socially critical art. In Adorno's view, art had become increasingly problematic in a society ruled by the culture industry and art markets, and to remain 'authentic', art must therefore radically resist commodification and integration. This required avant-garde techniques which would enhance art's shock-value, and its critical, emancipatory effects. In his volumes of critical writings, Adorno always championed precisely those most negative and dissonant artists: Kafka and Beckett in literature, Schoenberg and Berg in music, Giacommeti in sculpture, and Celan in poetry. Through de-aestheticisation, autonomous art would undermine specious harmonisations and reconciliation with the existing world, which could not legitimately take place, Adorno believed, until the world was radically changed.

Yet the Frankfurt School is probably best known for their critiques of mass culture and communication, a topic we now turn to in their theory of the culture industry.

Critical theory and the culture industry

The origins of the critical theorist's approach to mass culture and communication are visible in Adorno's early writings on music (see above), although the Frankfurt group did not really develop the theory of the culture industry until their emigration to the United States in the 1930s. During their exile period from the mid-1930s through the 1940s, members of the group witnessed the proliferation of mass communications and culture and the rise of the consumer society, experiencing at first-hand the advent to cultural power of the commercial broadcasting systems, President Roosevelt's remarkable use of radio for political persuasion, and the ever-growing popularity of cinema during a period in which from 85 to 110 million Americans paid to see 'the movies' each week. Further, they experienced as well

the wide-spread popularity of magazines, comic books, cheap fiction, and the other flora and fauna of the new mass-produced culture.

From their vantage point in California during the 1940s — where many of their exiled compatriots from Germany worked for the film industry — Adorno and Horkheimer were able to experience how business interests dominated mass culture and could observe the fascination that the entertainment industries exerted within the emerging media and consumer society. Marcuse, Lowenthal, and others, who worked in Washington during this period for the Office of War Information and the US intelligence services, were able to observe government use of mass communications as instruments of political propaganda (see Kellner 1998). The critical theorists thus came to see what they called the 'culture industry' as a central part of a new configuration of capitalist modernity which used culture, advertising, mass communications, and new forms of social control to induce consent to and reproduce the new forms of capitalist society. The production and transmission of media spectacles which transmit ideology and consumerism through the means of allegedly 'popular entertainment' and information were, they believed, a central mechanism through which contemporary society came to dominate the individual.

Adorno and Horkheimer adopted the term 'culture industry', as opposed to concepts like 'popular culture' or 'mass culture', because they wanted to resist notions that products of the culture industry emanated from the masses (that is, from the people). They saw the culture industry as being an administered culture, imposed from above, as instruments of indoctrination and social control. The term 'culture industry' thus contains a dialectical irony typical of the style of Frankfurt School critical theory: culture, as traditionally valorised, is supposed to be opposed to industry and expressive of individual creativity while providing a repository of humanising values. In the culture industry, however, culture has come to function as a mode of ideological domination and social control rather than of humanisation or emancipation.

The culture industry was perceived as the culmination of a historical process in which technology and scientific organisation and administration came to dominate thought and experience. Although Horkheimer and Adorno (1972) carry out a radical questioning of Marxism and the development of an alternative philosophy of history and theory of society in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, their theory of the culture industry provides a neo-Marxian account of mass media and culture which helps explain both the ways in which the culture industry reproduce capitalist societies and why socialist revolutions failed to take place in these societies. In this sense, the Institute theory of 'culture industry as mass deception' provides a rebuttal both to Lukács' theory of revolution and 'class consciousness', and to Brecht's and Benjamin's belief that the new forces of mass communications — especially radio and film — could serve as instruments of technological progress and social enlightenment which could be turned against the capitalist relations of

production and could be used as instruments of political mobilisation and struggle (Kellner 1989).

For Adorno and Horkheimer, by contrast, these new technologies were used as instruments of ideological mystification and class domination. Against Lukács (1972) and others who argued that capitalist society necessarily radicalised the working class and produced class consciousness, Adorno and Horkheimer could argue that the culture industry inhibits the development of class consciousness by providing the ruling political and economic forces with a powerful instrument of social control. The conception of the culture industry therefore provides a model of a technically advanced capitalist society which mobilises support for its institutions, practices, and values *from below* making class-consciousness more difficult to attain than before. Using Gramsci's terminology (1971), the culture industry reproduces capitalist hegemony over the working class by engineering *consent* to the existing society, and thus establishing a socio-psychological basis for social integration. Whereas fascism destroyed civil society (or the 'public sphere') through politicising mediated institutions, or utilising force to suppress all dissent, the culture industry coaxes individuals into the privacy of their own home, or movie theatre, producing consumers-spectators of media events and escapist entertainment who are being subtly indoctrinated into dominant ideologies.



Figure 4.2 Mass culture: standardised and formulaic

For the Frankfurt School, mass culture and communications therefore stand in the centre of leisure activity, are important agents of socialisation and mediators of political reality, and should thus be seen as major institutions of contemporary societies with a variety of economic, political, cultural and social effects.

Furthermore, the critical theorists investigated the cultural industry politically as a form of integration of the working class into capitalist societies. The Frankfurt School theorists were among the first neo-Marxian groups to examine the effects of mass culture and the rise of the consumer society on the working classes, the class that were to be the instrument of revolution in the classical Marxian scenario. They also analysed the ways that the culture industry and consumer society were stabilising contemporary capitalism and accordingly sought new strategies for political change, agencies of political transformation, and models for political emancipation that could serve as norms of social critique and goals for political struggle.

Like every theoretical conception, the notion of the culture industry was a product of its historical period and its insights and limitations result primarily from the fact that it theorised features of a past historical conjuncture. The Institute's conception of the role of mass culture and communication was first shaped in the period of Nazi Germany where they witnessed Hitler's extraordinary use of mass communications and fascist spectacles. Obviously, the experience of fascism shaped the Critical Theorists' views of the rise of a behemoth state and cultural apparatus combined with an eclipse of democracy, individuality, and what they saw as authentic art. And in exile in the United States, they observed President Roosevelt's impressive use of the media and the propagandistic uses of the mass media during World War II. Consequently, political use and control of the media during conditions of warfare, with an enlarged wartime state and subordinate wartime economy, coupled with capitalist control of the entertainment industries, provided the historical roots of the Institute model of the culture industry as instruments of social control. Indeed, the media under this type of militarised social system and war conditions — whether liberal-democratic, fascist, or state socialist — tend to be rather one-dimensional and propagandistic. Moreover, the Critical Theory model of the media and society also rather accurately described certain dominant trends and effects during the post-World War II Cold War period when the media were enlisted in the anti-communist crusade and when media content was subject to tight control and censorship — a situation signalled by Horkheimer and Adorno's allusions to 'purges' (1972: 123).

Critique and contemporary relevance

The culture industry theory was thus developed in the United States during the heyday of the press, radio, and cinema as dominant cultural forms; it was published just before the first wave of the introduction of television, whose importance Adorno and Horkheimer, and other members of their group, anticipated. Not only did the Critical Theorists provide an early model of critical communications research, but they were also among the first to see the importance of mass communications and culture for social theory, and influenced some of the early

attempts to incorporate such themes into critical social theory, influencing C. Wright Mills, David Riesman, Jürgen Habermas, and other social theorists to see the multiple functions of the media and mass communications in contemporary culture (see Kellner 1989).

The critique of the culture industry was one of the most influential aspects of Critical Theory, and its impact on social theory and on theories and critiques of mass communication and culture accounts in part for the continuing interest in the Frankfurt School today. Yet from the beginning, critiques of the Institute's theory of mass culture appeared which stressed the similarity of the Critical Theory analysis to conservative critics of mass culture, and which condemned them for their cultural elitism (see discussion in Kellner 1989, 1995).

Despite its limitations, which I shall outline in this section, the Frankfurt School theory of the culture industry contains several novel features and makes many important contributions to the study of mass communications and culture. Critical theory conceptualises culture and communications as part of society and focuses on how socio-economic imperatives helped constitute the nature, function, and effects of mass communication and culture. By conceptualising these important social forces as part of socio-economic processes, Critical Theory integrates study of culture and communication with study of the economy and society. And by adopting a critical approach to the study of all social phenomena, Frankfurt School critical theory is able to conceptualise how the culture industry serve as instruments of social control and thus serve the interests of social domination.

On the whole, later critical approaches to the media and culture tended to separate communications research from study of mass culture, thus failing to provide a unified account of cultural production, distribution, and reception (see Hammer and Kellner 2009; Kellner 1995). Consequently, critical theory is more than a piece of history because it contains a unified and critical approach to the study of culture and communication within the context of critical social theory that engages the political economy of culture and communication, analysis of texts, and the study of audience reception. Likewise, its mode of cultural criticism situates artefacts of analysis within the context of their social environment, and uses social theory to help interpret cultural artefacts, while using culture to help decipher social trends and processes. Their use of psychoanalytic theory leads them to decipher cultural works as exhibiting traits of individual and social psychology, as well as socio-historical content. Yet despite its contributions, there are serious limitations to the Frankfurt School model, for much of their criticism of popular culture limits itself to denunciation of its ideological features. Since much in popular culture deserves and demands severe condemnation, critical theory ideology critique provides some useful tools for cultural criticism, though also suffers some limitations.

In contrast to the mode of condemnatory criticism associated with Critical Theory, radical cultural criticism today should develop more complex strategies and should attempt to develop a more multi-dimensional approach to mass culture. Rather than seeing its artefacts simply as expressions of hegemonic ideology and ruling class interests, it is more useful to see popular entertainment as complex products that contain contradictory moments of desire and its displacement, articulations of hopes and their repression. In this view, popular culture provides access to a society's dreams and nightmares, and contains both ideological celebrations of the status quo and utopian moments of transcendence, moments of opposition and rebellion, and its attempted containment. Recent studies of popular culture also perceive how social struggles and conflicts enter into works of popular entertainment, and see culture as a contested terrain rather than a field of one-dimensional manipulation and illusion (Kellner 1995; 2010). For example, Kellner (1995) argues that contemporary media culture reproduces social struggles about politics and ideology, gender, race, class, sexuality and other key issues, and has oppositional and critical potential, as well as reproducing dominant ideologies.

Contemporary critical theories of culture and communication must therefore be able to develop more complex methods of cultural interpretation and criticism that pay attention to and conceptualise the contradictions, articulations of social conflicts, oppositional moments, subversive tendencies, and the projection of utopian images and scenes of happiness and freedom that appear within mainstream commercial culture. The classical critical theory approach, especially Adorno's work, generally limits itself, however, to attacking the ideology and purely retrogressive effects of radio, popular music, films, television and so forth. Moreover, there is a tendency to postulate a passive audience that is the object of ideological domination, resisted, however, by theorists like Benjamin discussed above.

British Cultural Studies, by contrast, postulates an active audience that can produce its own meanings and uses for media culture (Hall et al. 1991). Further, contemporary cultural studies has expanded the critique of ideology to include gender, race, sexuality, and other dimensions of media texts (see Hammer and Kellner 2009; Kellner 1995). By contrast, Adorno's model of the culture industry does not allow for the heterogeneity of popular culture and contradictory effects, instead straitjacketing popular culture in the form of reification and commodification as signs of the total triumph of capital and the total reification of experience. To be sure, much popular culture (such as top 40 music and certain blockbuster Hollywood films) lend themselves precisely to Adorno's categories and critique, though as suggested, certain forms of oppositional music, film, and television resist his categories and require a more complex approach to cultural interpretation and critique.

Contemporary critical approaches to media culture should thus not simply limit themselves to denouncing bourgeois ideologies and escapist functions. Even conservative media culture often provides insights into forms of dominant ideologies and sometimes unwittingly provides images of social conflict and opposition. Studies of Hollywood films, for instance, reveal that this form of commercial culture exhibits a conflict of representations between competing social ideologies over the last several decades (Kellner 2010; Kellner and Ryan 1988). Particularly, in the period from around 1967 to the present, a variety of competing ideological standpoints have appeared in mainstream Hollywood film. Consequently, there is no one monolithic, dominant ideology which the culture industry promotes, and indeed the conflicting ideologies in contemporary culture industry artefacts point to continuing and intensifying social conflict within capitalist societies.

Yet in an era of media concentration in which giant corporations own media empires which are dedicated to profit and advance the interests of media corporations, the Frankfurt School theory of the culture industry continues to be relevant. Moreover, since media culture continues to operate in the interests of giant corporations and advertising firms, the Frankfurt School ideology critique continues to be relevant. Yet ideology critique should be expanded to encompass gender, race, sexuality, religion, and other determinants of identities which are often produced in media culture. Finally, a critical posture toward media culture is necessary in developing critical media literacy which engages the politics of representation and empowers individuals in relation to the media, enabling critique, interpretation, and the further making of media products from media materials of the contemporary era. Thus, while the Frankfurt School critique of the culture industry needs to be expanded and reconstructed, it is still relevant in societies dominated by corporate media and the consumer society.

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-96-

PART TWO

COMMODIFYING: THE COMMODITY, CULTURE AND SOCIAL LIFE

Immediately succeeding the issue of terminology in the study of popular culture is the significance of the term commodity, for to understand popular culture it is necessary to contend with the interconnection of both its material and ideological capacities. Because the commodity, or the modern unit of exchange, is the site where value and meaning cohere and are contested, it bears upon how we understand the objects that surround us and through which we negotiate our relationship to the culture that surrounds us. As Michael T. Taussig makes plain in *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America* (1980), a study of 'the cultural reactions of peasants to industrial capitalism' (3):

> the market system of modern capitalism engenders a marketing mentality in which people tend to be seen as commodities and commodities tend to be seen as animated entities that can dominate persons. This socially instituted paradox arises because, unlike earlier forms of organization which joined persons into direct relationships for production and exchange ... the market interposes itself between persons, mediating direct awareness of social relations by the abstract laws of relationships between commodities. (25)

For better or for worse, the commodification of culture is an incontestable outgrowth of the processes of industrialization that have shaped the modern world. With the advent of mass production came the basis for widespread transformations in social and political life. New forms of distribution dependent on shifts in the organization of

international power structures, for example via colonization as well as through expanded trade, supported the circulation of the commodities being produced by industrialized nations. This interconnectedness, one that hinges on the emergence of the commodity-form's centrality within modern life, is powerfully encapsulated in the opening pages of *The Communist Manifesto* (orig., 1848; London: International Publishers Co., 1948): 'Modern industry has established the world market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry' (10). The spread of modern industry simultaneously involves the spread of bourgeois ideology, and its concomitant social and political consequences. As Marx and Engels later insist:

> The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In a word, it creates the world after its own image. (13)

The commodity thus exercises considerable influence over the establishment and maintenance of hegemony, a concept that is central to numerous considerations of the exercise of style and identity through popular practice.

Beginning with Karl Marx's elaboration of the commodity as fetish, the articles collected in this section treat the nature of the commodity in general as well as what happens to commodities in the arena of popular culture. The commodity is situated within a variety of contexts. In that sense, the section is very much concerned with how objects are understood and circulate within the particular political economy that marks culture and the influences that have been exerted on it over a long historical period of immense economic, social and political change. Because of this focus, the section shares much common ground with this volume's focus on marketing and practicing, although it is inarguably relevant to many of this book's themes.

In his development of nineteenth-century philosopher G. W. F. Hegel's theory of history, Karl Marx engaged the relationship of culture to political economy. Arguing for historical materialism (as opposed to Hegelian idealism), Marx paved the way for much of the most influential work in the study of popular culture, from the Frankfurt School's development of critical theory in 1930's Germany to its relocation in the USA in the 1940s–50s and the Birmingham Centre's contributions to cultural studies in Britain during the 1960s. In addition, Marx's work resonates within Antonio Gramsci's theorizations of hegemony, Louis Althusser's considerations of ideology, and Immanuel Wallerstein's contributions to world-systems analysis, as well as numerous other interventions. Marx's major works include: *The German Ideology* with Friedrich Engels (1845), *The Communist Manifesto* with Friedrich Engels (1848), and *Capital, Volume One* (1867), from which the present article is excerpted. In **'The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof'** Marx undertakes a massive, yet cleverly understated project of demystification. How is it, he asks, that value is attributed to the inanimate world in a manner that resembles that of social relations? The subject of his inquiry is a basic unit of exchange within capitalism: the commodity. 'A commodity', he

describes as, 'a mysterious thing [...] because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labor is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labor'. As an example, Marx turns readers' attention to a common object: a table. Neither the raw materials of which it is comprised nor the labor that transforms this raw material into a commodity, adequately reflect the value of wood and labor in the table as a commodity. As a result, he suggests that the commodity must be understood in its capacity as 'social thing'. For Marx, the very category of 'social thing' is fetishistic because it attributes special social, otherwise human qualities, to inanimate objects. Through a process of occultation, both exchange-value and use-value, necessarily human creations, are assumed to be inherent to, rather than projected on, objects and their circulation within bourgeois political economy. In brief, Marx's theorization of the commodity merits significant attention because of the valuable insights that it engenders with respect to our relationship to the social world of things that come under the category of popular.

'That which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art.' These famous words written by Walter Benjamin in his forever influential essay, **'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'** (1992 [1936]), speak to the effects of mass production, modes of consumption, and modern technology upon the status of art as well as their implications for contemporary forms of popular culture. Benjamin's essay examines how mechanical reproduction redefines and restructures the work of art's claims to 'authenticity', 'authority', and its 'unique' existence in time and space. The 'decay of aura', on account of modern technology, removes the work of art from its authorial status: 'By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced.' This absence is not mourned by Benjamin; for the absence of authority (based upon ritual and tradition) opens the object to a plurality of interpretations. It frees the object to be placed in unlimited and different contexts. Unlike his contemporaries, members of the Frankfurt School, Benjamin's thesis is not antagonistic toward mass culture: mechanical reproduction makes art, if not all culture that is reproducible, more accessible, democratic, and available, while opening up the ways in which art can be experienced and received. Major works (most of which were collected into book form after his untimely death) include: *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (trans., H. Zohn. London: Verso, 1973), *Illuminations* (trans., 1992 [1936]; London: Fontana), *Origin of German Tragic Drama* (trans., J. Osborne. London: Verso, 1977), *Reflections: Aphorisms, Essays and Autobiographical Writings* (trans., E. Jephcott. New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), and *One-Way Street and Other Writings* (trans., E. Jephcott and K. Shorter. London: Verso, 1979). More recently, four volumes of his *Selected Writings* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press), as well as his monumental *The Arcades Project* (trans., H. Eiland and K. McLaughline, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), have been published in English. Benjamin's work is returned to again and again for the richness of its analysis. He was hopeful about culture, change, and about the possibilities of transforming capitalism in an era within which the majority of scholars were not. It is not surprising that many scholars during the world wars' upheaval and turn to fascism found it difficult, if not impossible, to discern any possible good emerging from the changes underway. Benjamin did.

Seminal to the study of culture in all of its complex and disputed meanings is Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's neologism, 'the culture industry'. According to Martin Jay's excellent book, *The Dialectical Imagination* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1973), members of the University of Frankfurt's Institut für *Sozialforschung* (best known in the Anglo-American academy simply as the Frankfurt School) became 'a major force in the revitalization of Western European Marxism in the postwar years'. Rather than lead their readers to attribute agency on the part of the masses, Horkheimer and Adorno opt for the term 'culture industry' to explain the hegemony of mass culture, as well as its standardizing, commodifying, and controlling effects in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (English trans., 1973). Included here in a later essay entitled **'Culture Industry Reconsidered'** (1991) are Adorno's reflections on the culture industry thesis, not least of which is that: 'The power of the culture industry's ideology is such that conformity has replaced consciousness'. Despite its harsh condemnation of what has come to be known as popular culture, Adorno's work has greatly influenced the development of critical theory and expresses the complex relationship of culture and political economy that has become a generative site of cultural theorization for subsequent scholars.

Guy Debord wrote little as 'Guy Debord'. His accredited texts include the remarkable *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967, English trans. 1973), *Comments on The Society of the Spectacle* (1988, English trans. M. Imrie. London: Verso, 1991) (an even more pessimistic account of the condition of culture and everyday life than its predecessor), and the first volume of his autobiography, *Panegyric* (1989, English trans. J. Brook. London: Verso, 1991). As a filmmaker he is known, albeit in select circles, for his *Screams in Favor of De Sade* (1952), *In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni* (1978), and *La société du spectacle* (1973) to name a few. Debord's writings are commonly experienced through his anonymous (and sometimes acknowledged) contributions to the French journal, *Internationale Situationniste* – the mouthpiece of the radical group/movement known as the Situationist International. For the situationists and implicit throughout Debord's writing, everyday life has become commodified and, drawing from Marx, the commodity form signifies alienation in contemporary society. The commodity is recast as 'the spectacle': the social thing has become a spectacular event. 'Spectacle' captures the hegemonic power of capitalism whereby culture – even in its most mundane forms – becomes repressive, alienating; life and experience are rendered passive, known only through relational subordination to the spectacle. 'The spectacle is the moment when the commodity has attained the total occupation of social life', claims Debord in the excerpt **'The Commodity as Spectacle'**. Commenting on modern life Debord writes in an earlier section of his *the Society of the Spectacle* that: 'The promise of self-fulfillment and expression, pleasure and independence which adorn every billboard are realizable only through consumption, and the only possible relation to the social world and one's own life is that of the observer, the contemplative and passive spectator.'

Fredric Jameson, Marxist literary theorist and cultural critic, has been a major voice in contemporary debates over the relationship of political economy to cultural production. His major works, which engage developments in structuralist, poststructuralist and postmodern theory, include: *Marxism and Form* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC:

Duke University Press, 1991), and *The Geopolitical Aesthetic* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992). Through the concepts of pastiche, parody and the 'death of the subject', as well as through an analysis of nostalgia in film, artistic and literary production, Jameson's influential work on postmodernism characterizes the relationship of cultural production and social life. The work presented in this collection, **'Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture'**, excerpted from his *Signatures of the Visible* (New York: Routledge, 1990, orig. 1979), considers the impact of commodification on aesthetics and the debates that the latter generates. Jameson begins with an examination of the tension between populist and elitist conceptualizations of culture, a tension that he considers to be counter-productive. Criticism of mass culture from populist radicals carries an anti-intellectual thrust that belies such critics' own (disavowed) position as intellectuals and overlooks the critical function of modern art. Elitist criticism, as represented by the Frankfurt School, premises its critical apparatus on the valorization of high culture, a move that fails to recognize that high culture is also fully implicated in the capitalist scheme that it is used to criticize. In place of the binary between populist and elitist cultural criticism, Jameson suggests that: 'we must rethink the opposition high culture/mass culture in such a way that the emphasis on evaluation to which it has traditionally given rise ... is replaced by a genuinely historical and dialectical approach to these phenomena'. In other words, Jameson calls for a new area of study that can contend with the interrelationship of mass culture and modernism (reification and repetition are, for example, a 'key structural feature of both') that characterizes the present. In the succeeding portion of the essay, which we have not reproduced in this collection, Jameson works through the implications of his theory by applying it to three commercial films: Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* (1975) and the first two installments of Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* (1972, 1974).

In *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Late Capital* (1997) Lisa Lowe, the author of *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), and David Lloyd, author of *Anomalous States: Irish Writing in the Post-colonial Moment* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), draw together an influential array of essays that demonstrate contemporary scholars' revision and upending of received knowledge about the role of culture in light of recent developments in the economic and political spheres. Their **'Introduction'** radically extends the definition of culture as well as the relationship of politics to culture, and frames the book's contents as a powerful response to the fiercely relentless climate of contemporary neocolonial capitalism, all of which carry clear implications for an understanding of popular culture. Lowe and Lloyd tap Walter Benjamin's theory of history, Antonio Gramsci's articulation of hegemony, and a variety of interventions from scholars of postcoloniality, such as Franz Fanon, to make the case that social practices, including though not limited to anticolonial and antiracist struggles, feminist struggles, labor organizing, and cultural movements, 'challenge contemporary neocolonial capitalism as a highly differentiated mode of production'. They also critique theorizations of culture that assume either a homogeneous globalizing tendency or the facile reduction of culture to the hopelessly commodified. In brief, culture emerges as 'a terrain in which politics, culture, and the economic form an inseparable dynamic'. It produces its own politics, a politics of contradiction that results from the relationship of cultural formations to 'economic or political logics that try to refunction it for exploitation or domination'.

Chapter 6

Karl Marx

The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof

A commodity appears, at first sight, a very trivial thing, and easily understood. Its analysis shows that it is, in reality, a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties. So far as it is a value in use, there is nothing mysterious about it, whether we consider it from the point of view that by its properties it is capable of satisfying human wants, or from the point that those properties are the product of human labour. It is as clear as noon-day, that man, by his industry, changes the forms of the materials furnished by Nature, in such a way as to make them useful to him. The form of wood, for instance, is altered, by making a table out of it. Yet, for all that, the table continues to be that common, every-day thing, wood. But, so soon as it steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than 'table-turning' ever was.

The mystical character of commodities does not originate, therefore, in their use-value. Just as little does it proceed from the nature of the determining factors of value. For, in the first place, however varied the useful kinds of labour, or productive activities, may be, it is a physiological fact, that they are functions of the human organism, and that each such function, whatever may be its nature or form, is essentially the expenditure of human brain, nerves, muscles, &c. Secondly, with regard to that which forms the groundwork for the quantitative determination of value, namely, the duration of that expenditure, or the quantity of labour, it is quite clear that there is a palpable difference between its quantity and quality. In all states of

From: Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume One.* (Orig. 1867). Reprinted in *The Marx-Engels Reader.* R. Tucker (ed.) London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1972.

society, the labour-time that it costs to produce the means of subsistence, must necessarily be an object of interest to mankind, though not of equal interest in different stages of development. And lastly, from the moment that men in any way work for one another, their labour assumes a social form.

Whence, then, arises the enigmatical character of the product of labour, so soon as it assumes the form of commodities? Clearly from this form itself. The equality of all sorts of human labour is expressed objectively by their products all being equally values; the measure of the expenditure of labour-power by the duration of that expenditure, takes the form of the quantity of value of the products of labour; and finally, the mutual relations of the producers, within which the social character of their labour affirms itself, take the form of a social relation between the products.

A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour. This is the reason why the products of labour become commodities, social things whose qualities are at the same time perceptible and imperceptible by the senses. In the same way the light from an object is perceived by us not as the subjective excitation of our optic nerve, but as the objective form of something outside the eye itself. But, in the act of seeing, there is at all events, an actual passage of light from one thing to another, from the external object to the eye. There is a physical relation between physical things. But it is different with commodities. There, the existence of the things *qua* commodities, and the value-relation between the products of labour which stamps them as commodities, have absolutely no connexion with their physical properties and with the material relations arising therefrom. There it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore, to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities.

This Fetishism of commodities has its origin, as the foregoing analysis has already shown, in the peculiar social character of the labour that produces them.

As a general rule, articles of utility become commodities, only because they are products of the labour of private individuals or groups of individuals who carry on their work independently of each other. The sum total of the labour of all these private individuals forms the aggregate labour of society. Since the producers do not come into social contact with each other until they exchange their products, the specific social character of each producer's labour does not show itself except in the act of exchange. In other words, the labour of the individual asserts itself as a part of the labour of society, only by means of the relations which the act of exchange establishes directly between the products, and indirectly, through them, between the producers. To the latter, therefore, the relations connecting the labour of one individual with that of the rest appear, not as direct social relations between individuals at work, but as what they really are, material relations between persons and social relations between things. It is only by being exchanged that the products of

labour acquire, as values, one uniform social status, distinct from their varied forms of existence as objects of utility. This division of a product into a useful thing and a value becomes practically important, only when exchange has acquired such an extension that useful articles are produced for the purpose of being exchanged, and their character as values has therefore to be taken into account, beforehand, during production. From this moment the labour of the individual producer acquires socially a two-fold character. On the one hand, it must, as a definite useful kind of labour, satisfy a definite social want, and thus hold its place as part and parcel of the collective labour of all, as a branch of a social division of labour that has sprung up spontaneously. On the other hand, it can satisfy the manifold wants of the individual producer himself, only in so far as the mutual exchangeability of all kinds of useful private labour is an established social fact, and therefore the private useful labour of each producer ranks on an equality with that of all others. The equalisation of the most different kinds of labour can be the result only of an abstraction from their inequalities, or of reducing them to their common denominator, viz., expenditure of human labour-power or human labour in the abstract. The two-fold social character of the labour of the individual appears to him, when reflected in his brain, only under those forms which are impressed upon that labour in everyday practice by the exchange of products. In this way, the character that his own labour possesses of being socially useful takes the form of the condition, that the product must be not only useful, but useful for others, and the social character that his particular labour has of being the equal of all other particular kinds of labour, takes the form that all the physically different articles that are the products of labour, have one common quality, viz., that of having value.

Hence, when we bring the products of our labour into relation with each other as values, it is not because we see in these articles the material receptacles of homogeneous human labour. Quite the contrary: whenever, by an exchange, we equate as values our different products, by that very act, we also equate, as human labour, the different kinds of labour expended upon them. We are not aware of this, nevertheless we do it. Value, therefore, does not stalk about with a label describing what it is. It is value, rather, that converts every product into a social hieroglyphic. Later on, we try to decipher the hieroglyphic, to get behind the secret of our own social products; for to stamp an object of utility as a value, is just as much a social product as language. The recent scientific discovery, that the products of labour, so far as they are values, are but material expressions of the human labour spent in their production, marks, indeed, an epoch in the history of the development of the human race, but, by no means, dissipates the mist through which the social character of labour appears to us to be an objective character of the products themselves. The fact, that in the particular form of production with which we are dealing, viz., the production of commodities, the specific social character of private labour carried on independently, consists in the equality of every kind of that labour, by virtue of its being human labour, which character, therefore, assumes in the product the form of value—this fact appears to the producers, notwithstanding the discovery above referred to, to be just as real and final, as the fact, that, after the discovery by science of the component gases of air, the atmosphere itself remained unaltered.

What, first of all, practically concerns producers when they make an exchange, is the question, how much of some other product they get for their own? in what proportions the products are exchangeable? When these proportions have, by custom,

attained a certain stability, they appear to result from the nature of the products, so that, for instance, one ton of iron and two ounces of gold appear as naturally to be of equal value as a pound of gold and a pound of iron in spite of their different physical and chemical qualities appear to be of equal weight. The character of having value, when once impressed upon products, obtains fixity only by reason of their acting and re-acting upon each other as quantities of value. These quantities vary continually, independently of the will, foresight and action of the producers. To them, their own social action takes the form of the action of objects, which rule the producers instead of being ruled by them. It requires a fully developed production of commodities before, from accumulated experience alone, the scientific conviction springs up, that all the different kinds of private labour, which are carried on independently of each other, and yet as spontaneously developed branches of the social division of labour, are continually being reduced to the quantitative proportions in which society requires them. And why? Because, in the midst of all the accidental and ever fluctuating exchange-relations between the products, the labour-time socially necessary for their production forcibly asserts itself like an over-riding law of Nature. The law of gravity thus asserts itself when a house falls about our ears. The determination of the magnitude of value by labour-time is therefore a secret, hidden under the apparent fluctuations in the relative values of commodities. Its discovery, while removing all appearance of mere accidentality from the determination of the magnitude of the values of products, yet in no way alters the mode in which that determination takes place.

Man's reflections on the forms of social life, and consequently, also, his scientific analysis of those forms, take a course directly opposite to that of their actual historical development. He begins, post festum, with the results of the process of development ready to hand before him. The characters that stamp products as commodities, and whose establishment is a necessary preliminary to the circulation of commodities, have already acquired the stability of natural, self-understood forms of social life, before man seeks to decipher, not their historical character, for in his eyes they are immutable, but their meaning. Consequently it was the analysis of the prices of commodities that alone led to the determination of the magnitude of value, and it was the common expression of all commodities in money that alone led to the establishment of their characters as values. It is, however, just this ultimate money-form of the world of commodities that actually conceals, instead of disclosing, the social character of private labour, and the social relations between the individual producers. When I state that coats or boots stand in a relation to linen, because it is the universal incarnation of abstract human labour, the absurdity of the statement is self-evident. Nevertheless, when the producers of coats and boots compare those articles with linen, or, what is the same thing, with gold or silver, as the universal equivalent, they express the relation between their own private labour and the collective labour of society in the same absurd form.

The categories of bourgeois economy consist of such like forms. They are forms of thought expressing with social validity the conditions and relations of a definite, historically determined mode of production, viz., the production of commodities. The whole mystery of commodities, all the magic and necromancy that surrounds the products of labour as long as they take the form of commodities, vanishes therefore, so soon as we come to other forms of production.

Since Robinson Crusoe's experiences are a favourite theme with political economists, let us take a look at him on his island. Moderate though he be, yet some few

wants he has to satisfy, and must therefore do a little useful work of various sorts, such as making tools and furniture, taming goats, fishing and hunting. Of his prayers and the like we take no account, since they are a source of pleasure to him, and he looks upon them as so much recreation. In spite of the variety of his work, he knows that his labour, whatever its form, is but the activity of one and the same Robinson, and consequently, that it consists of nothing but different modes of human labour. Necessity itself compels him to apportion his time accurately between his different kinds of work. Whether one kind occupies a greater space in his general activity than another, depends on the difficulties, greater or less as the case may be, to be overcome in attaining the useful effect aimed at. This our friend Robinson soon learns by experience, and having rescued a watch, ledger, and pen and ink from the wreck, commences, like a true-born Briton, to keep a set of books. His stock-book contains a list of the objects of utility that belong to him, of the operations necessary for their production; and lastly, of the labour-time that definite quantities of those objects have, on an average, cost him. All the relations between Robinson and the objects that form this wealth of his own creation, are here so simple and clear as to be intelligible without exertion, even to Mr. Sedley Taylor. And yet those relations contain all that is essential to the determination of value.

Let us now transport ourselves from Robinson's island bathed in light to the European middle ages shrouded in darkness. Here, instead of the independent man, we find everyone dependent, serfs and lords, vassals and suzerains, laymen and clergy. Personal dependence here characterises the social relations of production just as much as it does the other spheres of life organised on the basis of that production. But for the very reason that personal dependence forms the groundwork of society, there is no necessity for labour and its products to assume a fantastic form different from their reality. They take the shape, in the transactions of society, of services in kind and payments in kind. Here the particular and natural form of labour, and not, as in a society based on production of commodities, its general abstract form is the immediate social form of labour. Compulsory labour is just as properly measured by time, as commodity-producing labour, but every serf knows that what he expends in the service of his lord, is a definite quantity of his own personal labour-power. The tithe to be rendered to the priest is more matter of fact than his blessing. No matter, then, what we may think of the parts played by the different classes of people themselves in this society, the social relations between individuals in the performance of their labour, appear at all events as their own mutual personal relations, and are not disguised under the shape of social relations between the products of labour.

For an example of labour in common or directly associated labour, we have no occasion to go back to that spontaneously developed form which we find on the threshold of the history of all civilised races. We have one close at hand in the patriarchal industries of a peasant family, that produces corn, cattle, yarn, linen, and clothing for home use. These different articles are, as regards the family, so many products of its labour, but as between themselves, they are not commodities. The different kinds of labour, such as tillage, cattle tending, spinning, weaving and making clothes, which result in the various products, are in themselves, and such as they are, direct social functions, because functions of the family, which, just as much as a society based on the production of commodities, possesses a spontaneously developed system of division of labour. The distribution of the work within the family, and the regulation of the labour-time of the several

members, depend as well upon differences of age and sex as upon natural conditions varying with the seasons. The labour-power of each individual, by its very nature, operates in this case merely as a definite portion of the whole labour-power of the family, and therefore, the measure of the expenditure of individual labour-power by its duration, appears here by its very nature as a social character of their labour.

Let us now picture to ourselves, by way of change, a community of free individuals, carrying on their work with the means of production in common, in which the labour-power of all the different individuals is consciously applied as the combined labour-power of the community. All the characteristics of Robinson's labour are here repeated, but with this difference, that they are social, instead of individual. Everything produced by him was exclusively the result of his own personal labour, and therefore simply an object of use for himself. The total product of our community is a social product. One portion serves as fresh means of production and remains social. But another portion is consumed by the members as means of subsistence. A distribution of this portion amongst them is consequently necessary. The mode of this distribution will vary with the productive organisation of the community, and the degree of historical development attained by the producers. We will assume, but merely for the sake of a parallel with the production of commodities, that the share of each individual producer in the means of subsistence is determined by his labour-time. Labour-time would, in that case, play a double part. Its apportionment in accordance with a definite social plan maintains the proper proportion between the different kinds of work to be done and the various wants of the community. On the other hand, it also serves as a measure of the portion of the common labour borne by each individual, and of his share in the part of the total product destined for individual consumption. The social relations of the individual producers, with regard both to their labour and to its products, are in this case perfectly simple and intelligible, and that with regard not only to production but also to distribution. [...]

To what extent some economists are misled by the Fetishism inherent in commodities, or by the objective appearance of the social characteristics of labour, is shown, amongst other ways, by the dull and tedious quarrel over the part played by Nature in the formation of exchange-value. Since exchange-value is a definite social manner of expressing the amount of labour bestowed upon object, Nature has no more to do with it, than it has in fixing the course of exchange.

The mode of production in which the product takes the form of a commodity, or is produced directly for exchange, is the most general and most embryonic form of bourgeois production. It therefore makes its appearance at an early date in history, though not in the same predominating and characteristic manner as now-a-days. Hence its Fetish character is comparatively easy to be seen through. But when we come to more concrete forms, even this appearance of simplicity vanishes. Whence arose the illusions of the monetary system? To it gold and silver, when serving as money, did not represent a social relation between producers but were natural objects with strange social properties. And modern economy, which looks down with such disdain on the monetary system, does not its superstition come out as clear as noon-day, whenever it treats of capital? How long is it since economy discarded the physiocratic illusion, that rents grow out of the soil and not out of society?

But not to anticipate, we will content ourselves with yet another example relating to the commodity-form. Could commodities themselves speak, they would say: Our use-value may be a thing that interests men. It is no part of us as objects. What, however, does belong to us as objects, is our value. Our natural intercourse as commodities proves it. In the eyes of each other we are nothing but exchange-values. Now listen how those commodities speak through the mouth of the economist. 'Value' – (i.e., exchange-value) 'is a property of things, riches' – (i.e., use-value) 'of man. Value, in this sense, necessarily implies exchanges, riches do not.' 'Riches' (use-value) 'are the attribute of men, value is the attribute of commodities. A man or a community is rich, a pearl or a diamond is valuable. ... A pearl or a diamond is valuable' as a pearl or diamond. So far no chemist has ever discovered exchange-value either in a pearl or a diamond. The economic discoverers of this chemical element, who by-the-by lay special claim to critical acumen, find however that the use-value of objects belongs to them independently of their material properties, while their value, on the other hand, forms a part of them as objects. What confirms them in this view, is the peculiar circumstance that the use-value of objects is realised without exchange, by means of a direct relation between the objects and man, while, on the other hand, their value is realised only by exchange, that is, by means of a social process. Who fails here to call to mind our good friend, Dogberry, who informs neighbour Seacoal, that, 'To be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune; but reading and writing comes by Nature.'

Chapter 11

Fredric Jameson

Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture

The theory of mass culture – or mass audience culture, commercial culture, 'popular' culture, the culture industry, as it is variously known – has always tended to define its object against so-called high culture without reflecting on the objective status of this opposition. As so often, positions in this field reduce themselves to two mirror images, which are essentially staged in terms of value. Thus the familiar motif of *elitism* argues for the priority of mass culture on the grounds of the sheer numbers of people exposed to it; the pursuit of high or hermetic culture is then stigmatized as a status hobby of small groups of intellectuals. As its anti-intellectual thrust suggests, this essentially negative position has little theoretical content but clearly responds to a deeply rooted conviction in American populism and articulates a widely based sense that high culture is an establishment phenomenon, irredeemably tainted by its association with institutions, in particular with the university. The value invoked is therefore a social one: it would be preferable to deal with tv programs, *The Godfather*, or *Jaws*, rather than with Wallace Stevens or Henry James, because the former clearly speak a cultural language meaningful to far wider strata of the population than what is socially represented by intellectuals. Populist radicals are however also intellectuals, so that this position has suspicious overtones of the guilt trip; meanwhile it overlooks the anti-social and critical, negative (although generally not revolutionary) stance of much of the most important forms of modern art; finally, it offers no method for reading even those cultural objects it valorizes and has had little of interest to say about their content.

From: Fredric Jameson, *Signatures of the Visible*. London: Routledge, 1990.

This position is then reversed in the theory of culture worked out by the Frankfurt School; as is appropriate for this exact antithesis of the populist position, the work of Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, and others is an intensely theoretical one and provides a working methodology for the close analysis of precisely those products of the culture industry which it stigmatizes and which the radical view exalted. Briefly, this view can be characterized as the extension and application of Marxist theories of commodity reification to the works of mass culture. The theory of reification (here strongly overlaid with Max Weber's analysis of rationalization) describes the way in which, under capitalism, the older traditional forms of human activity are instrumentally reorganized and 'taylorized,' analytically fragmented and reconstructed according to various rational models of efficiency, and essentially restructured along the lines of a differentiation between means and ends. This is a paradoxical idea: it cannot be properly appreciated until it is understood to what degree the means/ends split effectively brackets or suspends ends themselves, hence the strategic value of the Frankfurt School term 'instrumentalization' which usefully foregrounds the organization of the means themselves over against any particular end or value which is assigned to their practice.[1] In traditional activity, in other words, the value of the activity is immanent to it, and qualitatively distinct from other ends or values articulated in other forms of human work or play. Socially, this meant that various kinds of work in such communities were properly incomparable; in ancient Greece, for instance, the familiar Aristotelian schema of the fourfold causes at work in handicraft or *poeisis* (material, formal, efficient, and final) were applicable only to artisanal labor, and not to agriculture or war which had a quite different 'natural' – which is to say supernatural or divine – basis.[2] It is only with the universal commodification of labor power, which Marx's *Capital* designates as the fundamental precondition of capitalism, that all forms of human labor can be separated out from their unique qualitative differentiation as distinct types of activity (mining as opposed to farming, opera composition as distinct from textile manufacture), and all universally ranged under the common denominator of the quantitative, that is, under the universal exchange value of money.[3] At this point, then, the quality of the various forms of human activity, their unique and distinct 'ends' or values, has effectively been bracketed or suspended by the market system, leaving all these activities free to be ruthlessly reorganized in efficiency terms, as sheer means or instrumentality.

The force of the application of this notion to works of art can be measured against the definition of art by traditional aesthetic philosophy (in particular by Kant) as a 'finality without an end,' that is, as a goal-oriented activity which nonetheless has no practical purpose or end in the 'real world' of business or politics or concrete human praxis generally. This traditional definition surely holds for all art that works as such: not for stories that fall flat or home movies or inept poetic scribblings, but rather for the successful works of mass and high culture alike. We suspend our real lives and our immediate practical preoccupations just as completely when we watch *The Godfather* as when we read *The Wings of the Dove* or hear a Beethoven sonata.

At this point, however, the concept of the commodity introduces the possibility of structural and historical differentiation into what was conceived as the universal description of the aesthetic experience as such and in whatever form. The concept of the commodity cuts across the phenomenon of reification – described above in

terms of activity or production – from a different angle, that of consumption. In a world in which everything, including labor power, has become a commodity, ends remain no less undifferentiated than in the production schema – they are all rigorously quantified, and have become abstractly comparable through the medium of money, their respective price or wage – yet we can now formulate their instrumentalization, their reorganization along the means/ends split, in a new way by saying that, by its transformation into a commodity, a thing of whatever type has been reduced to a means for its own consumption. It no longer has any qualitative value in itself, but only insofar as it can be 'used': the various forms of activity lose their immanent intrinsic satisfactions as activity and become means to an end.

The objects of the commodity world of capitalism also shed their independent 'being' and intrinsic qualities and come to be so many instruments of commodity satisfaction: the familiar example is that of tourism – the American tourist no longer lets the landscape 'be in its being' as Heidegger would have said, but takes a snapshot of it, thereby graphically transforming space into its own material image. The concrete activity of looking at a landscape – including, no doubt, the disquieting bewilderment with the activity itself, the anxiety that must arise when human beings, confronting the non-human, wonder what they are doing there and what the point or purpose of such a confrontation might be in the first place[4] – is thus comfortably replaced by the act of taking possession of it and converting it into a form of personal property. This is the meaning of the great scene in Godard's *Les Carabiniers* (1962–63) when the new world conquerors exhibit their spoils: unlike Alexander, 'Michel-Ange' and 'Ulysse' merely own images of everything, and triumphantly display their postcards of the Coliseum, the pyramids, Wall Street, Angkor Wat, like so many dirty pictures. This is also the sense of Guy Debord's assertion, in an important book, *The Society of The Spectacle*, that the ultimate form of commodity reification in contemporary consumer society is precisely the image itself.[5] With this universal commodification of our object world, the familiar accounts of the other-directedness of contemporary conspicuous consumption and of the sexualization of our objects and activities are also given: the new model car is essentially an image for other people to have of us, and we consume, less the thing itself, than its abstract idea, open to all the libidinal investments ingeniously arrayed for us by advertising.

It is clear that such an account of commodification has immediate relevance to aesthetics, if only because it implies that everything in consumer society has taken on an aesthetic dimension. The force of the Adorno-Horkheimer analysis of the culture industry, however, lies in its demonstration of the unexpected and imperceptible introduction of commodity structure into the very form and content of the work of art itself. Yet this is something like the ultimate squaring of the circle, the triumph of instrumentalization over that 'finality without an end' which is art itself, the steady conquest and colonization of the ultimate realm of non-practicality, of sheer play and anti-use, by the logic of the world of means and ends. But how can the sheer materiality of a poetic sentence be 'used' in that sense? And while it is clear how we can buy the idea of an automobile or smoke for the sheer libidinal image of actors, writers, and models with cigarettes in their hands, it is much less clear how a narrative could be 'consumed' for the benefit of its own idea.

In its simplest form, this view of instrumentalized culture [...] suggests that the reading process is itself restructured along a means/ends differentiation. It is instructive here to juxtapose Auerbach's discussion of the *Odyssey* in *Mimesis*,

and his description of the way in which at every point the poem is as it were vertical to itself, self-contained, each verse paragraph and tableau somehow timeless and immanent, bereft of any necessary or indispensable links with what precedes it and what follows; in this light it becomes possible to appreciate the strangeness, the historical unnaturality (in a Brechtian sense) of contemporary books which, like detective stories, you read 'for the end' – the bulk of the pages becoming sheer devalued means to an end – in this case, the 'solution' which is itself utterly insignificant insofar as we are not thereby in the real world and by the latter's practical standards the identity of an imaginary murderer is supremely trivial.

The detective story is to be sure an extremely specialized form: still, the essential commodification of which it may serve as an emblem can be detected everywhere in the sub-genres of contemporary commercial art, in the way in which the materialization of this or that sector or zone of such forms comes to constitute an end and a consumption-satisfaction around which the rest of the work is then 'degraded' to the status of sheer means. Thus, in the older adventure tale, not only does the *dénouement* (victory of hero or villains, discovery of the treasure, rescue of the heroine or the imprisoned comrades, foiling of a monstrous plot, or arrival in time to reveal an urgent message or a secret) stand as the reified end in view of which the rest of the narrative is consumed – this reifying structure also reaches down into the very page-by-page detail of the book's composition. Each chapter recapitulates a smaller consumption process in its own right, ending with the frozen image of a new and catastrophic reversal of the situation, constructing the smaller gratifications of a flat character who actualizes his single potentiality (the 'choleric' Ned Land finally exploding in anger), organizing its sentences into paragraphs each of which is a sub-plot in its own right, or around the object-like stasis of the 'fateful' sentence or the 'dramatic' tableau, the whole tempo of such reading meanwhile overprogrammed by its intermittent illustrations which, either before or after the fact, reconfirm our readerly business, which is to transform the transparent flow of language as much as possible into material images and objects we can consume.[6]

Yet this is still a relatively primitive stage in the commodification of narrative. More subtle and more interesting is the way in which, since naturalism, the best-seller has tended to produce a quasi-material 'feeling tone' which floats about the narrative but is only intermittently realized by it: the sense of destiny in family novels, for instance or the 'epic' rhythms of the earth or of great movements of 'history' in the various sagas can be seen as so many commodities towards whose consumption the narratives are little more than means, their essential materiality then being confirmed and embodied in the movie music that accompanies their screen versions.[7] This structural differentiation of narrative and consumable feeling tone is a broader and historically and formally more significant manifestation of the kind of 'fetishism of hearing' which Adorno denounced when he spoke about the way the contemporary listener restructures a classical symphony so that the sonata form itself becomes an instrumental means toward the consumption of the isolatable tune or melody.

It will be clear, then, that I consider the Frankfurt School's analysis of the commodity structure of mass culture of the greatest interest; if, below, I propose a somewhat different way of looking at the same phenomena, it is not because I feel that their approach has been exhausted. On the contrary, we have scarcely begun to work out all the consequences of such descriptions, let alone to make an exhaustive

inventory of variant models and of other features besides commodity reification in terms of which such artifacts might be analyzed.

What is unsatisfactory about the Frankfurt School's position is not its negative and critical apparatus, but rather the positive value on which the latter depends, namely the valorization of traditional modernist high art as the locus of some genuinely critical and subversive, 'autonomous' aesthetic production. Here Adorno's later work (as well as Marcuse's *The Aesthetic Dimension*) mark a retreat over the former's dialectically ambivalent assessment, in *The Philosophy of Modern Music*, of Arnold Schoenberg's achievement: what has been omitted from the later judgments is precisely Adorno's fundamental discovery of the historicity, and in particular, the irreversible aging process, of the greatest modernist forms. But if this is so, then the great work of modern high culture – whether it be Schoenberg, Beckett, or even Brecht himself – cannot serve as a fixed point or eternal standard against which to measure the 'degraded' status of mass culture: indeed, fragmentary and as yet undeveloped tendencies[8] in recent art production – hyper- or photo-realism in visual art; 'new music' of the type of Lamonte Young, Terry Riley, or Philip Glass; post-modernist literary texts like those of Pynchon – suggest an increasing interpenetration of high and mass cultures.

For all these reasons, it seems to me that we must rethink the opposition high culture/mass culture in such a way that the emphasis on evaluation to which it has traditionally given rise – and which however the binary system of value operates (mass culture is popular and thus more authentic than high culture, high culture is autonomous and, therefore, utterly incomparable to a degraded mass culture) tends to function in some timeless realm of absolute aesthetic judgment – is replaced by a genuinely historical and dialectical approach to these phenomena. Such an approach demands that we read high and mass culture as objectively related and dialectically interdependent phenomena, as twin and inseparable forms of the fission of aesthetic production under capitalism. In this, capitalism's third or multinational stage, however, the dilemma of the double standard of high and mass culture remains, but it has become – not the subjective problem of our own standards of judgment – but rather an objective contradiction which has its own social grounding.

Indeed, this view of the emergence of mass culture obliges us historically to respecify the nature of the 'high culture' to which it has conventionally been opposed: the older culture critics indeed tended loosely to raise comparative issues about the 'popular culture' of the past. Thus, if you see Greek tragedy, Shakespeare, *Don Quijote*, still widely read romantic lyrics of the type of Hugo, and best-selling realistic novels like those of Balzac or Dickens, as uniting a wide 'popular' audience with high aesthetic quality, then you are fatally locked into such false problems as the relative value – weighed against Shakespeare or even Dickens – of such popular contemporary auteurs of high quality as Chaplin, John Ford, Hitchcock, or even Robert Frost, Andrew Wyeth, Simenon, or John O'Hara. The utter senselessness of this interesting subject of conversation becomes clear when it is understood that from a historical point of view the only form of 'high culture' which can be said to constitute the dialectical opposite of mass culture is that high culture production contemporaneous with the latter, which is to say that artistic production generally designated as *modernism*. The other term would then be Wallace Stevens, or Joyce, or Schoenberg, or Jackson Pollock, but surely not cultural artifacts such as the

novels of Balzac or the plays of Molière which essentially antedate the historical separation between high and mass culture.

But such specification clearly obliges us to rethink our definitions of mass culture as well: the commercial products of the latter can surely not without intellectual dishonesty be assimilated to so-called popular, let alone folk, art of the past, which reflected and were dependent for their production on quite different social realities, and were in fact the 'organic' expression of so many distinct social communities or castes, such as the peasant village, the court, the medieval town, the polis, and even the classical bourgeoisie when it was still a unified social group with its own cultural specificity. The historically unique tendential effect of late capitalism on all such groups has been to dissolve and to fragment or atomize them into agglomerations (*Gesellschaften*) of isolated and equivalent private individuals, by way of the corrosive action of universal commodification and the market system. Thus, the 'popular' as such no longer exists, except under very specific and marginalized conditions (internal and external pockets of so-called underdevelopment within the capitalist world system); the commodity production of contemporary or industrial mass culture has nothing whatsoever to do, and nothing in common, with older forms of popular or folk art.

Thus understood, the dialectical opposition and profound structural interrelatedness of modernism and contemporary mass culture opens up a whole new field for cultural study, which promises to be more intelligible historically and socially than research or disciplines which have strategically conceived their missions as a specialization in this or that branch (e.g., in the university, English departments vs. Popular Culture programs). Now the emphasis must lie squarely on the social and aesthetic situation – the dilemma of form and of a public – shared and faced by both modernism and mass culture, but 'solved' in antithetical ways. Modernism also can only be adequately understood in terms of that commodity production whose all-informing structural influence on mass culture I have described above: only for modernism, the omnipresence of the commodity form, *not* to be a commodity, to devise an aesthetic language incapable of offering commodity satisfaction, and resistant to instrumentalization. The difference between this position and the valorization of modernism by the Frankfurt School [...] lies in my designation of modernism as reactive, that is, as a symptom and as a result of cultural crises, rather than a new 'solution' in its own right: not only is the commodity the prior form in terms of which alone modernism can be structurally grasped, but the very terms of its solution – the conception of the modernist text as the production and the protest of an isolated individual, and the logic of its sign systems as so many private languages ('styles') and private religions – are contradictory and made the social or collective realization of its aesthetic project (Mallarmé's ideal of *Le Livre* can be taken as the latter's fundamental formulation[9]) an impossible one (a judgment which, it ought not to be necessary to add, is not a judgment of value about the 'greatness' of the modernist texts).

Yet there are other aspects of the situation of art under monopoly and late capitalism which have remained unexplored and offer equally rich perspectives in which to examine modernism and mass culture and their structural dependency. Another such issue, for example, is that of *materialization* in contemporary art – a phenomenon woefully misunderstood by much contemporary Marxist theory (for obvious reasons, it is not an issue that has attracted academic formalism). Here the misunderstanding is dramatized by the pejorative emphasis of the Hegelian tradition (Lukács as well as

the Frankfurt School) on phenomena of aesthetic reification – which furnishes the term of a negative value judgment – in juxtaposition to the celebration of the 'material signifier' and the 'materiality of the text' or of 'textual production' by the French tradition which appeals for its authority to Althusser and Lacan. If you are willing to entertain the possibility that 'reification' and the emergence of increasingly materialized signifiers are one and the same phenomenon – both historically and culturally – then this ideological great debate turns out to be based on a fundamental misunderstanding. Once again, the confusion stems from the introduction of the false problem of value (which fatally programs every binary opposition into its good and bad, positive and negative, essential and inessential terms) into a more properly ambivalent dialectical and historical situation in which reification or materialization is a key structural feature of both modernism and mass culture.

The task of defining this new area of study would then initially involve making an inventory of other such problematic themes or phenomena in terms of which the interrelationship of mass culture and modernism can usefully be explored, something it is too early to do here. At this point, I will merely note one further such theme, which has seemed to me to be of the greatest significance in specifying the antithetical formal reactions of modernism and mass culture to their common social situation, and that is the notion of *repetition*. This concept, which in its modern form we owe to Kierkegaard, has known rich and interesting new elaborations in recent post-structuralism: for Jean Baudrillard, for example, the repetitive structure of what he calls the simulacrum (that is, the reproduction of 'copies' which have no original) characterizes the commodity production of consumer capitalism and marks our object world with an unreality and a free-floating absence of 'the referent' (e.g., the place hitherto taken by nature, by raw materials and primary production, or by the 'originals' of artisanal production or handicraft) utterly unlike anything experienced in any earlier social formation.

If this is the case, then we would expect repetition to constitute yet another feature of the contradictory situation of contemporary aesthetic production to which both modernism and mass culture in one way or another cannot but react. This is in fact the case, and one need only invoke the traditional ideological stance of all modernizing theory and practice from the romantics to the *Tel Quel* group, and passing through the hegemonic formulations of classical Anglo-American modernism, to observe the strategic emphasis on innovation and novelty, the obligatory break with previous styles, the pressure – geometrically increasing with the ever swifter temporality of consumer society, with its yearly or quarterly style and fashion changes – to 'make it new,' to produce something which resists and breaks through the force of gravity of repetition as a universal feature of commodity equivalence. Such aesthetic ideologies have, to be sure, no critical or theoretical value – for one thing, they are purely formal, and by abstracting some empty concept of innovation from the concrete content of stylistic change in any given period end up flattening out even the history of forms, let alone social history, and projecting a kind of cyclical view of change – yet they are useful symptoms for detecting the ways in which the various modernisms have been forced, in spite of themselves, and in the very flesh and bone of their form, to respond to the objective reality of repetition itself. In our own time, the post-modernist conception of a 'text' and the ideal of schizophrenic writing openly demonstrate this vocation of the modernist aesthetic to produce sentences which are radically discontinuous, and which defy repetition not merely on the level of the break

with older forms or older formal models but now within the microcosm of the text itself. Meanwhile, the kinds of repetition which, from Gertrude Stein to Robbe-Grillet, the modernist project has appropriated and made its own, can be seen as a kind of homeopathic strategy whereby the scandalous and intolerable external irritant is drawn into the aesthetic process itself and thereby systematically worked over, 'acted out,' and symbolically neutralized.

But it is clear that the influence of repetition on mass culture has been no less decisive. Indeed, it has frequently been observed that the older generic discourses – stigmatized by the various modernist revolutions, which have successively repudiated the older fixed forms of lyric, tragedy, and comedy, and at length even 'the novel' itself, now replaced by the unclassifiable 'livre' or 'text' – retain a powerful afterlife in the realm of mass culture. Paperback drugstore or airport displays reinforce all of the now sub-generic distinctions between gothic, best-seller, mysteries, science fiction, biography, or pornography, as do the conventional classification of weekly tv series, and the production and marketing of Hollywood films (to be sure, the generic system at work in contemporary commercial film is utterly distinct from the traditional pattern of the 1930s and 1940s production, and has had to respond to television competition by devising new metageneric or omnibus forms, which, however, at once become new 'genres' in their own right, and fold back into the usual generic stereotyping and reproduction – as, recently, with disaster film or occult film).

But we must specify this development historically: the older pre-capitalist genres were signs of something like an aesthetic 'contract' between a cultural producer and a certain homogeneous class or group public; they drew their vitality from the social and collective status (which, to be sure, varied widely according to the mode of production in question) of the situation of aesthetic production and consumption – that is to say, from the fact that the relationship between artist and public was still in one way or another a social institution and a concrete social and interpersonal relationship with its own validation and specificity. With the coming of the market, this institutional status of artistic consumption and production vanishes: art becomes one more branch of commodity production, the artist loses all social status and faces the options of becoming a *poète maudit* or a journalist, the relationship to the public is problematized, and the latter becomes a virtual 'public introuvable' (the appeals to posterity, Stendhal's dedication 'To the Happy Few,' or Gertrude Stein's remark, 'I write for myself and for strangers,' are revealing testimony to this intolerable new state of affairs).

The survival of genre in emergent mass culture can thus in no way be taken as a return to the stability of the publics of pre-capitalist societies: on the contrary, the generic forms and signals of mass culture are very specifically to be understood as the historical reappropriation and displacement of older structures in the service of the qualitatively very different situation of repetition. The atomized or serial 'public' of mass culture wants to see the same thing over and over again, hence the urgency of the generic structure and the generic signal: if you doubt this, think of your own consternation at finding that the paperback you selected from the mystery shelf turns out to be a romance or a science fiction novel; think of the exasperation of people in the row next to you who bought their tickets imagining that they were about to see a thriller or a political mystery instead of the horror or occult film actually underway. Think also of the much misunderstood 'aesthetic bankruptcy' of television: the structural reason for the inability of the various television series to produce episodes

which are either socially 'realistic' or have an aesthetic and formal autonomy that transcends mere variation has little enough to do with the talent of the people involved (although it is certainly exacerbated by the increasing 'exhaustion' of material and the ever-increasing tempo of the production of new episodes), but lies precisely in our 'set' towards repetition. Even if you are a reader of Kafka or Dostoyevsky, when you watch a cop show or a detective series, you do so in expectation of the stereotyped format and would be annoyed to find the video narrative making 'high cultural' demands on you. Much the same situation obtains for film, where it has however been institutionalized as the distinction between American (now multinational) film – determining the expectation of generic repetition – and foreign films, which determine a shifting of gears of the 'horizon of expectations' to the reception of high cultural discourse or so-called art films.

This situation has important consequences for the analysis of mass culture which have not yet been fully appreciated. The philosophical paradox of repetition – formulated by Kierkegaard, Freud, and others – can be grasped in this, that it can as it were only take place 'a second time.' The first-time event is by definition not a repetition of anything; it is then reconverted into repetition the second time round, by the peculiar action of what Freud called 'retroactivity' [*Nachträglichkeit*]. But this means that, as with the simulacrum, there is no 'first time' of repetition, no 'original' of which succeeding repetitions are mere copies; and here too, modernism furnishes a curious echo in its production of books which, like Hegel's *Phenomenology* or Proust or *Finnegan's Wake*, you can only *reread*. Still, in modernism, the hermetic text remains, not only as an Everest to assault, but also as a book to whose stable reality you can return over and over again. In mass culture, repetition effectively volatilizes the original object – the 'test,' the 'work of art' – so that the student of mass culture has no primary object of study.

The most striking demonstration of this process can be witnessed in our reception of contemporary pop music of whatever type – the various kinds of rock, blues, country western, or disco. I will argue that we never hear any of the singles produced in these genres 'for the first time'; instead, we live a constant exposure to them in all kinds of different situations, from the steady beat of the car radio through the sounds at lunch, or in the work place, or in shopping centers, all the way to those apparently full-dress performances of the 'work' in a nightclub or stadium concert or on the records you buy and take home to hear. This is a very different situation from the first bewildered audition of a complicated classical piece, which you hear again in the concert hall or listen to at home. The passionate attachment one can form to this or that pop single, the rich personal investment of all kinds of private associations and existential symbolism which is the feature of such attachment, are fully as much a function of our own familiarity as of the work itself: the pop single, by means of repetition, insensibly becomes part of the existential fabric of our own lives, so that what we listen to is ourselves, our own previous auditions.[10]

Under these circumstances, it would make no sense to try to recover a feeling for the 'original' musical text, as it really was, or as it might have been heard 'for the first time.' Whatever the results of such a scholarly or analytical project, its object of study would be quite distinct, quite differently constituted, from the same 'musical text' grasped as mass culture, or in other works, as sheer repetition. The dilemma of the student of mass culture therefore lies in the structural absence, or repetitive volatilization, of the 'primary texts'; nor is anything to be gained by reconstituting

a 'corpus' of texts after the fashion of, say, the medievalists who work with pre-capitalist generic and repetitive structures only superficially similar to those of contemporary mass or commercial culture. Nor, to my mind, is anything explained by recourse to the currently fashionable term of 'intertextuality,' which seems to me at best to designate a problem rather than a solution. Mass culture presents us with a methodological dilemma which the conventional habit of positing a stable object of commentary or exegesis in the form of a primary text or work is disturbingly unable to focus, let alone to resolve; in this sense, also, a dialectical conception of this field of study in which modernism and mass culture are grasped as a single historical and aesthetic phenomenon has the advantage of positing the survival of the primary text at one of its poles, and thus providing a guide-rail for the bewildering exploration of the aesthetic universe which lies at the other, a message or semiotic bombardment from which the textual referent has disappeared.

The above reflections by no means raise, let alone address, all the most urgent issues which confront an approach to mass culture today. In particular, we have neglected a somewhat different judgment on mass culture, which also loosely derives from the Frankfurt School position on the subject, but whose adherents number 'radicals' as well as 'elitists' on the Left today. This is the conception of mass culture as sheer manipulation, sheer commercial brainwashing and empty distraction by the multinational corporations who obviously control every feature of the production and distribution of mass culture today. If this were the case, then it is clear that the study of mass culture would at best be assimilated to the anatomy of the techniques of ideological marketing and be subsumed under the analysis of advertising texts and materials. Roland Barthes's seminal investigation of the latter, however, in his *Mythologies*, opened them up to the whole realm of the operations and functions of culture in everyday life; but since the sociologists of manipulation (with the exception, of course, of the Frankfurt School itself) have, almost by definition, no interest in the hermetic or 'high' art production whose dialectical interdependency with mass culture we have argued above, the general effect of their position is to suppress considerations of culture altogether, save as a kind of sandbox affair on the most epiphenomenal level of the superstructure.

The implication is thus to suggest that real social life – the only features of social life worth addressing or taking into consideration when political theory and strategy are at stake – is what the Marxian tradition designates as the political, the ideological, and the juridical levels of superstructural reality. Not only is this repression of the cultural moment determined by the university structure and by the ideologies of the various disciplines – thus, political science and sociology at best consign cultural issues to that ghettoizing rubric and marginalized field of specialization called the 'sociology of culture' – it is also and in a more general way the unwitting perpetuation of the most fundamental ideological stance of American business society itself, for which 'culture' – reduced to plays and poems and highbrow concerts – is par excellence the most trivial and non-serious activity in the 'real life' of the rat race of daily existence.

Yet even the vocation of the esthete (last sighted in the U.S. during the pre-political heyday of the 1950s) and of his successor, the university literature professor acknowledging uniquely high cultural 'values,' had a socially symbolic content and expressed (generally unconsciously) the anxiety aroused by market competition and the repudiation of the primacy of business pursuits and business values: these are then, to be sure, as thoroughly repressed from academic formalism as

culture is from the work of the sociologists of manipulation, a repression which goes a long way towards accounting for the resistance and defensiveness of contemporary literary study towards anything which smacks of the painful reintroduction of just that 'real life' – the socio-economic, the historical context – which it was the function of aesthetic vocation to deny or to mask out in the first place.

What we must ask the sociologists of manipulation, however, is whether culture, far from being an occasional matter of the reading of a monthly good book or a trip to the drive-in, is not the very element of consumer society itself. No society, indeed, has ever been saturated with signs and messages like this one. If we follow Debord's argument about the omnipresence and the omnipotence of the image in consumer capitalism today, then if anything the priorities of the real become reversed, and everything is mediated by culture, to the point where even the political and the ideological 'levels' have initially to be disentangled from their primary mode of representation which is cultural. Howard Jarvis, Jimmy Carter, even Castro, the Red Brigade, B.J. Vorster, the Communist 'penetration' of Africa, the war in Vietnam, strikes, inflation itself – all are images, all come before us with the immediacy of cultural representations about which one can be fairly certain that they are by a long shot not historical reality itself. If we want to go on believing in categories like social class, then we are going to have to dig for them in the insubstantial bottomless realm of cultural and collective fantasy. Even ideology has in our society lost its clarity as prejudice, false consciousness, readily identifiable opinion: our racism gets all mixed up with clean-cut black actors on tv and in commercials, our sexism has to make a detour through new stereotypes of the 'women's libber' on the network series. After that, if one wants to stress the primacy of the political, so be it: until the omnipresence of culture in this society is even dimly sensed, realistic conceptions of the nature and function of political praxis today can scarcely be framed.

It is true that manipulation theory sometimes finds a special place in its scheme for those rare cultural objects which can be said to have overt political and social content: sixties protest songs, *The Salt of the Earth* (Biberman, 1954), Clancy Sigal's novels or Sol Yurick's, Chicano murals, the San Francisco Mime Troop. This is not the place to raise the complicated problem of political art today, except to say that our business as culture critics requires us to raise it, and to rethink what are still essentially thirties categories in some new and more satisfactory contemporary way. But the problem of political art – and we have nothing worth saying about it if we do not realize that it is a problem, rather than a choice or a ready-made option – suggests an important qualification to the scheme outlined in the first part of the present essay. The implied presupposition of those earlier remarks was that authentic cultural creation is dependent for its existence on authentic collective life, on the vitality of the 'organic' social group in whatever form (and such groups can range from the classical polis to the peasant village, from the commonality of the ghetto to the shared values of an embattled pre-revolutionary bourgeoisie). Capitalism systematically dissolves the fabric of all cohesive social groups without exception, including its own ruling class, and thereby problematizes aesthetic production and linguistic invention which have their source in group life. The result, discussed above, is the dialectical fission of older aesthetic expression into two modes, modernism and mass culture, equally dissociated from group praxis. Both of these modes have attained an admirable level of technical virtuosity; but it is a daydream to expect that either of these semiotic structures could be retransformed, by fiat,

miracle, or sheer talent, into what could be called, in its strong form, political art, or in a more general way, that living and authentic culture of which we have virtually lost the memory, so rare an experience it has become. This is to say that of the two most influential recent Left aesthetics – the Brecht-Benjamin position, which hoped for the transformation of the nascent mass-cultural techniques and channels of communication of the 1930s into an openly political art, and the *Tel Quel* position which reaffirms the 'subversive' and revolutionary efficacy of language revolution and modernist and post-modernist formal innovation – we must reluctantly conclude that neither addresses the specific conditions of our own time.

The only authentic cultural production today has seemed to be that which can draw on the collective experience of marginal pockets of the social life of the world system: black literature and blues, British working-class rock, women's literature, gay literature, the *roman québécois*, the literature of the Third World; and this production is possible only to the degree to which these forms of collective life or collective solidarity have not yet been fully penetrated by the market and by the commodity system. This is not necessarily a negative prognosis, unless you believe in an increasingly windless and all-embracing total system; what shatters such a system – it has unquestionably been falling into place all around us since the development of industrial capitalism – is however very precisely collective praxis or, to pronounce its traditional unmentionable name, class struggle. Yet the relationship between class struggle and cultural production is not an immediate one; you do not reinvent an access onto political art and authentic cultural production by studding your individual artistic discourse with class and political signals. Rather, class struggle, and the slow and intermittent development of genuine class consciousness, are themselves the process whereby a new and organic group constitutes itself, whereby the collective breaks through the reified atomization (Sartre calls it the seriality) of capitalist social life. At that point, to say that the group exists and that it generates its own specific cultural life and expression, are one and the same. That is, if you like, the third term missing from my initial picture of the fate of the aesthetic and the cultural under capitalism; yet no useful purpose is served by speculation on the forms such a third and authentic type of cultural language might take in situations which do not yet exist. As for the artists, for them too 'the owl of Minerva takes its flight at dusk,' for them too, as with Lenin in April, the test of historical inevitability is always after the fact, and they cannot be told any more than the rest of us what is historically possible until after it has been tried.

This said, we can now return to the question of mass culture and manipulation. Brecht taught us that under the right circumstances you could remake anybody over into anything you liked (*Mann ist Mann*), only he insisted on the situation and the raw materials fully as much or more than on the techniques stressed by manipulation theory. Perhaps the key problem about the concept, or pseudo-concept, of manipulation can be dramatized by juxtaposing it to the Freudian notion of repression. The Freudian mechanism, indeed, comes into play only after its object – trauma, charged memory, guilty or threatening desire, anxiety – has in some way been aroused, and risks emerging into the subject's consciousness. Freudian repression is therefore determinate, it has specific content, and may even be said to be something like a 'recognition' of that content which expresses itself in the form of denial, forgetfulness, slip, *mauvaise foi*, displacement or substitution.

But of course the classical Freudian model of the work of art (as of the dream or the joke) was that of the symbolic fulfillment of the repressed wish, of a complex structure of indirection whereby desire could elude the repressive censor and achieve some measure of a, to be sure, purely symbolic satisfaction. A more recent 'revision' of the Freudian model, however – Norman Holland's *The Dynamics of Literary Response* – proposes a scheme more useful for our present problem, which is to conceive how (commercial) works of art can possibly be said to 'manipulate' their publics. For Holland, the psychic function of the work of art must be described in such a way that these two inconsistent and even incompatible features of aesthetic gratification – on the one hand, its wish-fulfilling function, but on the other the necessity that its symbolic structure protect the psyche against the frightening and potentially damaging eruption of powerful archaic desires and wish-material – be somehow harmonized and assigned their place as twin drives of a single structure. Hence Holland's suggestive conception of the vocation of the work of art to *manage* this raw material of the drives and the archaic wish or fantasy material. To rewrite the concept of a management of desire in social terms now allows us to think repression and wish-fulfillment together within the unity of a single mechanism, which gives and takes alike in a kind of psychic compromise or horse-trading; which strategically arouses fantasy content within careful symbolic containment structures which defuse it, gratifying intolerable, unrealizable, properly imperishable desires only to the degree to which they can be momentarily stilled.

This model seems to me to permit a far more adequate account of the mechanisms of manipulation, diversion, and degradation, which are undeniably at work in mass culture and in the media. In particular it allows us to grasp mass culture not as empty distraction or 'mere' false consciousness, but rather as a transformational work on social and political anxieties and fantasies which must then have some effective presence in the mass cultural text in order subsequently to be 'managed' or repressed. Indeed, the initial reflections of the present essay suggest that such a thesis ought to be extended to modernism as well, even though I will not here be able to develop this part of the argument further.[11] I will therefore argue that both mass culture and modernism have as much content, in the loose sense of the word, as the older social realisms; but that this content is processed in all three in very different ways. Both modernism and mass culture entertain relations of repression with the fundamental social anxieties and concerns, hopes and blind spots, ideological antinomies and fantasies of disaster, which are their raw material; only where modernism tends to handle this material by producing compensatory structures of various kinds, mass culture represses them by the narrative construction of imaginary resolutions and by the projection of an optical illusion of social harmony.

Notes

1. See for the theoretical sources of this opposition my essay on Max Weber, 'The Vanishing Mediator,' in *The Ideologies of Theory,* Vol. II (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), pp. 3–34.

2. The classical study remains that of J.-P. Vernant; see his 'Travail et nature dans la Grèce ancienne' and 'Aspects psychologiques du travail,' in *Mythe et pensée chez les grecs* (Paris: Maspéro, 1965).

3. Besides Marx, see Georg Simmel, *Philosophy of Money* (London: Routledge, 1978) and also his classic 'Metropolis and Mental Life,' translated in Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 324–39.

4. '[Bourgeois city-dwellers] wander through the woods as through the moist tender soil of the child they once were; they stare at the poplars and plane trees planted along the road, they have nothing to say about them because they are doing nothing with them, and they marvel at the wondrous quality of this silence,' etc. J.-P. Sartre, *Saint Genêt* (Paris: Gallimard, 1952), pp. 249–250.

5. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black and Red Press, 1973).

6. Reification by way of the *tableau* was already an eighteenth-century theatrical device (reproduced in Buñuel's *Viridiana*), but the significance of the book illustration was anticipated by Sartre's description of 'perfect moments' and 'privileged situations' in *Nausea* (the illustrations in Annie's childhood edition of Michelet's *History of France*).

7. In my opinion, this 'feeling tone' (or secondary libidinal investment) is essentially an invention of Zola and part of the new technology of the naturalist novel (one of the most successful French exports of its period).

8. Written in 1976. A passage like this one cannot be properly evaluated unless it is understood that they were written before the elaboration of a theory of what we now call the postmodern (whose emergence can also be observed in these essays).

9. See Jacques Scherer, *Le 'Livre' de Mallarmé* (Paris: Gallimard, 1957).

10. My own fieldwork has thus been seriously impeded by the demise some years ago of both car radios: so much the greater is my amazement when rental cars today (which are probably not time machines) fill up with exactly the same hit songs I used to listen to in the early seventies, repeated over and over again!

11. Written before a preliminary attempt to do so in *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981); see in particular chapter three, 'Realism and Desire.'





THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

WEEK 4

RICO LIE

WHAT'S NEW ABOUT CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION?... LINKING THE GLOBAL FROM WITHIN THE LOCAL

Globalization and localization are two concepts concerned with 'the whole' *and with* 'the parts.' *Discussions about* 'totality' *and about* 'fragments' *are old, but are still highly relevant. Especially in the discussion about globalization and localization there are some questions that, again, need attention. For instance : Is the global world changing as a whole* ***or*** *are the local parts changing in such a way that it only lóóks like the whole is changing ? Are the parts changing in the same direction and toward similar characteristics* ***or*** *are the parts changing in themselves by adopting outside cultural elements and integrating them into their own social structure, cultural perceptions and worldviews ? Is the local becoming partly global* ***or*** *does the global only exist within the local ?*

Introduction

In the postmodern era of today, globalization and localization are seen as interlinked processes and this marks a radical change in thinking about change and development. Potential, it integrates dependency thinking, world system theory and local, grassroots, interpretative, participatory theory and research on social change. On the other hand, it also marks the arising of a new range of problems. Especially the link between the global and the local is not always made clear.

The discussion in the field of international and intercultural communication has shifted and broadened. It has shifted in the sense that it is now focusing on issues related to 'global culture,' 'local culture,' (post)modernity and 'multiculturalism' in stead of its previous concern with modernization, synchronization and cultural imperialism. With this 'new' discussion, the debate has also shifted from an emphasis on homogeneity toward an emphasis on differences. "The idea of a posteriori diversity allows for the possibility of more radical rupture under condi-

tions of modernity, but does not assume that homogenisation follows. Rather it seeks out new forms of difference, some regional, but increasingly based on social distinctions which may not be easily identified with space" (Miller, 1995 : 3). New forms of localism and localities, recognizing cultural and social differences in the context of the global, seem to be emerging (see for instance Fardon, 1995; Featherstone, 1995; Strathern, 1995). With this shift toward differences and localities there is also an increased interest in the link between the global and the local and in how the global is perceived in the local.

The same discussion has also broadened in the sense that with this shift different disciplines have found common ground. Anthropology, communication science and cultural studies seem to be interested in the same phenomena of 'communication related cultural globalization and localization.' Furthermore, pushed by economic globalizing tendencies, the discussion on 'bottom-up'-approaches in the field of participatory intercultural communication has found common ground with the discussion on localism, 'locality' and community in cultural globalization theory and world-system theory. This is especially true with regard to its 'new' concern with localization as an interconnected aspect of globalization. In this way the local has found a place in a broader, global perspective.

In the context of these discussions this article will specifically focus on linking the local with the global. It will try to present an alternative view on this link by developing its argument from a culturalistic and people centered perspective. In contrast to mainstream views on globalization, which center the political-economy and the global industry, this article tries to situate the field of globalization in the local. In order to accomplish this, it will first try to shed some light on the 'new' global-local debate in general, and this from a culturalistic perspective, in particular. By reviewing some elements of cultural globalization that seem to be new or evolved it will address the link between the global and the local by introducing the concept of 'communication for localization.'

Situating the globalization thesis

Globalization refers to the changing economic and political interconnections and interdependencies between nations. It stands for the creation of large-scale systems, complex and increasing global relations, and builds on the dependency paradigm in general and Wallerstein's 'world-system'-theory in particular. Globalization is also often situated in, and associated with, the current period of modernity, post-modernity and high modernity.

'Globalization' hypothesizes that the world is becoming one place with a single system. From a political economy point of view, the globalization thesis posits that, since the virtual hatchet of the Cold War has been buried, we are evolving towards

several co-existing economic and political power centers in the world, or, that the center of the world is relocating itself in the Asia-Pacific region and that the distinction between the first, second and third world is disappearing (see for instance Buell, 1994). In all cases, new global relations will emerge, which means that they will increase and converge in quantity and intensify in quality. Robertson (1992 : 8) distinguishes still another dimension to globalization by defining it "as a concept that refers both to the compression of the world and *the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole* (emphasis added)." By doing so he adds a subjective dimension to the objective interpretation of globalization. With the subjective dimension he refers to the process which describes an increase in the awareness of individuals that they are part of a global setting (see also Friedman, 1994 : 196).

Giddens (1990), identifying globalization as a consequence of modernity, sees four dimensions of globalization which follow his four-fold classification of institutions of modernity : 1. the world capitalist economy, 2. the nation-state system, 3. the world military order, and, 4. the international division of labor. Overall he interprets globalization as a transformation in time and space. Following this line of thought he defines globalization as "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa" (Giddens, 1990 : 64). By this definition he emphasizes that local happenings can be interpreted in a broader frame of time and space ('at distance'). His interpretation of the globalization of modernity and consequently the globalization of localities, mainly shows that it is a very broad, complex and problematic concept, which includes a consciousness, a project, a process and an analytic framework, and leaves as such a lot of room for different interpretations. Parkins (1996 : 69-70) summarizes these different interpretations of globalization as follows. "At present globalization is used in at least four different ways :

1. to refer to a *new consciousness of global interdependence*, particularly in relation to issues such as the environment that extends beyond the compass of individual states;
2. as a project, in the sense of *global business strategies* and attempts at *global governance*;
3. as a process of *change in economic and cultural relations* which intensifies links at a global level, and;
4. as *an explanatory framework*, a way of understanding social relations by considering the world as a single system (emphasis added)."

Not only can we identify different interpretations or *dimensions* of globalization, we can also distinguish different societal fields or *domains* that are being globalized. Besides referring to social, economic, political, military, environmental, health and business aspects, globalization also refers to culture and the assumed *changing cultural state of the world*. The cultural issue is also the aspect of the globalization thesis that I would like to elaborate upon here. The cultural state of the world can

be interpreted as being intrinsically linked to the flow of information and knowledge, which is in fact a cultural flow in itself. Besides tourism and all kinds of migration this cultural flow is in a large part made up of mediated communication.

Cultural globalization

Although many reflect on 'the cultural globalization theory' (e.g., Appadurai, 1990, 1995; Braman & Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1996; Featherstone, 1990, 1995; Friedman, 1994; Hannerz, 1987, 1990, 1992, 1996; King, 1991 and Robertson, 1985, 1992, 1995), it is difficult to identify the body of this 'theory.' Abu-Lughod (1991) even termed it only a babble. However, the core seems to be clear: "We end up with a single human society and therefore necessarily with a world culture" (Wallerstein, 1991: 93-94). Besides Wallerstein and McLuhan, who are frequently cited, and to a lesser, and slightly different extent, perhaps Giddens and Robertson, it is also hard to personalize the theory in this field. Cultural globalization – like the related concept of internet – seems to be a buzz word. But as is the case with all buzz words, they are buzz words for a reason. Cultural globalization is an all-embracing concept and therefore a very complex phenomenon. We all sense that it is happening, but also feel that it is artificial and emotional. It is surely hard to grasp.

In 1985 Robertson and Lechner identified the problem of the 'cultural factor' in 'world-system'-theory. In his later work, Robertson gives particular attention to, in his own words, this 'cultural turn' (Robertson, 1992). He distinguishes, as Giddens does, four elemental points of reference in any discussion on globalization. Though, different from Giddens, he does this with a more explicit cultural focus. The four major aspects are: national societies, individuals, the world system of societies (relationships between national societies) and humankind (Robertson, 1992: 25). With these four elements he builds a model of the global field. In his quest for structure and order within a cultural and flexible global perspective, he grasps the global complexity by interrelating these four elements. What I want to emphasize here is that this model of global order is not a fixed model, but rather it "is conceived as an attempt to make analytical and interpretive sense of how quotidian actors, collective or individual, go about the business of conceiving of the world, including attempts to *deny* that the world is one" (Robertson, 1992: 26). His model is objectively constructed, but subjectively defined by local interpretations.

Giddens (1990: 77) himself sees cultural globalization as a fundamental aspect of globalization, which lies behind each of the four institutional dimensions he distinguished. In 1994 he stated that "Globalization is not only, or even primarily, an economic phenomenon; and it should not be equated with the emergence of a 'world system'" (Giddens, 1994: 4-5). In the cultural field, globalization refers to the changes taking place in the global cultural industries. Over the last ten years,

from Varis' study in 1985 onwards, we have, with an even more critical eye than before, monitored these changes in the global cultural industries in general (see for instance Hamelink, 1994), and the global television industry in particular. Although we found cultural variations of soap operas around the world (Allen, 1995), we also witnessed that global agencies have decreased in number and increased in size. "By the end of the 1980s, they were largely the domain of big companies, all based in either Japan, the United States or Western Europe, producing products for the entire world" (Alleyne, 1995: 47).

But besides these important economic, political and power analyses of the global cultural flow, there is also a need for a cultural analysis of this flow. "A recent UNESCO report (Larsen, 1990), reaffirms continued U.S. dominance of the international television market where economic factors outweigh questions of cultural proximity, but it adds little to our knowledge of the 'how' and 'which' of transcultural value migration" (Ferguson, 1992: 81). In this case, although the theoretical body is still loose, globalization seems to be replacing – although some will speak of an umbrella function – notions of cultural (and communication) imperialism (Galtung, 1971), media imperialism (Schiller, 1971; Tunstall, 1977), cultural domination (Schiller, 1976), cultural dependency (Boyd-Barrett, 1982), cultural synchronization (Hamelink, 1983), integration, homogenization, and McLuhan's relatively simple notion of 'a global village.'

The term cultural globalization has, in this context, become something that stands for 'new' perspectives on intercultural contacts or intercultural communication. Though, globalization has also something to say about the *direction* of the results of these intercultural contacts. The direction is often seen as being twofold. First, there is the direction of homogeneity, synchronization, integration, unity and universalism (*scale enlargement*) and second, there is the direction of heterogeneity, differentiation, disintegration, diversity, variety and particularism (*scale reduction*). Although the different directions are recognized, little is known about how the two are related and interconnected. How the interconnection of globalization and localization comes about, what constitutes the processes, and how it actually works within a specific community, remain important research topics. I will return to this 'missing link' later.

What's new about cultural globalization?

"... if symbols/images/commodities are read so differently from one culture to another, what is really global about global culture? Do we not have to do here once again with a classical anthropological view of a world made up of a plurality of largely unrelated systems of cultural meaning only superficially connected by signs

or material objects ? How then does the current age of communications revolutions really differ from earlier periods when cultural contact was similarly intensive ?" (Kahn, 1995 : 126-127)

Having situated the field of cultural globalization, we can now ask ourselves 'What's new about cultural globalization ?.' It can hardly be said that situating culture in a global perspective is new or innovative. For a start, I state, with Hall (1991 : 19), that globalization is far from being a new process and, therefore, agree with Parkins (1996 : 71) that, especially from the point of view of the South, globalization seems in many ways to be a *repackaging* of some already well analyzed themes. On the other hand, however, there are some issues that seem to be new, have been interpreted in a different light, or have at least been evolved. This evolving of ideas is, in my opinion, mainly a result of the bringing together of 'old' ideas in a 'new' global-local context. The first thing that can be interpreted as new in the global-local debate is therefore its *multidisciplinarity*. Scholars from different social disciplines are reading each other's works and are building on each other's thoughts. The second thing is that the global-local debate in different disciplinary fields has stimulated the discussions on the *role of culture in power driven environments*. Moreover, culture is now an accepted field of study in itself. Thirdly, the global context of the discussions has obliged us to *rethink the thesis that globalization and modernization equals westernization*. Fourthly, the fact that culture transcends national boundaries and does not in all cases equal national culture, but rather faces the problem of multiculturalism, has made us aware of the *limitations of nation-state centered thinking in the field of culture*. Lastly, we are, due to the 'global babble' forced to address the *link between the global and the local*. These five issues will be addressed below.

1. The multidisciplinarity; the 'meeting' of different theoretical perspectives

Because of the complexity of societies and cultures, especially in a 'world-system' perspective, the future of the social sciences lies in *multidisciplinarity*. The 'meeting' of different perspectives, or in Geertz's terms 'blurred genres' (Geertz, 1983), on socio-cultural phenomena seems to be the most adequate way to grasp the complexity. According to Giddens (1990 : 65) discussions of globalization tend to appear in two bodies of literature : 1. the literature of international relations, and 2. literature based on Wallerstein's 'world-system'-theory. Things have changed rapidly in the last 6 years. Theory on the impact of culture on globalization and localization has become a truly interdisciplinary academic field of study. Marxists, anthropologists, philosophers, political scientists, historians, sociologists, economists, communication specialists and scholars in the field of cultural studies are attempting to integrate the field. It is these united attempts that can provide fruitful insights and shed new light on old and new emerging problems.

2. The power of culture and the embedding of culture in a power driven environment

The second thing that seems to be new is the fact that *culture* is seen as an important and even fundamental factor in the discussions. Culture has long been regarded as only *context*, but more and more (that is outside the cultural studies and anthropological traditions) culture is becoming *text*. Besides the increased interest in culture, it looks as if culture is also the concept that constitutes the common interests of the different disciplines and is as such responsible for multidisciplinarity. Robertson termed this increasing interest in culture 'the cultural turn.' "For not merely is culture increasingly visible as a topic of specialized concern, it is evidently being taken more seriously as a relatively 'independent variable' by sociologists working in areas where it had previously been more or less neglected" (Robertson, 1992 : 32). Moreover, culture is also increasingly seen as an important factor in international communication, social processes and social movements (Johnston & Klandermans, 1995). More focus on culture, and the increased attention that is being given to culture and cultural identity, has changed the debate from its inception with modernization, dependency and 'world-system'-theory.

However, there is still a wide variety of interpretations among scholars in what is actually constituting the concept of culture. Clarifying the concept of culture is not a goal here, but, in a basic sense, the underlying theoretical approach adopted here can be found in *symbolic conceptualizations of culture* (e.g., Geertz, 1973). The same can be said for the concept of communication. Communication is operationalized as sharing, as ritual and as performance, which is in fact a *symbolic construction of communication* (e.g., Carey, 1989). To identify this approach is important because such a perspective makes it possible to grasp the concepts of communication and culture at once as symbolic constructs. Culture need in this view no longer be seen as the context in which communication occurs. Communication and culture are operationalized together, as a twofoldness.

Geertz, Carey, and cultural studies in general have been criticized for a lack of attention to the fact that culture always functions in a power driven environment (see for instance Thompson, 1990). Combining symbolic perspectives on communication and culture with power structure analyses is relatively new. Different authors like Mach (1993), Lull (1995) and Thompson (1995) are overcoming this critique by explicitly operationalizing the power driven environment in which symbolic forms function. I agree that power is an important factor in cultural analyses and therefore *I see culture as being shared, in a power driven environment, by communicating symbolic forms in ritual ways and by acts of performance*. When we break this definition down to the basic statement, then culture *is* communication in a power structure of, in our case, a global cultural industry.

Almost all scholars agree that an increase in cultural contacts or an increase in intercultural communication does not necessarily mean that we are going to have

a single world culture, as the globalization thesis in its simplest form implies. Nobody underwrites this thesis without some critical notes. These critical notes range from simply denying that we are heading towards a world culture to pointing to cultural diversity. Diversity not only exists *between* cultures, but also *within* cultures. All cultures are plural, creole, hybrid and multicultural from within. There are no (more) authentic, pure, traditional and isolated cultures in the world, if they ever existed at all. So what is the fuss about cultural globalization ? Why do we think the world is going to have one single culture ? The premise is that all cultures are heading in the same direction. However, there is little evidence for this, with the exception of pizzas, Coca Cola, IBM clones, the Big Mac and similar examples. These examples, that are often given to prove that we are heading towards a single culture, are almost always, as is the case with soap operas, reshaped to fit the local culture. McDonald's in Brussels, Jakarta, Sydney or Moscow are different in, for instance, non-verbal behaviors like services and other context variables that go beyond the visual symbols. Besides, people will give the phenomena a position in daily life which depends on the existing local cultural lifestyles and interpretations. And it even goes further than this. The boom in bed & breakfasts (B&Bs), which is identified by Ritzer (1993 : 15) as a reaction against McDonaldization has also its local and regional cultural varieties, like those in the northeastern province of Groningen in the Netherlands.

Moreover, "The history of the world, rather than moving towards cultural homogenization, has demonstrated the opposite : a trend to cultural differentiation and cultural complexity" (King, 1991 : 16). The question is therefore in my opinion not *if* we are developing towards a single world culture and *if* we are all participants in a process called cultural globalization. I would like to suggest that the question can read, from a less deterministic point of view and a bottom-up perspective : How do people in a local setting deal with global mass media content and how do they counteract, in an interpretive sense, the increase in a foreign (global) cultural flow ? If one, as an individual or as an organization, is sympathetic with local cultures and local knowledge, the question can read for the field of practice and action : How can the efforts of people to counterbalance the international flow of alien cultural products and to produce a local media content, which is relevant to themselves, be supported ? The first question seems to have relevance to the field of the interpretive social sciences and the second question seems to locate itself in the field of action.

3. A new form of modernization has emerged that no longer equals westernization, but has again a linear perspective and an end state of the world order

This is a case in point that I will only address briefly because it is a side-step to the main argument concerning the link between the local and the global. Though, it is an important underlying philosophical statement that needs some elaboration. In

the current age of modernism, post-modernism, late or high modernism, or whatever new prefix is used to grasp the current modern state of the world, it is important to once again point out the linear implications of this thinking. Globalization, which is highly associated with modernisms, as a process of the changing cultural state of the world, is quite linear in its conceptualization. Although the process is less American oriented and no longer equals westernization compared to theories on cultural and media imperialism in the '70s, it does not *fundamentally* change the thinking that the world has an end state which is determined by external forces.

4. The nation-states and national cultures as central points of convergence and main actors in globalization ?

Nation-states are seen by most scholars, especially marxists, as the basic elements in a world system and the main actors in the process of globalization, but is this also true for cultural globalization ? Does the globalization thesis automatically imply that national cultures are the main elements or actors in a 'global culture' ?

On the one hand the globalization thesis centers the nation-state as the main actor. On the other hand different scholars try to escape from the limitations of state-centrism. This problematizing of state-centrism is in essence what the globalization thesis is all about. According to Sklair (1991) we must go beyond the nation-state and develop a sociology of the global system. The same seems to be true for the cultural field. Discussions on global and local culture seem to go beyond discussions that centralize the nation-state and thus center national culture, national identity and nationalism. The nation-state might be the most significant political-economic unit into which the world is divided, but a cultural discussion on globalization must include other levels, because the nation-state is not the only cultural frame that is used for the construction of a cultural identity. Tomlinson (1991 : 70-75) also showed us by analyzing the discourse within UNESCO, where cultural identity seems to be seen as an equivalent to national identity, that this statement cannot stand ground, because cultural identity transcends national identity (Tomlinson, 1991 : 74).

If culture at the national level is identified as being only one level that structures and frames the construction of identity, we need to initiate a discussion on other levels that play roles in the process of identity construction. There is little discussion possible about what the global level incorporates. There is no bigger socio-cultural or economic-political analytic frame possible. But there seem to be some different interpretations possible about how local, 'local' actually is. Is it an extended family, a village, a tribe, a neighborhood in a town, a city, a county, a region, an island or even a nation-state ? Or does it even go beyond a nation-state and does 'local' refer to populations like the Papuans, the Polynesians, the Pacific people, the Lapps in Scandinavia, the black European community ? These are important issues that also

need to incorporate discussions on macro-micro linkages in the social sciences. I will return to this problematic later.

5. Attempts to address the link between the global and the local

"Globalisation does not only concern the creation of large-scale systems, but also the transformation of the local, and even personal, context of social experience." (Giddens, 1994 : 4-5)

The fifth idea that seems to be new in the global-local debate is that globalization is often conceptualized as being intrinsically linked to *localization*. I will explore this point in the remaining parts of this article.

Thinking about globalization seems to be, once again, a western based conceptualization of the state of the world. Assuming that cultures change due to contacts with western cultures is of course true, but it is highly western oriented thinking. The same culture can change, even more dramatically, because of contacts with other non-western cultures. In this case nobody talks about globalization, let alone they are aware of these contacts. Furthermore, questions or statements such as "How have local modes of group ascription changed as a consequence of the colonial encounter ?" (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990 : 6) are western based questions. Although Linnekin and Poyer are in the rest of their book eager to distinguish a 'western paradigm' from a 'Pacific paradigm' it is a question, and therefore a focus, that is conceptualized from a western perspective. A non-western based question with regard to this example would read something like : 'How does a group incorporate foreign or colonial cultural aspects ?' Such a question does not center the colonial encounters or the foreign contacts, but centers the non-western group, which is a different angle and provides a different perspective.

Moreover, a statement such as : "anthropologists in Fiji should aim for a balance between industrial development and maintenance of traditional culture" (read in a discussion on ASAONET, March 20, 1996) is a western way of conceptualizing distinctions, even if the statement is formulated by someone who defines himself as non-western. If we accept that in theorizing globalization, the process itself is intrinsically linked to localization, we need no further, a priori, distinguish foreign culture from traditional culture. Cultures are always *mixed* and *hybrid* in themselves, and have and provide as such local cultural meaning. In many cases people do not even remember if a particular cultural domain is traditional or not. For instance, different versions of the story of Cinderella are found in many different cultures and the Irish icon, 'Irish Coffee,' is, as the welcoming drink at the opening of Shannon airport in Ireland, far from being traditional. It is even far from being Irish, as it was (re-)introduced to Ireland and the rest of the world by a barkeeper from the United States.

All cultures are creole in their roots and the common task of theorists and practitioners is to see cultures, on the basis of mutual respect, 'from the inside out' instead of 'from the western outside in' (see for instance Swidler, 1995). This means that when a culture itself does not make the distinction between industrializing development and traditional culture, who are we to make such a foreign distinction ? Dichotomizing, black-white or left-right distinctions or even, to use the conceptual framework of Lévi-Strauss, thinking in binary oppositions, is seldom the right way to proceed. "Globalisation – which is a process of uneven development that fragments as it coordinates – introduces new forms of world interdependence, in which, once again, there are no 'others'" (Giddens, 1990 : 175).

One attempt to more fully address local culturally related issues and interpretations in the interconnection of globalization and localization in the present world order can be found in the multiplicity paradigm : 'multiplicity in one world' (Servaes, 1989, 1997). Although the multiplicity paradigm does not explicitly work with the concepts of globalization and localization it can be seen as putting more emphasis than the previous dominant concepts like cultural synchronization, media imperialism and the popular cocacolonization on issues such as local capacity and activity in dealing with 'outgroup' messages that are supposed to make the world one system.

Hybridization and creolization

In this context, besides Servaes, who speaks of multiplicity, some also speak of *hybridization* (see for instance Nederveen Pieterse, 1994) and *creolization* (see for instance Hannerz, 1987, 1992). These concepts refer to the fact that there are multiple globalization processes at work, if we want to call these processes globalization.

Hybridization and creolization are two concepts that explicitly deal with the mixing of societal levels in, as Hannerz calls it, "the interplay between imported and indigenous cultures" (Hannerz, 1987 : 546). The concept of creolization was (re-)introduced by Hannerz in his much cited article "The World in Creolization" (1987). One could indeed speak about re-introducing, because the concept in itself is an old concept. Whatever the history of the term itself, Hannerz's anthropology about creolization is concerned with the mixing of cultures and "cultures must be seen as involved in an intercontinental traffic in meaning" (Hannerz, 1987 : 547). No longer can we speak of *inter*cultural, but increasingly we need to address *multi*cultural, because the mixing of cultures has become increasingly complex. No longer can we speak of linear contacts between cultures, because multiple cultures play, as actors or factors, parts in the same contacts, and all cultures have become creole from within.

The concept of hybridization was (re-)introduced by Jan Nederveen Pieterse in 1994 and refers to a similar process. Building on Rowe and Schelling's definition of hybridization, who defined it as "the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices" (Rowe & Schelling, 1991 : 231), Nederveen Pieterse uses the concept in the sense that there is a global process in which cultural elements are mixed into a global mélange of cultures.

The interconnected processes of globalization and localization, or *glocalization* as some also prefer, are operational at different societal levels and between different societal levels. In the case of *glocalization*, globalization does not only refer to contacts between the level of nations (as was common in the dependency paradigm, and is mostly referred to by those who use the term globalization), but also to intercultural contacts at other levels of societal organization. Globalization is a process that not only applies to nations, but also to small-scale communities and individuals. These interlevel contacts – also referred to as *flows* to more specifically emphasize the flow of cultural products – and the interpretations of the cultural products by individuals in local communities form the basis for a more people centered perspective on globalization.

It is then at the local level that one can identify processes of localization. Localism refers to "the representation of group identity as defined primarily by a sense of commitment to a particular place and to a set of cultural practices that are self-consciously articulated and to some degree separated and directed away from the surrounding social world" (Nadel-Klein, 1991 : 502). Localization is in many cases seen as a reaction to the process of globalization (see for instance Van Ginkel, 1992). In this case, the process of localization can therefore be seen as referring to a reinforcement of cultural identity at a local community level. People deal with globalization aspects ('outgroup' messages) from their own local contexts and this interaction could lead to more emphasis on small-scale cultural processes.

"In ... attempts to theorize the present phase of globalization, world-wide interconnectedness does not result in the creation of a 'global society.' It yields, on the one hand, a decentered set of subnational and supra-national interactions – from capital transfers and populations movements to the transmission of information – and these interactions help multiply, invent, and disseminate cultural differences, rather than overcome them" (Buell, 1994 : 10). So, even on the national level, with reference to national cultures and the nation-state, globalization does not necessarily stand for cultural integration. It is often assumed that globalization and localization are interrelated processes and that globalization can somehow stimulate processes of localization. Localization, as it is intrinsically linked to globalization, can mean, in my opinion, that more emphasis will be put on the articulation of local cultural identities and local community characteristics.

Cultural localization : 'communication for localization'

Building on Tomlinson (1994) and with him, reflecting on Giddens, the globalization thesis is in fact about *structure*, and "our day-to-day experience of locales is certainly structured by forces which are, ultimately, global" (Tomlinson, 1994 : 153). But, it "is surely not a central figure in most people's everyday awareness" (Tomlinson, 1994 : 154). If it is not a global structure that plays a central role in people's daily experience, what does ? Building on interpretive approaches in communication studies (Carragee, 1990; Evans, 1990; Servaes & Frissen, 1997), anthropology (Geertz, 1973; Keesing, 1987) and sociology (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) reference frameworks, worldviews, cultures and structures that guide daily activity can, first of all, be sought in the local. An interpretive approach centers people's interpretations in a local context. In such an interpretive way, daily structure is far more local than global. So, if we return to Giddens' claim and Tomlinson's critique I would like to state that phenomenal worlds are still truly local, instead of global. But how do we include the global level in the locally based interpretations ?

In my opinion, the cultural flow, be it local or global, is interpreted in the local context of every day life. Daily life is as such the primary context in which people deal, in an interpretive sense, with 'outgroup'- as well as 'ingroup'-messages. A (cultural) identity that is constructed (partly) based on these locally embedded interpretations is however derived from different societal levels, e.g., the global level, the macro-regional level (e.g., the Pacific Islands region or Europe), the national level (nation-states), the meso-regional level (e.g., provinces or counties), the local level (e.g., cities, neighborhoods, communities, but also (extended) families) and the individual level. This is the case because the cultural flow incorporates elements which are derived from these different levels. In this line of thought the global has indeed an influence on the construction of identity but this influence cannot be overemphasized because the interpretations, which are local cultural interpretations, precede the construction of identity.

One can distinguish, in a very general way, two dimensions to the popular idea of cultural globalization. First, there is the still strong opinion of cultural modernization, a process which stands for the idea that cultures have to become modernized. Second, there is the idea of the development towards one cosmopolitan 'world culture.' Both processes have a deterministic or passive ring to them. The complete opposite of these two processes is cultural localization. Though, to give it a more active connotation I would like to call it '*communication for localization.*' With 'communication for localization' I do not mean the idea of *de*globalization (Robertson, 1992 : 10), a process that aims to undo the compression of the world. With 'communication for localization' I basically mean that processes of cultural change and flows of knowledge, culture or information should be interpreted and analyzed in a local context instead of trying to place them directly in a global context. The

flow may have a global character, but the interpretations of these flows are, first of all, local. 'Communication for localization' is particularly interested in the subjective dimensions of globalization as a bottom-up process of interpretations.

A consequence of such a position is that one favors 'the right to culture' *from an internal point of view* (from the inside out). Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states: "Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community." And one of the statements at the 1968 UNESCO conference on cultural rights as human rights was: "The rights to culture include the possibility for each man to obtain the means of developing his personality, through his direct participation in the creation of human values and of becoming, in this way, responsible for his situation, *whether local or on a world scale*" (emphasis added, cited in Hamelink, 1994: 187-188). The point that is stressed here is that the world scale or the global reference framework is not an outside *force* in the creation of an individual or even a collective cultural identity. The reference frame is indeed nothing more than a framework that guides, structures, surrounds and frames the locally embedded cultural interpretations.

Another more action oriented dimension of 'communication for localization' is for instance the activities of grass roots social movements concerned with cultural or ethnic issues. It is these activities that try to counterbalance global cultural flows and express concern with local cultural identity. Here, the first concern is also with localization and not with globalization. When scholars talk about *global* grass roots social movements, they often only refer to two areas in which these movements have global tendencies; *the environment and human rights*. It is in these areas that we face common, *global risks* and in these cases there are no 'others.' But with culture there are others. Moreover, we are not even sure that our anxiety shared with others can produce the experience of, to say it with Tomlinson (1994: 63), a global 'we.' The global warming and the rising of the sea level is for instance catastrophic for many Pacific Islands because they will literally lose their land. But in this case, there is still no global 'we.' So, even *without* the problem of ethnic diversity, fundamental religious differences and cultural variety, we have great difficulty in creating a global 'we.'

Ethnic and cultural movements are, interpreted in this way, not global in perspective. They are not about homogenization, they are about *differences*, and differences can only exist if there are others, and if there are others, there are boundaries. Locality, community, Gemeinschaft (Tönnies), neighborhood (Appadurai) all exist because of small scale *boundaries*, which are either symbolic (Cohen, 1985), structural (political, economic, social, cultural), territorial or virtual. Cultures have always tried to distinguish themselves from other cultures, emphasizing differences rather than similarities. The only way in which these movements can be termed global is in their use of new communication technology. Now, different groups, especially in the Fourth World, can communicate with each other through e-mail,

fax and visuals. This of course only means that their *means* of communication are global, not their *goals*.

'Communication for localization' in the field of action is therefore also primarily concerned with localization, not with globalization. It tries to counterbalance the global communication flow by positive, locally based, action.

Conclusion

To sum up, 'communication for localization' has two dimensions. First, it is concerned with local *interpretations* and local *cultural identity construction*, a construction which is (partly) based on these interpretations. Interpretations of the cultural flow, be the flows global or local, are always locally contextualized using a local reference frame. However, because the flow incorporates elements from many different levels, the construction of identity also incorporates these elements. Though, because of the fact that these elements are first interpreted in a local context, they are also locally reshaped. Second, 'communication for localization' is concerned with *action*. As an active concept it refers not to a process of deglobalization, but refers to supporting the voice of the local (which in some cases can also mean national or even macro-regional) or disadvantaged groups (either in a global, macro-regional, national, regional or local arena), in order to counterbalance the global communication flow and to positively favor 'the right to culture' from the inside out.

In this respect, Giddens' earlier cited definition of globalization (1990: 64) is of high relevance: "Globalisation can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. ... *Local transformation* is as much a part of globalisation as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space." Robertson (1992: 8) and Friedman (1994: 196) also addressed this interpretive dimension of globalization. The attempt, then, is not to *reconstruct* macrosociology from a microsociological perspective, but to *re-interpret* or to *reconstruct* the *interpretations* of macrosociological events or structures, be they close or distant in time and space.

7

Globalization, McDonaldization and Americanization

Globalization has emerged as a central concern in sociology and other social sciences in the last few years. While a focus on the globe and global issues is welcome, many globalization theorists have been premature in their rejection of other substantive focuses and of alternative theoretical orientations. This is apparent not only in my work on fast-food restaurants and the McDonaldization process, but also in my more recent work on credit cards and the process of Americanization. The objective in this chapter is to re-examine some of the basic tenets of globalization theory not only in light of this work, but also as it relates to the new "means of consumption" (see Chapter 9) emanating, in large part, from the United States.

While there are significant differences among globalization theorists, most if not all would accept Robertson's (1992: 61, 64) advocacy of the idea that social scientists adopt "a specifically global point of view," and "treat the global condition as such." Elsewhere, Robertson (1990: 18) talks of the "study of the world as a whole." More specifically, Robertson (1992: 60) argues, "there is a general autonomy and 'logic' to the globalization process, which operates in *relative* independence of strictly societal and other conventionally studied sociocultural processes." Similarly, Feathersone (1990: 1) discusses the interest in processes that "gain some autonomy on a global level."

Virtually all globalization theorists, and even many of those operating with other theoretical orientations, are able to accept such generalizations. However, it is a different matter when one gets into the specifics of these approaches. They are open to serious debate and disagreement not only from outsiders, but also from within globalization theory itself (for example, Robertson's critiques of Wallerstein's world-systems version of globalization theory).

What is of interest to us here is not so much the nature of globalization theory, but the many things it appears to reject. In fact, it sometimes seems as if globalization theorists spend almost as much time critiquing alternative perspectives and focuses as they do developing the theory itself. While they may disagree on the specifics of the approach, they do agree much more on ideas to which they are opposed. Among the things that tend to be rejected are:

1 a focus on any single nation-state;
2 a focus on the West in general, or the United States in particular;

3 a concern with the impact of the West (westernization) or the United States (Americanization) on the rest of the world;
4 a concern with homogenization (rather than heterogenization);
5 a concern with modernity (as contrasted with postmodernity);
6 an interest in what used to be called modernization theory (Tiryakian, 1991).

Let us look at each of these as well as what the work on fast-food restaurants and credit cards (and later on the new means of consumption) tells us about them.

First, the focus on the globe as the unit of analysis is generally coupled with a rejection of a focus on the nation-state (and related phenomena).[1] This is a result of a Durkheimian sense of emergence, or the view that "the global whole . . . is more than a collection of juxtaposed particularities" (Beyer, 1994: 14). Therefore, globalization theory involves a "shift in unit of analysis" (Beyer, 1994: 14). More negatively, Beyer argues that "we must make the primary unit of analysis the global system and *not* some subunit of it, such as the *nation*, the *state*, or the *region*" (1994: 2; italics added). Even more strongly, Beyer argues: "Globalization means, for instance, that we *cannot* conceive the whole in terms of one of its parts, say the First or Third worlds, or as a composite system of logically prior nation states" (1994: 7; italics added).

This change in the unit of analysis is sometimes seen as a result of the fact that there has been a historical shift and the nation-state is no longer the major player on the globe. Anthony Smith (1990: 174), for example, argues that "the era of the nation-state is over." This change is seen as leading to a shift in the main focus of sociology. For example, in Archer's (1990: 133) view, the "globalisation of *society* means that *societies* are no longer the prime units of sociology." Indeed, classical and contemporary sociology are often castigated for their near-singleminded concern with the nation to the exclusion of an interest in global processes. Globalization theorists seem intent on righting this wrong by moving our focus away from the nation and to the globe. While they may be right about a traditional imbalance in sociological concerns, and the contemporary importance of global processes, this is not to say that the nation-state has ceased to be of great, if not paramount, importance in the contemporary world.

In a related, but more general, argument, Appadurai (1990: 301) contends that deterritorialization "is one of the central forces in the modern world." In such a deterritorialized world, "money, commodities and persons are involved in ceaselessly chasing each other around the world" (Appadurai, 1990: 303). While this view well describes fast-food restaurants and credit cards, the "territory" from which they emanate, largely the United States, as well as the territories to which they are exported, remains of central importance.

In practice, however, globalization theorists *do* have a great deal to say about territories and nation-states, but they tend to be *different* territories and states than those of interest in traditional sociology. That is, to use the concepts of Immanuel Wallerstein (1974, 1980, 1989), while traditionally sociologists have focused on "core" nations (and territories) and their impact on "peripheral" nations, globalization theorists seem much more interested in peripheral nations and the way they resist or modify that which emanates from the core nations (Smart, 1994).[2]

So, as even many globalization theorists implicitly acknowledge, the nation-state remains important today. However, it is certainly not just the peripheral nations that are of significance; needless to say, core nations like the United States are of great, if not overwhelming, importance. In our rush to focus on the globe, we should not lose sight of the importance of nation-states, *both* core *and* periphery.

The fast-food restaurant and the credit card are both very distinctive products of the United States, that is, of a single nation-state. While it had precursors, the first truly important chain of fast-food restaurants, McDonald's, opened in the United States in 1955. Similarly, while it, too, had predecessors, the first modern "universal" credit card, Diners Club, was first issued in the United States in 1950 and the first modern bank card was created by the Franklin National Bank of Long Island in 1951. BankAmericard (later Visa) was originally issued in California in 1958 by the Bank of America. Master Charge (later MasterCard) was founded in 1966 by several large Chicago banks. In many ways, these innovations in the means of consumption (and many others to be discussed below) could *only* have emerged from a specific nation. They were generated by the affluence and the mobility, especially via automobile, that are so much associated with the post-World War II United States. Thus, while we certainly need to concern ourselves with global processes, we must also be attuned to the specific nature of a given nation in order to understand its role and place in the global society.

While fast-food restaurants and credit cards are products of a single nation, they are certainly global in character. In fact, with their American markets becoming more and more crowded and saturated, the fast-food and credit card companies are focusing on international expansion. For example, McDonald's is now opening more outlets overseas each year than it is in the United States and half its profits come from overseas operations. Similarly, with the American market moving toward saturation, the credit card companies are concentrating on international expansion. Nevertheless, their point of origin was the United States.

A concern with the products of the United States, even if they are global in character, stands in opposition to the rejection by globalization theorists of a focus on the United States or the West in general, as well as on the processes of Americanization or westernization (Robertson, 1992; Friedman, 1994). For example, Featherstone (1991: 127) critiques the idea that "consumer culture on a global scale parallels the expansion of the power of the United States over the world economic order. Here consumer culture is seen

as destined to become a universal culture which destroys each country's own national culture." Featherstone (1991: 142) also critiques a more general focus on the West: "if we consider the relations between nation-states and power blocs on the global level, it can be argued that a shift is taking place away from the West." Pieterse (1994: 163) criticizes the notion of westernization for offering "a narrow window on the world, historically and culturally." Such rejections are traceable to the fact that much thinking about international processes was, in the past, biased in the direction of America and the West: Americanization and westernization. Globalization theorists argue that such perspectives were misguided and ethnocentric.

Furthermore, even if such theorists are willing to admit (and they aren't) that Americanization and westernization adequately described the past, they argue that the world has changed, has become more "compressed" and subject to multi-dimensional and multi-directional processes. Smith argues that today's global culture has become decentered: "Today's emerging global culture is tied to *no place* or period. It is context-less, a true melange of disparate components drawn from everywhere and nowhere, borne upon the modern chariots of global telecommunications systems" (1990: 177; italics added).[3] In light of the demise of communism, Friedman (1994: 99) sees a crisis with the breakdown of the global order and "declining centers of the world system." Thus, from the point of view of globalization theorists, a focus on America and the West, or Americanization and westernization, would be both far too restrictive and out of touch with contemporary global realities.

Again, while there is much truth in this, it remains the case that there *is* a disproportionate amount of goods, bodies of information, and other cultural products emanating from the United States and the West: a great deal more than there is flowing into them. More generally, much of the rest of the world is subject to westernization and Americanization. In fact, with the death of communism, with the end of the only viable large-scale alternative to Western/American-style capitalism, the world is more open and vulnerable to this than ever before. The main opposition to these processes will come from local cultures (McKay, 1996) and it remains to be seen just how capable many of these cultures will be of warding off such incursions on their own.

The fast-food restaurants are bringing to the rest of the world not only Big Macs and french fries, but more importantly the American style of eating on the run. The fast-food restaurant brings with it the idea (and the structure to implement it) that eating is something to be completed as quickly and effortlessly as possible. Similarly, credit cards make it easier to purchase American goods like Levis and Pepsi and, more generally, the American consumer culture.[4] Fast-food restaurants and credit cards are beginning to flood the globe, and to bring with them the Americanization of local cultures. This judgment is in line with Dezelay's (1990: 281) conclusion, in another domain, that "the globalization of the market for legal services . . . is for the most part an Americanization." To paraphrase Dezelay, the worldwide spread of fast-food restaurants and credit cards is primarily an Americanization of the world.

This focus on Americanization (and westernization) is not to deny the independent importance of local cultures. As we have seen, McDonald's routinely adapts itself to local markets and for their part the locals adapt these restaurants to their cultures. While McDonald's sells products like Big Macs and fries throughout the world, it also sells products adapted to the needs and demands of local markets. Take the following, for example:

In Norway, McDonald's sells McLaks, a grilled salmon sandwich with dill sauce on a whole-grain bread.
In the Netherlands, a groenteburger (or vegetable burger) is on the menu.
Uruguayan McDonald's sport McHuevo (hamburgers with poached egg) and McQuesos (toasted cheese sandwiches).
Thai McDonald's offer Samurai pork burgers marinated in teriyaki sauce.
In Japan, we find a Chicken Tatsuta sandwich, fried chicken spiced with soy sauce and ginger, with cabbage and mustard mayonnaise.
Finally in the Philippines, McDonald's offers McSpaghetti, with tomato sauce and a meat sauce with frankfurter bits (Sullivan, 1995).

Local cultures have produced their own versions of fast-food restaurants such as Lebanon's Juicy Burger and India's Nirula's (as well as Russkoye Bistro, discussed in Chapter 6). Furthermore, American fast-food restaurants may have a very different meaning in other societies: dinner at McDonald's may be considered an elegant and expensive date or a family outing that requires months of saving.

Appadurai (1990: 295) argues that the "central problem of today's global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization." Most globalization theorists argue that we are witnessing greater heterogenization, while the spread of fast-food restaurants and credit cards around the world points toward increased homogenization. Thus, Featherstone (1991) devotes a chapter to the "globalization of diversity." Pieterse (1994: 161) rejects a singleminded focus on homogenization and argues "for viewing globalisation as a process of hybridisation which gives rise to a global melange." As examples of cultural hybridization (he is also interested in structural hybridization), Pieterse offers the following: "Thai boxing by Moroccan girls in Amsterdam, Asian rap in London, Irish bagels, Chinese tacos and Mardi Gras Indians in the United States" (Pieterse, 1994: 169).

In fact, of course, it is possible for *both* things to be true. That is, we can have the greater homogenization of some aspects of our lives along with the greater heterogenization of other aspects. This is the position taken by Giddens (1990: 64): "Globalization can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice

versa." Robertson (1992: 132) takes a similar position on this issue: "In the ideal-typical form of my conception of the global human condition it is possible for there to be an equal emphasis upon societal uniqueness, on the one hand, and the commonality of mankind, on the other." Similarly, Friedman (1990: 311) contends, "Ethnic and cultural fragmentation and modernist homogeneization are two constitutive trends of global reality." Smart (1994: 157) argues that "global transformations have led simultaneously to the dispersion of some common forms, commodities and ideas and yet, in so far as they are received, interpreted, adapted and utilised in potentially radically different cultural contexts, have contributed to the (re)production and (re)constitution of difference and diversity." Similarly and more specifically, Beyer (1994: 3) argues,

> the global system corrodes inherited or constructed cultural and personal identities; yet also encourages the creation and revitalization of particular identities as a way of gaining control over systemic power. It is in the context of this last feature that religion plays one of its significant roles in the development, elaboration, and problematization of the global system.

King (1990: 410) concludes that the world's cities are growing simultaneously more "similar to, and different from, each other." In fact, as we have seen, a number of globalization theorists argue that it is homogenization that tends to bring forth heterogenization as a response to it.

The coexistence of homogenization and heterogenization is manifest in the concept of "glocalization," reflecting a complex and reciprocal relationship between the global and the local (Robertson, 1992: 173). Similarly, Friedman (1994: 12) focuses on the "ongoing articulation between global and local processes." More specifically, he argues that "the local is itself a global product" (Friedman, 1994: 198) and contends that we have both the "cultural pluralization of the world" and the "formation of a single world culture . . . the things and symbols of Western culture have diffused into the daily lives of many of the world's peoples" (Friedman, 1994: 100). This is similar to Robertson's view that we have witnessed both the "particularization of universalism" (the world as a single place) and the "universalization of particularism" (the global expectation that societies should have their own distinctive identities). Robertson is right in his view that local cultures are not crushed by global phenomena. However, the spread of fast-food restaurants and credit cards indicates that such global processes *are* having a powerful homogenizing effect on them. I would take issue with Friedman's (1994: 239) contention that Western products have not led to homogenization, "but ha[ve] supplied raw materials for new local variations." While Friedman offers some important examples, I am hard pressed to see McHuevos, McLaks or elegant dates at fast-food restaurants as significant local variations on the homogenizing process of McDonaldization.

More generally, Robertson is correct in pointing to the global importance of factors like ethnicity, nationalism, race and gender. These can, and do,

retard the progress of McDonaldization and Americanization.[5] At the same time, the forces behind the latter processes actively seek to neutralize such factors by co-opting them into the system. For example, advertisements are tailored to the needs and interests of different ethnic and national groups, different races, and both genders.

Most globalization theorists also reject modern theories and favor postmodern approaches (Smart, 1994). Beyer (1994: 8) argues that "this global spread has resulted in a new social unit which is much more than a simple expansion of Western modernity." However, fast-food restaurants and credit cards can be seen as highly modern phenomena.[6] For example, to use the concept – rationality – most often associated with modernity, they are highly rational, emphasizing the most efficient ways of obtaining a meal, purchasing goods and services, and getting credit. Furthermore, these and other rational phenomena are of increasing importance in the West and are spreading throughout the rest of the world. This stands in contrast to various ideas associated with postmodernism. Postmodernists would argue that the world is growing less rather than more rational and that local cultures are of greater importance than such a homogenizing trend as increasing rationalization. Furthermore, the rationalization thesis implies a grand narrative which is rejected by postmodernists in favor of local or even individual narratives.

Featherstone (1990: 2) argues that postmodernism rejects the idea of "proto universal culture riding on the back of Western economic and political domination." This involves a rejection not only of westernization and Americanization, but also of the ideas of cultural imperialism and the exportation of mass consumer culture. Yet what the fast-food and credit card industries represent is precisely that. They *are* involved in a general effort to export American culture with the aim of gaining control over indigenous cultures. More specifically, they are involved in the exportation of America's mass consumer culture. One of the things that distinguishes these efforts from previous efforts such as coca-colonization (Kuisel, 1993), is that America is not merely exporting products, but also, and more importantly, the means to consume those and other products.[7] Fast-food restaurants and credit cards are better seen as means of consumption than as consumer products: they can be used as means to consume anything and everything. They are more important than products that preceded them into the international marketplace such as Coca-Cola and Levis since they are not merely altering what is consumed in other cultures, but also the *way* in which they and many other things are consumed. In that sense, their impact is far greater and far more pervasive.

In addition, Featherstone (1990: 3) argues that postmodernism assumes "that we have moved beyond the logic of the universal 'iron cage' rationalization process." Of course, the opposite thesis, the greater proximity of the iron cage as time passes, is precisely the point of my work on fast-food restaurants. Similarly, credit cards represent the rationalization of the

loan process (see Chapter 8) and have, in turn, helped to further rationalize all types of consumption.

Finally, globalization theorists contrast their perspective to the modernization theory that was popular several decades ago (Archer, 1990). Featherstone (1990), for one, argues that Western modernity, and therefore implicitly modernization theory, is exhausted. However, the spread of fast-food restaurants and credit cards seems to support modernization theory. While there is some overlap between the thesis about the growth of these phenomena and that theory, there is at least one absolutely crucial difference. Modernization theorists tended to laud Western developments and to urge the rest of the world to move in this direction. In contrast, my work on fast-food restaurants and credit cards has been highly critical of these developments. Most of these criticisms are subsumed under the heading of the irrationality of rationality. There are many irrationalities associated with these systems, especially dehumanization. From a global perspective these rational systems tend to bring about homogenization, and an increasingly homogeneous world is a less human world. Other nations are urged to resist such incursions, or at least to try to adapt them to the local culture. In fact, given its focus on formal (or instrumental) rationality, and its critical character, my approach is closer to that of anti-American thinking and critical theory than it is to modernization theory (see Chapter 6).

Critical theorists were concerned with the rise of instrumental rationality and its extension from production to consumption (Featherstone, 1991). It could be argued that what I am doing is extending this critique from consumer goods to the means of consumption. This would seem to be in line with the postmodern critique of consumer culture, but there is an important difference. Postmodernists such as Baudrillard are focally concerned with the consumption of signs and not of use values as material utilities. In contrast, my main concern is the effect of such material realities as fast-food restaurants and credit cards (and other means of consumption) on consumption. My position can also be broadly contrasted with the "cultural turn" in the social sciences and seen as a reassertion of the importance of material realities in consumption.

Thus far, I have made this argument in largely negative terms. That is, I have been critically analysing the rejection by globalization theorists of various perspectives and social realities. By way of summary, let me now turn things around and put the case I am making more positively.

- The development and growth of fast-food restaurants and credit cards indicate that the nation-state continues to be important in sociological analysis.
- More specifically, the West in general, and the United States in particular, continues to be central to global analyses.
- Relatedly, the processes of westernization and Americanization continue to have a profound effect on the world economically, politically and culturally.

- The spread of fast-food restaurants and credit cards indicates that there are powerful homogenizing trends in the world today, although that does not deny a parallel trend in the direction of heterogenization.
- The developments of concern in this chapter, especially given their highly rational characteristics, indicate that we continue to live in a world with many modern characteristics; it is premature to declare the end of modernity and the dawning of postmodernity.
- These developments seem supportive of what used to be called modernization theory. However, it is important to remember that one is not necessarily describing desirable developments when one talks of modernization. Modernization can and does have undesirable, irrational consequences for societies.

Points of Agreement

While I have emphasized areas of disagreement with globalization theorists, there are several points of agreement between our perspectives. For example, I would agree with Featherstone (1990: 12) that we can anticipate "continuing struggles to define the global cultural order." Similarly, I accept Robertson's contention that the global order is "up for grabs." Where I differ with Featherstone and Robertson is over the nature of the struggle. From my perspective, it is a struggle in which the West in general, and especially the United States, holds the upper hand. With the death of communism, there is no large-scale alternative to international capitalism. Local cultures will certainly continue to be important and will remain capable not only of generating their own ways of life, but of modifying and altering the imports from other societies, especially the United States (McKay, 1996). Some may even succeed in exporting significant elements of their culture to large portions of the rest of the world. But they will also continue to be bombarded, and greatly altered, by exports from the West in general and the United States in particular.

I tend to agree with Featherstone's contention (1990: 10) that "there is little prospect of a united global culture, rather there are global cultures in the plural." Smith (1990: 171) makes a similar argument, contending that "the idea of a 'global culture' is a practical impossibility." Hannerz is on target when he says:

> There is now a world culture. . . . It is marked by an organization of diversity rather than by a replication of uniformity. No *total* homogenization of systems of meaning and expression has occurred, nor does it appear likely that there will be one anytime soon. But the world has become one network of social relationships, and between its different regions there is a flow of meanings as well of people and goods. (Hannerz, 1990: 237; italics added)

However, while we will continue to see global diversity, many, most, perhaps eventually all of those cultures will be affected by American exports; America will become virtually everyone's "second culture."

While I see a strong trend in the world at the moment toward Americanization, I do not think that that trend will last forever. In fact, there is evidence that in Russia the initial love affair is ebbing and there is a resurgence of interest in things Russian (McKay, 1996). In his discussion of the global market for legal services, Dezelay sees it as dominated by Americanization, but he also argues that this is merely a "historical interlude" resulting from the head start of American lawyers (Dezelay, 1990: 287). We are in a similar interlude in American hegemony in fast-food restaurants, credit cards and other means of consumption. Eventually, much of the rest of the world will catch up in these areas (as they have in production) and not only become better able to control their own societies, but begin exporting their creations to other societies.

While I have focused on differences between globalization theory and a perspective derived from my work on fast-food restaurants and credit cards, there are ways in which the latter phenomena can be dealt with under the heading of globalization theory. For example, Robertson (1992: 8) defines globalization as a process encompassing "the compression of the world" and "the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole." The worldwide presence of fast-food restaurants and credit cards has served to compress the world, and those who utilize them are certainly made more conscious of the global system.

Globalization theorists also emphasize the development of third cultures within the global system (Robertson, 1992). These are partially autonomous cultures that transcend national boundaries and exist on a global basis. Appadurai (1990) has identified several. For example, there is the global "finanscape" dealing with the "movement of megamonies through national turnstiles at blinding speed" (Appadurai, 1990: 298). Clearly, the credit-card industry is part of the finanscape.[8] It, and the fast-food industry, are also part of the ethnoscape, involving the movement of large numbers of people via tourism (see Chapter 10). And both industries, especially the credit-card industry, are part of the technoscape employing technologies that girdle the globe.

Globalization theorists recognize the importance of economic and political factors, but give special attention to cultural factors and the emergence of a "global culture" (Robertson, 1992: 114). However, to Robertson (1992: 135), the global culture is not normatively binding, but simply a "general mode of discourse about the world as a whole and its variety." Clearly, fast-food restaurants and credit cards are not only of economic significance; they also are of great cultural significance. They are certainly influencing the world's mode of discourse, but I also think, in contrast to Robertson, that they are creating normative constraints on the way people eat and consume.

Friedman (1994: 103) argues that consumption is "an aspect of broader cultural strategies of self-definition and self-maintenance." Credit cards profoundly alter the way in which things are consumed. Friedman singles out eating as of central cultural importance and the fast-food restaurants are

radically altering the way in which many people in many cultures eat. In doing this, credit cards and fast-food restaurants are changing, at least to some degree, people's definitions of self.

Means of Consumption

Fast-food restaurants and credit cards are far from the only American exports that are radically altering the globe. Furthermore, it is not just that the United States is producing consumer goods that are being exported to the rest of the world. What fast-food restaurants and credit cards show is that the United States is now in the business of creating, producing and exporting dramatic new means of consumption.[9] Once the center of revolutionary new developments in the means of production, the United States is now better described as the center of the creation of radically new means of consumption. Exporting the means of consumption to other societies, often along with the goods to be consumed by them, is of far greater importance than simply exporting such goods alone. This radically alters not just what people consume, but the ways in which they consume.

The notion of means of consumption is derived from Marx's concept of the means of production, or the tools, machines, raw materials, and so on owned by the capitalist and needed by the proletariat in order to be productive. Means of consumption can be defined as those things owned by capitalists and rendered by them as necessary to customers in order for them to consume. The chains of fast-food restaurants and the credit-card system clearly fit this definition. Like Marx's means of production, means of consumption should be seen as material phenomena.

Fast-food restaurants and credit cards are not the only new means of consumption being generated by the United States. We can include under this heading such predecessors as the supermarket (Walsh, 1993) and the shopping mall (Kowinski, 1985). Of greater interest are the means of consumption emerging in the United States today and still in the very early stages of being exported to the rest of the world. Take, for example, the TV shopping channels such as Home Shopping Network (HSN). For those of you unfamiliar with it, HSN is a 24-hour a day, seven-day a week, television network devoted to nothing but shopping. Goods are displayed and viewers are given phone numbers to call in order to place their orders. This development, by the way, is made possible by the existence and widespread use of credit cards. HSN (and the other similar networks) is revolutionary in that it breaks down space, and especially time, barriers to consumption. Now goods from anywhere in the world can be purchased at any time of the day or night; no more frustration over being unable to consume because the shops are closed. We are already beginning to see more global versions of HSN.

Another development worth noting is the ongoing fusion of consumption and entertainment – the goal of entertainment has become consumption; consumption must be entertaining. In a sense, there is nothing new here.

Fairs, for example, have long been both markets and sites of pleasure. The pre-industrial "carnivalesque tradition" has long been incorporated in the modern world (Featherstone, 1991). However, this fusion of consumption and amusement has become far more widespread and it has been rationalized (manufactured, sanitized, homogenized). The old "ordered disorder" of fairs has been transformed into much order and woefully little, if any, disorder.

For example, amusement parks like Disneyland and Disney World , while they are ostensibly about entertainment, can be seen as really shopping malls for the vast array of Disney products (Fjellman, 1992).[10] Shopping malls themselves are coming to look more and more like amusement parks: the huge malls in Bloomington, Minnesota and Edmonton, Canada literally encompass amusement parks complete with rollercoasters and ferris wheels. Lured to the malls by the amusements, many consumers stay to shop, eat, drink, see a movie, visit a fitness center, and so on. Featherstone (1991: 103) has described an English version of such a mall, Metrocentre at Gateshead: "The Metrocentre has promoted itself as a tourist attraction with its 'Antiques Village', fantasy fairytale 'Kingdom of King Wiz', Ancient Roman Forum gallery. . . ."

Malls are also being transformed by encompassing more businesses, most of them chains, devoted exclusively to entertainment (Pressler, 1995a). There are the often franchised play centers (Discovery Zone, for example) where parents can leave their children while they go shopping. The big growth area, however, is in the adult play centers (Dave and Buster's, Q-Zar) of various types proliferating throughout the malls of America (Pressler, 1995b). Dave and Buster's "is adult entertainment '90's style, with dozens of specially made billiard tables and shuffleboards, carnival games, play-for-fun blackjack, state-of-the-art electronic simulators and virtual reality pods where players can fight virtual pterodactyls or one another" (Pressler, 1995a: D1). Q-Zar is a 15-minute game of laser tag played by two teams with up to 20 players on each team. Each player has a laser gun and wears a vest with laser-sensitive panels.

> Music pounds overhead while the players weave and dart toward each other's home base looking for the enemy. . . . Players know they have "tagged" a member of the opposite team when a computer voice from the gun exclaims, "Good shot!" The target's vest vibrates when it is hit. Computers track each player's ammunition level and hit ratio. (Pressler, 1995b: D1)

Drawn to the malls to "play," adults not only spend large sums of money at these centers, but stay on to spend even larger sums at the malls' many shops.

By the way, some of the earlier innovators in the means of consumption have long recognized that they are in the business of using fun to sell goods. Supermarkets use games, clowns, and "fun foods" (Count Chocula breakfast cereal, for example) to help market their wares. Fast-food restaurants know that what they are selling, given the mundane character of their food, is "fun." Thus, they are characterized by bright lights, garish colors, clowns

and cartoon characters, and above all the kind of finger food one associates with amusement parks.

Featherstone (1991: 103) has offered the following overview of developments in shopping centers, malls and department stores:

> Within these sites it is apparent that shopping is rarely a purely calculative rational economic transaction to maximize utility, but is primarily a leisure-time cultural activity in which people become audiences who move through spectacular imagery designed to connote sumptuousness and luxury, or to summon up connotations of desirable exotic far-away places, and nostalgia for past emotional harmonies. In short, shopping has become an experience.

While fast-food restaurants and supermarkets may not conjure up a sense of luxury, they do seek to make the customer's visit an "experience."

As for credit cards, they represent the ideal way to pay. They are seemingly magical keys that open the doors to all of these wondrous experiences. Not only do they allow one to partake in all of them, but it all appears, at least for the moment, to be free. Credit cards are *meta-means*: means that make possible the other means of consumption. We are likely to see expansion in other meta-means of consumption (debit cards, electronic funds transfers) in the future.

We are now even witnessing the emergence of *meta-meta-means*. Take, for example, Hospitality Franchise Systems, an organization that provides services to franchises. For example, for the hotel chains that it owns (e.g. Ramada, Days Inn), it provides marketing services and centralized reservation systems. It has recently agreed to buy the largest residential real estate chain in the USA, Century 21, and will provide it with a similar set of services (McDowell, 1995).

Returning to the central theme, fast-food restaurants and credit cards are just two of a steady stream of innovations in the means of consumption that one can expect from the United States in the coming years. They are not simply aberrant phenomena; they are part of a long-term process that is altering the way people consume and live.

Lest the reader still be wary of the conclusions being drawn here, let me close with yet one more example of a revolution in the means in consumption, this time one which is as yet in the very earliest stages of development. This is the emergence of "cybermalls" on the Internet. While the wrinkles are still being worked out (for example, Visa and Mastercard are currently ironing out the details on how to pay for the products purchased since credit card numbers can easily be compromised on the Internet), it is just a matter of time until more and more purchases will be made via the cybermalls on the Internet. What is striking about this development is its global implications. There will come a time when anyone with a computer any place in the world can tap into the Internet and its cybermalls. We will witness an unprecedented level of homogenization of consumption around the world; the world will in effect have its own shopping mall. Created in America, and undoubtedly dominated at least initially by American technology and

American businesses, the cybermalls will lead to yet higher levels of Americanization and homogenization.

Notes

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1. The rejection of a focus on the nation-state is but part of a broader rejection of prioritizing all global subunits: "*ethnies*, nations, states, organizations, movements, or religions . . . [are] no longer conceived simply as logically pre-existing social unities" (Beyer, 1994: 14). Featherstone (1991: 146) defines ethnie as "the set of symbols, myths, memories, heroes, events, landscapes and traditions woven together in popular consciousness . . . the ground for a common culture."
2. I use the terminology of world-systems theory here even though, as mentioned above, that theory is often heavily criticized by other globalization theorists.
3. It might well be that the thinking of globalization theorists has been distorted by their focus on telecommunications which lend themselves quite readily to globalization. Other international processes, like those taking place in the fast-food and credit card industries, do not lend themselves as easily to globalization, at least as that process is conceived by globalization theorists.
4. However, credit cards can be, and are, used to purchase indigenous goods and services.
5. As pointed out in the preceding chapter, there is not a simple one-to-one relationship between these two processes. McDonaldization has origins outside the United States and Americanization involves much more than McDonaldization.
6. Although, as we will see later, they can also be analysed from a postmodern perspective.
7. Another, as we saw in the preceding chapter, is that they also involve the exportation of McDonald's business practices.
8. The fast-food industry fits here, too, in the sense that a portion of the profits earned in other countries is making its way back to the United States.
9. This can be differentiated from Featherstone's (1991: 16) "modes of consumption," or "socially structured ways in which goods are used to demarcate social relationships."
10. For more on this, see Chapter 10.

Overview

McDonaldization is the term invented by *George Ritzer* to describe a sociological phenomenom that is happening in our society. You may think it started with *Ray Kroc* in the 1950's when he bought his first hamburger restaurant, but it's origins were actually much earlier than that. In fact, *Henry Ford* was the first McDonaldization pioneer with his vision of an assembly line for improving the production of automobiles. His revolutionary idea dramatically changed how many automobiles could be produced and was very *efficient*.

In essence, McDonaldization is the process of *rationalization*, albiet taken to extreme levels. Rationalization is a sociological term that simply means the substitution of logically consistent rules for traditional (or illogical) rules. One of the fundamental aspects of McDonaldization is that almost any task can (and should) be rationalized.

The process of McDonaldization takes a task and breaks it down into smaller tasks. This is repeated until all tasks have been broken down to the smallest possible level. The resulting tasks are then rationalized to find the *single* most efficient method for completing each task. All other methods are then deemed inefficient and discarded.

The result is an efficient, logical sequence of methods that can be completed the same way every time to produce the desired outcome. The outcome is *predictable*. All aspects of the process are easily *controlled*. Additionally, quantity (or *calculability*) becomes the measurement of good performance.

By now, you might be thinking that this all sounds pretty good. After all, being more efficient is a good thing. Controlled, consistent and measurable outcomes also sound good. So, what's the problem?

It turns out that *over*-rationalizing a process in this manner has an unexpected side effect. It's called *irrationality*. In a sociological context that simply means that a rationalized system may result in events or outcomes that were neither anticipated or desired, and in fact, may not be so good.

Take the example of the McDonald's chain of restaurants. Where is the irrationality? The premise of *fast food* often turns out to be just the opposite - long waits in lines. Fast food is not necessarily good food - in fact, McDonald's food is extremely unhealthy and the taste is average and bland. The system of efficiently producing and distributing their food has some other consequences, namely millions of tons of trash each year (disposability) and a food cultivation system of questionable ethics.

According to Ritzer, the four main dimensions of McDonaldization are:

- Efficiency - The *optimum* method of completing a task. The rational determination of the best mode of production. Individuality is not allowed.
- Calculability - Assessment of outcomes based on quantifiable rather than subjective criteria. In other words, quantity over quality. They sell the *Big* Mac, not the *Good* Mac.
- Predictability - The production process is organized to guarantee uniformity of product and standardized outcomes. All shopping malls begin to look the same and all highway exits have the same assortment of businesses.
- Control - The substitution of more predictable non-human labor for human labor, either through automation or the deskilling of the work force.

Efficiency is the process of "...choosing the optimum means to a given end (p. 36)". Efficiency is something that is sought after by many people, even without the shackles of a person, so instead of choosing your own methods of efficiency, you are forced to accept the efficiency of the surrounding institutions.

In fact this can lead to a lamb-like acceptance of what the surrounding institutions consider efficient. Which may be vastly different from what would actually be efficient for either the employees or the consumer.

Ritzer uses the examples of salad bars: in essence, with a salad bar, you buy an empty plate, go to the bar and create the salad yourself. This is very efficient for the restaurant, but makes more work for the consumer. In other words you have to pay for the privilege of making your own salad.

Another example of this inefficient efficiency is the ATM machine, popular at many banks. The consumer has to fill out all of the paper work, enter in the deposit or withdrawal to the computer, and, on top of all this, pay for the privilege of being a bank teller.

Many would argue that both the salad bar, and the ATM are conveniences, rather than inconveniences. With the salad bar, you are not limited by what the cook wants to put in the salad, and ATMs allow you to do your banking any time you want, unhindered by inefficient bank hours. However, keep in mind, that both of these serve to reduce the level of human interaction. Consumers are forced to deal with computers or salad bars and not people, training them to be better workers for the McDonaldized society.

Calculability

I like big things
The size of them impresses me
Just give me plenty
Forget about the quality
And I like fast food
The burgers always taste the same
No snotty waiters,
Escargot or Beaujolais

Music Time
Dennis DeYoung/Styx

Actually, Dennis mentions two of McDonaldization's themes in this song. "The burgers always taste the same" is a reference to predictability. "Big things," however, is calculability all the way. He just mentioned two out of the four main dimensions of McDonaldization without even trying.

The second aspect of McDonaldization is *calculability*. Calculability is " ... an emphasis on the quantitative aspects of products sold (portion size, cost) and service offered (the time it takes to get the product). (Page 9)"

Ritzer goes on to point out that this emphasis leads to the erroneous conclusion that more is better. If there is a lot of a product then it must be good. This is why we "super size" our "Double" Big Mac "extra" value meal. It is thought of as a better product.

As the term ***predictability*** would indicate, a McDonaldized society, "...emphasizes such things as discipline, order, systemization, formalization, routine, consistency, and methodical operation. In such a society, people prefer to know what to expect in most settings and at most times (page 79)."

This has a two-fold effect. It makes the experience of the consumer the same at every location of a McDonaldized company. It also makes the work routine for the employees of that company.

Some people like this predictability, and would argue that it is a good thing, you don't have to worry about eating a bad burger. Burgers from one McDonald's to the next will taste the

same. Workers, don't have to worry about thinking for themselves, they will have time to concentrate on other things, while they go through the motions of performing their jobs. But, is this predictability better? When you travel to a different area, do you want the experience to be the same? If you are in France, touring the city of Paris, do you really want to eat at McDonald's? Doesn't that detract from the whole experience of a different culture? It is true, many employees don't want to have to think while they are working, but isn't a job that is challenging better?

This predictability has spilled over into more than just jobs and food. The most popular movies out today are sequels. Sequels are great, because they are almost assured to make money for the studio, writer's don't have to work as hard, because the characters have already been developed. Consumer's love them because they also don't have to think. The moviegoer is usually familiar with the characters in the sequel and know what to expect, making the movie experience more of a passive one.

Television is even more infamous for its predictability. It has been said that there are only 40 different sitcom situations, and have been since the 1960's. These situations are used over and over again, from one sitcom to the next, without fail. Occasionally a new plot will be introduced, but next week it is back to the same old situations.

Next time you are watching your favorite sitcom, think of these ten experiences, and think to see if it is being done, or has been done on your show:

- Sitcom family or group goes camping.
- One member of the sitcom family or group feels unloved, or unneeded and the rest of the episode is spent convincing that person he or she is a necessary part of the family.
- One cast member is accidentally labeled a genius through a computer malfunction.
- A member of the cast is forced to get a job in a fast-food restaurant.
- A cast member (us the resident "nerd") gets to be the hero as a member of a sports team.
- A female member of the cast gets pregnant. The most unlikely male cast member is forced to go to Lamaze class with her.
- The same female cast member will eventually go to the hospital to have the baby, leading to a "zany hospital" episode, ending in a touching newborn baby scene.
- One of the children of the sitcom family attempts to move out on his or her own, only to find out the he or she still needs the family, and moves back home.

If you can recognize these plots from more than one sitcom, then you, hopefully, can see what is meant by the predictability of television.

The final aspect of McDonaldization is ***control.*** Control over both employees and customers because, " [people are] the great source of uncertainty, unpredictability and inefficiency in any rationalizing system...(page 101)". By increasing control, through increased mechanization, employers maintain a better control over the entire rationalization process.

Ritzer's focus involves control through the substitution of non-human for human technology. By making tasks repetitive and forcing employees not to think, employers can maintain a tighter control over them.

Then we go home, and the money we take from the bank is decided by the computer. Our meals are frozen, we microwave our popcorn (our microwaves even have "popcorn" buttons on them, so the popcorn is perfect every time), and our salads come pre-made in bags--just open and pour.

Pilots have begun to rely more and more on automated systems, Hertz Rent-A-Car is installing computerized maps in their cars, and scientists are experimenting with cars that have built-in guides all in a futile attempt to eliminate the fear that accidents will occur due to human error.

However, each of these "advances" becomes a step back. We are in less control and computers are in more control As things become more automated it is easier to replace workers, and as we spend more time on front of the television and less time thinking for ourselves. We become more dependent on the very things that McDonaldization creates.

There are other dimensions of McDonaldization that Ritzer didn't include with the main four, but are worthy enough for prime attention. They are:

- **Irrationality** - A side effect of over-rationalized systems. Ritzer himself hints that this is the fifth dimension of McDonaldization. An example of this could be workers on an assembly line that are hired and trained to perform a single highly rationalized task. Although this may be a very efficient method of operating a business, an irrationality that is spawned can be worker burnout.
- **Deskilling** - A work force with the minimum abilities possible to complete simple focused tasks. This means that they can be quickly and cheaply trained and are easily replaceable.
- **Consumer Workers** - One of the sneakiest things about McDonaldization is how consumers get tricked into becoming unpaid employees. They do the work that was traditionally performed by the company. The prime example of this is diners who bus their own tables at the fast food restaurant. They dutifully carry their trash to friendly receptacles marked "thank you." (The extreme rationalization of this is the drive-thru; consumers take their trash with them!) Other examples are many and include: ATM's, salad bars, automated telephone menus, and pumping gas.

Adapted from: **http://www.mcdonaldization.com/whatisit.shtm**

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Global Media and Communication

ARTICLE

'Think globally, act locally'

China's rendezvous with MTV

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ABSTRACT

Using the case of MTV China, this article examines how transnational media corporations have been extending into China where ideological control and joint business cooperation remain barriers for foreign capital. Based on interviews with personnel of MTV, as well as observations of their programme productions, this article explores how MTV localizes in China under various economic and political constraints. It argues that the localization process is not a planned strategy that seeks to circumvent Chinese authorities. Instead, it is argued that transnational corporations have devised methods to maximize manoeuverability within the various political and economic constraints, and tune into the cultural and political configurations encountered. Whereas most academic studies have asserted that authoritarian states set high thresholds to prevent global capital from 'Westernizing' the culture, this article argues that the Chinese state, in various forms, is now flexible enough to work closely with Viacom in producing a new popular youth culture.

KEY WORDS

China ■ globalization ■ localization ■ modernity ■ MTV ■ popular culture ■ WTO

China's rendezvous with Viacom

'Think globally, act locally' is the business motto of Viacom Inc., one of the largest global entertainment corporations in the world. This article, through the case study of Viacom's MTV Channel in China, examines how transnational media corporations have localized in China, and the implications of the globalization/localization process. Viacom may well be the first American global media enterprise to significantly penetrate the China market and has drawn the attention of the Chinese public and officials alike. In 1999 Viacom spent $37.3 billion acquiring CBS, the network on which Jiang Zimen agreed to be interviewed by Mick Wallace

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on the programme *60 Minutes*. This created perhaps the deepest impression of Viacom in Chinese minds. With pre-eminent positions in broadcast and cable television, radio, outdoor advertising and online (Viacom.com), Viacom covers creation, promotion, and distribution of entertainment, news, sports, music and comedy.[1] Of all these businesses, MTV (Music Television), is the world's most widely distributed television network, reaching more than 340 million households in 140 countries via 31 localized TV channels and 17 web sites.[2] Since its establishment in 1981, through its ground-breaking visual expression of popular music, MTV has become a global youth phenomenon.

Viacom first entered China through its entertainment arm MTV Asia,[3] which covers three regional channels, MTV Mandarin, MTV Southeast Asia and MTV India, and reaches over 124 million households in 21 territories. The Chinese-language MTV Mandarin was inaugurated in 1995, and is, along with its precursor, Channel V of Murdoch's News Corporation, one of only two legal foreign-owned music channels in China.[4] Following their lead, US media giant AOL Time Warner acquired China Entertainment Television (CETV) in 2000 and eventually sold a 64 percent stake in the TV company to Asia's richest man, Ka-shing Li, and his internet, publishing and advertising group, Tom.com with a return of $6.8 million.[5]

In the late 1990s, while Murdoch had already found the key to opening China's door by satellite broadcasting with both legal and illegal reception and other cable relay services, MTV seized the opportunity to extend its arm into the region (Xu, 2002). Initially MTV China was available only in expensive hotels and areas inhabited by foreigners. Like Viacom's localization strategies in other countries, MTV renounced campaigning against the Chinese government for acceptance in China. With the experience of creating animated Korean characters strongly laden with traditional cultural elements in Korea, they repeated the experiment in China and thrived on four locally produced television programmes, the main 60-minute MTV programme *MTV Global Village* (*Tian Lai Cun*), *MTV Star Profile* (*Mingxing Dangan*) featuring anecdotes of artists in movies, *MTV Chart of Glory* (*Guangrong Bang*), a synopsis of music charts across the globe, and *MTV Learning English* (*Xue yingyu*) which teaches 'cool' English. This programming serves up a playlist consisting of 70 percent Chinese music videos with the balance made up of international videos for viewers in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan (interview with Wu)[6]. It also cooperated with China's state broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV) to produce the CCTV-MTV Music Awards in Beijing and later with Shanghai Media Group (SMG) to create

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the Style Awards in Shanghai. Coupled with the localization strategy of 'local people, local programme',[7] MTV sell their made-in-China syndicated programmes to stations in different Chinese cities, insert advertising between the programme slots, and have thus gradually established their profitable business.

Political economy of localizing global capital

Taking MTV China as a case study of the political economy of transnational cultural industries and the process of localization/globalization of the music and popular cultures involves examining the production and circulation of symbolic meaning which revolves around global capital (Garnham, 1990: 155). This political economy perspective seeks to explicate how culture, symbol and ideology – reflecting the various impacts of economic dynamics on the range and diversity of public cultural expression – are closely connected to the strategies of transnational media corporations within the framework of globalization. Nevertheless, in contrast to some political economists who believe that globalization will bring freedom for consumers, my study provides an alternate hypothesis; that is, with the production and consumption of MTV, music and cultural products as the starting point, I examine the set of social relations and the interplay of power between the global media and the state, between the commercial interests and the ideology, and between the economics and the politics in this Chinese setting.

Against the backdrop of a deterministic framework and the common perception that the strong political control and limited political freedoms in China might be tied to a repressive economy (for example, Derleth and Herche, 2005), I would like to contend that China is not always hostile and anxious to set barriers to all multinational media ventures; nor that global capital necessarily is intent on homogenizing the authoritarian state. Sutton's study (2003) of the MTV channel in Indonesia shows how nationally televised music can be subject, and sometimes resistant, to global homogenization – susceptible to it in the borrowing of cultural forms from abroad and defiant in the incorporation of local performers and audio-visual styles. Under what conditions are national cultures challenged by and or absorbed into these global forces? As China meets MTV this poses some intriguing theoretical questions.

Studying Viacom's strategic competitor, Murdoch's STAR TV, Michael Curtin (2005: 171–3) concluded that all three factors – infrastructural, political and textual – that shape satellite TV services are subject to

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China's political upheavals and internal politics. His study suggests that global media corporations have to be quite spontaneous and ad hoc in response to capricious political change in China, making media policy highly unpredictable. Based on the study of the strategies of four foreign television operators in China (CETV, AOL Time Warner, News Corporation and MTV), Ian Weber (2003) concludes that successful transnational media corporation strategies quite often comply with hegemonic order, with success operating as a function of the degree to which these global media enhance China's ability to engage in the discursive construction of the 'imagined world'. The latter is a modern and yet sustainable value system that the authorities have to deliver to Chinese people at home and abroad in order to maintain cultural identity and to allow room for a progressive culture to develop. In other words, despite the high fences put up against foreign capital, once the transnational media harmonizes with the state's agenda, entry into China is possible.

James Curran and Myung-jin Park (2000) put forth a new version of the power of the nation-state over the media, refuting the argument that the growing size and volume of global media flow render the national border indefensible. Based on an examination of media reform after China entered the World Trade Organization (WTO), Zhongshi Guo (2003) finds that regulatory reform in Chinese media is more restrictive than liberalizing. Many of the regulatory policies, far from evolving as mature media law protecting foreign investors, are newly founded barriers – a conclusion that lends support to Curran and Park's viewpoint.

Curran and Park (2000) suggest that when global media commercialization conflicts with the authoritarian regime, it results eventually in global media-state integration or a national-capitalist alliance. In the case of Indonesia, Sutton (2003) evidenced that there can be 'local' instances which are interpreted as tokenistic but which in fact operate to reinforce the hegemonic Western global order. Yuezhi Zhao (2001) further dissected the forces which shape this emerging integrated complex in China. She argued that under the push for China's accession to the WTO, the state's integration with global capitalism through its bureaucratically controlled and market-driven communication industries became increasingly visible. The specific terms and conditions of this integration has meant that a newly reconstituted power bloc – consisting of the bureaucratic capitalists of a reformed party state, the capital of transnational corporations, and an emerging local urban middle class – has assumed dominance of the communicative processes both internally and externally. Zhao also argued the hegemonic process

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has been highly contentious and it is constantly mediated by both the nationalistic and leftist ideological legacies of the Chinese state and emerging forms of social and cultural contestation.

MTV's strategies of localization

When global capital meets China, history tells us that it must be subsumed under red capital in order to break even. Phoenix TV, a subsidiary of STAR (which owned 38% of its share) is an exemplary case demonstrating that global media corporations can profit in China by partnering with Chinese tycoons (Liu Chenglu is the current CEO of Phoenix). Allowing the Chinese owner to have the controlling share, Murdoch managed to have a subsidiary of News Corporation break even in its fifth year of operation.[8] Ostensibly, having a Chinese partner could avoid bureaucratic interference and focus on the market; however, whether the organizational fusion between the global capital and local business and bureaucratic elites can be sustainable in the long term has yet to be proven.

Instead of joint forces with local corporations, Viacom chose another business model: indigenizing their programmes and producing material with 'Chinese characteristics' – MTV China may be the first transnational corporation to test this hypothesis – and it may well be the right strategy to forestall its competitor. Chairman and CEO of Viacom Sumner Redstone once announced the motto of its transnational empire as 'content is king'. However, the problem lies in how to produce local content in another country. The additional complicating factor in this commercial formula – which includes taste, style and quality of content – is the political dimension. Thus for MTV, it ensures that its localization should consider two capacities. First, it involves the know-how to localize content, the flow of which involves programming and production. For MTV, besides importing Western and other Asian music videos, they feature local stars and music in their four locally produced programmes, including building their own Chinese VJ (video jockey) teams.

While the first dimension is just another replication of MTV's business in a Chinese context, the second involves the production of attractive and appropriate content, with politically acceptable values for the authorities. This relies on the knowledge of local employees. Nearly 85 percent of Viacom staff is mainland Chinese (interview with Wu).[9] Using the analogy from the Marketing and Communication director of Viacom '[In China], hoisting the red flag to fit [China's agenda, for example, during the Chinese festivals] is needed' (interview with Wu,

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2004), and only the local staff knows that the flag is red and on what important occasions it is raised.

At this point MTV channel's corporate behaviour is atypical. While previous studies sometimes gauge the amount of anti-hegemonic content in Chinese media and regard it as a thermometer of liberalization (Chan and Qiu, 2001), the temperature measured is actually a 'preset' requirement for a global entertainment media. They cannot risk using content as a testing ground for China's patience. In China, the control of the music industry is no less austere than any other media; all audio-visual forms are regarded as a publishing business, which means that a designated editor must be responsible for filtering and gatekeeping. Entertainment industries are a sensitive area for the Chinese authorities, and if deemed deflecting from the national ideology, foreign capital can be forced to retreat from the market. From a government policy perspective, the range of control for transnational corporations covers three main areas, namely source of capital, the reception and the content (Tang, 2004: 6). MTV's venture in China can be regarded as an exception to this strict control. At least, the first two regulatory bars have been exempted in this case, but the relaxation can easily be reverted if foreign capital fails to toe the line by airing politically provocative content.

Local production, Western modernity

Despite the highly controlled production line, the localization strategies involved can 'usher in' foreign culture and thereby displace the local. For MTV, with its programme repackaged by the Chinese and with the VJ speaking Chinese with Chinese music, the symbolic meaning, values and moral norms associated with the localized MTV programme is still not local. In other words, the strategy of localization remains confined to the production process, daily routine and operations. MTV syndicates sell a modern symbol of the capitalist West in connection with MTV consumption. For example, *MTV Global Village* is a typical 60-minute programme to introduce foreign popular music and infotainment to the Chinese audience, while *MTV Star Profile* promotes internationally famous movie stars and its *Star Diary* features their glamorous daily life. Like other MTV channels, MTV in China presents itself as a youth brand targeting 15 to 34 year-olds and caters to this group with consumerist values. MTV centres on branding a Chinese platform for youth (interview with Wu) – with its slogan of 'good music is right here on MTV'. With apparently few obstacles from the government, it seems that MTV

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is able to march into any major university campus to promote their image with various advertising campaigns. Cooperating with the Korean high-tech brand Samsung, they have launched college-singing contests to promote their brand image and also boost the sales of Samsung's mobile phone as a materialistic realization of their values (interview with Goh)[10]. Via the MTV Guangdong Channel, especially approved by the authorities, MTV launched the programme *'yue ding yue zheng'*, giving access to young people to choose their favourite songs on TV for friends via their mobile phones. The consequence, as manifested, is a potpourri of emerging youth's desires – the yearning for modernity, materialistic aspirations and individual pursuits – with few political overtones. The question is how did MTV get the consent of the Chinese government to promote Western modernity?

The key probably lies in the state's intention. In the wake of globalization and entry into the WTO, what culture do they want to produce? Do they want to stick to hardcore communist tenets that drive youth away? Or are they willing to make an impact on youth culture at the expense of an influx of Western values and modernity? The authorities seem to have selected certain national media and bureaucracies and given them special permission to trial collaborative ventures with global capital to create a new youth culture, which combines a sense of Chineseness with a Western modernity stripped of any strong political values. The assumption behind this seems obvious: no challenge to the establishment. This does not mean that the state has ceased to advocate party ideology and nationalistic imperatives, rather that the responsibility for education and party control is left to the state-owned media, giving an extra route by which the state can process the construction of folk, public culture and symbolic reality, which would otherwise be left in the hands of the transnational media corporations.

MTV Awards: MTV's branding with Chinese characteristics

The essence of the global-Chinese fusion is accentuated and evidenced in the cooperation of the CCTV-MTV Music Awards and the MTV Style Awards organized with SMG and CCTV6.[11] In line with other international MTV award brandings, these awards have a strong MTV style: the stage is a jigsaw of light boxes with a colossal blue television as the backdrop and an eye-catching MTV logo as the foreground. In the middle of, and surrounding, the long stage are physical spaces for fans that dance and yell. Despite being a state/joint venture, it is clear that MTV is privileged in bringing in Western forms of production, design

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and music without being compelled to annex the anachronistic national form as in other formal state occasions. In contrast, all existing state-endorsed Chinese music awards – such as the China Gold Record Awards organized by the China Record Company in 2003, the Award of the China Institute of Light Music (which are modelled on the American Grammy Award) in December 2004, and the popular music session of the China Young Singer Television Competition by CCTV in May 2004 – which tried to juxtapose secular elements with traditional performances, patriotic acclamations and national hymns amidst the supposedly secular pop music events, turned out to be a weird Chinese Leviathan incongruously wearing a Western suit.

The Western-oriented awards have a number of characteristics. For instance, high doses of hip-hop music and dances fill up the entire CCTV-MTV Music Awards in Beijing, diluting the presence of Chinese cultural forms and overwhelming artists of different cultural contexts as if the entire event was staged in the US. The few awards given to the best folk singers are repackaged, for example, with a female artist wearing Western evening dress with glittering silver decoration. For the MTV Style Awards in Shanghai, the apex is crystallized around the grandeur and fashion of Chinese superstars from Hong Kong, including Kwan-yu Ng, Ka-ling Lau, Tin-lok Koo, speaking Cantonese-accented mandarin, and the famous Hong Kong-turned-Hollywood artists Michelle Yeoh and Coco Li. Hong Kong, symbolizing the modernity of the former British colony, is seen by MTV as having superiority of style over 5000 years of Chinese heritage. This is the baseline that MTV would insist upon: the localization strategy of MTV excludes the localization of cultural form. The failure to deliver this Western cultural form would also signify the disappearance of the MTV brand, which must be kept intact. MTV's challenge is to be internationally competitive but also attractive to the Chinese government. The latter endeavours to 'sinicize' MTV's brand and make use of its modernity to reach out to its own youth. As MTV staff opined, we reflect 'only the modern, the trendy and the popular' (interview with Wu).

Given the MTV 'brand' as the foreground, what is the 'Chineseness' behind the awards? Is it possible that despite the hip-hop overtones and strong Western images, traces of state ideology still exist in these awards? There is no doubt that the state steers clear of using the carnival atmosphere to venerate the Communist Party. The case demonstrates that it is possible to produce popular culture even with the state's involvement. However, it is only under the advanced and mature strategic planning and collaboration of a transnational corporation that

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these subtle, ambivalent and often conflicting ideas of production could be accommodated.

The organization of the sixth CCTV-MTV Music Awards in 2004 reveals some of these dynamics. First, while MTV proposed the entire list of awards and the programme rundown, it was agreed with CCTV that there was a balance between the CCTV and MTV, between the mainland Chinese and Western artists, between Western-style-turned-Chinese ballad and Western music. The presenters of the awards were an MTV spokesperson and CCTV's Dong Qing. Guest of honour to deliver the awards was NBA 'Magic's' Steve Francis – an African-American – partnered with a well-known Chinese female singer Weiwei. Unlike other MTV Awards, the emphasis was not only on Western music bands and artists but also on Chinese singers. The cooperation resulted in awards for many mainland artists such as Hanhong and Poshu, respectively the most popular mainland Chinese female and male singers. MTV was also able to include the trendiest Korean-pop in Asia and featured K-pop singer Seung Hoon Shin and rock singer Maya, while they maintained a Western profile with Whitney Houston and Gareth Gates sharing the international special contribution award and the most popular international singer award respectively. All these signalled emphatically that this was a Chinese event as well as being an MTV production, and, that CCTV can also do hip hop when the lyrics are apolitical and in Chinese.

Opting for a cultural form embodying Western modernity and Chinese localness provides a mechanism for China to develop popular culture. First, the cooperation between the authorities and MTV China results in the production and circulation of cultural products that match the Western conception of the 'popular'. It has incubated a kind of apolitical popular youth culture concomitant of capitalist consumption. The latter is packaged in a way that is congruous (or non-contradictory) to the political ideology and is functionally on a par with an overwhelming ideology for the public. In the long run it may also increase Chinese and, not just Western influence. In this sense, popular culture now disseminated and marketed by a resourceful, global media corporation will sooner or later be personified in, and circulated back to, local Chinese artists and singers who receive the awards.

Commerce vs politics

As shown, MTV's corporate communication reflects the fact that a transnational corporation in China has to operate, not only under economic constraints, but also implicitly with some degree of political

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obligation. When in early 2005, as a result of political considerations, the Propaganda Department of the Party announced that they were stopping all the award ceremonies in China, MTV reacted quickly to toe the party line by renaming the CCTV-MTV 'Music Awards' as 'Music Honours' in a manner emblematically conforming to the party policy. While pragmatically the 'Honours' could continue unaffected, the state's rule is observed and their power is legitimized.

Viacom has been promoting the image of operating with official sanction. In 2001, Viacom's chairman Sumner Redstone and the leadership of CCTV discussed the possibility of collaboration on an AIDS campaign in a symposium organized by the United Nations, following which MTV collaborated with CCTV to promote AIDS control in China.[12] In 2004, Viacom also turned itself into a lobbying body and ventured into non-media business when they joined with Tsinghua University to develop products or platforms on digital technology. They also actively helped enhance global moguls' dialogue with the government, and for example, in 2002, co-organized with the National Broadcasting, Film and Television Bureau, the 21st century media development symposium and established the Sumner Redstone scholarship at the Chinese National Music Academy.

Such practices tell us that Viacom have operated as more than just a commercial MTV channel.[13] Rather than exalting profit as the mission of Viacom, Redstone publicly stated that 'developing horizontal collaboration and cultural exchange' is the core mission in China. On another occasion, answering a question about promoting American values in China, Redstone said that social responsibility was more important than profit, implying that a happy marriage between global capital and China requires a temporary diluting of the profit motive (at least in so far as public announcements are concerned).

Official behaviour speeds up MTV's process of localization. As Li Yifei, chairman of MTV China, indicated, collaborating with the local capital, including the local media, seems the specific path for localization (Li, 2003: 178), in particular, dealing with those having the official status necessary to bypass legal barriers. What MTV China has gained is the groundbreaking permission from the authorities to operate a Guangdong television channel. With its production base in Beijing, the Guangdong channel is now allowed to relay MTV programmes. As the official partner with the authorities, Viacom is also obliged to be the extension of the Chinese government to publicize Chinese culture to the West. In 2003 MTV helped CCTV-9 (the English-language international channel) broadcast to hotels in the US and sponsored Chinese broadcasting ethnic music groups to organize performances in China.

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Chinese national strategies?

What has been described above seems to contradict the commonplace conception that Chinese authorities are on the defensive and that they bar foreign media corporations and impede the process of globalization. However, the examples mentioned earlier suggest that Chinese authorities and their media are more flexible, sophisticated and active than the West has given them credit for (interview with senior producer of CCTV).[14] Rather than waiting for the global capital to colonize the Chinese media, they capitalized on the semi-open market and national policy to create commercial programmes – commercialized to an extent allowed by the political leadership – to occupy the market first, and possibly create Chinese-CNN and similar transnational media ventures. Allowing global elements does not contradict the national Chinese policy of keeping transition to marketization politically peaceful.[15]

From the viewpoint of the Chinese authorities, the localized global capital also brings an opportunity for them to globalize their media. CCTV is a striking example – it collaborates with 134 countries and 208 television corporations – and also a demonstration for other media: it is only through collaborating with global media that they could strengthen competitive capability by increasing the efficiency of the operation and improving management structures. What seems to be crucial is that Chinese media face strong internal and regional competition. This is particularly true of entertainment content where CCTV compete with the Shanghai Media Group (SMG) and also with Hunan Satellite TV. With more than 2,000 national and other cable channels in China (Zhang, 2003: 127), filling in all the time slots can be a problem. Globalized content, programming and management seem the first step for a Chinese media to acquire programming.

At present, legal forms of collaboration with global capital include: (1) co-production of co-copyrighted programmes; (2) foreign programme production with foreign capital injected into local production teams; (3) local production of foreign-content programmes; (4) programme exchanges; (5) joint events such as variety shows and awards; and (6) importing of foreign and exporting of local programmes (Zhang, 2003: 128). These collaborations accelerate the interaction between foreign capital and local cultures, which in turn speeds up the globalization of transnational corporations and opens up the possibility for Chinese media companies to expand overseas. As the deputy director of CCTV remarked: CCTV is now equipped with 'a vision of globalization', and the fundamental problem is still its rendezvous with the localizing

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global media (Zhang, 2003: 130). There is no doubt that the joint CCTV-MTV awards are only a token of the global-local cooperation to come.

Although corporations nowadays are aware of the ideological incompatibility between the global culture and the local political culture, what appears most challenging to the legitimacy of the state is the alternative and uncontrolled public spaces, such as newly emerging cultures, youth culture and hip-hop cultures, which have the potential to be counter-hegemonic. However, it is also music – the melody, rhythm and tone of it – which can be harnessed to absorb these micro-cultures into the 'manageable zone' of the state. The production of popular culture under the umbrella of these 'privileged' transnational media corporations in China has the power to define what the popular is and what the elements of popularity are. They also benchmark what kind of modern Chinese popular culture can be produced. The state allows these foreign corporations to operate because they produce a predictable and acceptable popular Chinese culture.

With the input of the cultural forms and even management structures that produce the popular culture, it also appears that youth is developing an unfettered modern culture. This argument is consistent with recent studies (for example, Zhang and Harwood, 2004 on Chinese advertising) that argue that the Chinese media are embedded with both traditional and modern themes but that they also reflect Western values. In other words, should more transnational media enter China, the popular culture produced will be recreated through a process of cultural change into what the Chinese people might perceive as modern and Western. While this suggests a new direction for society, it is a path that does not in fact deviate from the status quo.

TV channel: educating Generation Z

One last question is how MTV Channel can benefit from the Chinese market and what the profit model for global capital will be. From the collaboration with Chinese media, MTV at least had the intangible benefits of a strong influence and a massive audience in terms of exposure. CCTV 3, a station for variety and entertainment shows and CCTV 9 both broadcast the CCTV-MTV Music Awards and are able to reach an average rating of 9 percent (Cunningham, 2003: 189). With SMG as a media collaborator, the media corporations in Shanghai directed Shanghai broadcast media to feature the MTV Style Awards. Currently, Viacom starts to benefit from these viewerships as 15 percent

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of Viacom's global revenue ($4 billion) comes from Asia, with China representing most of this, mainly via the MTV channel.

However, Viacom has already invested $10 million in the China market but the MTV channel so far has yielded no immediate financial rewards.[16] That revenue is not able to offset the huge operational cost in China and, in particular, the MTV-CCTV annual music awards. Nonetheless, this does not mean that the foreign corporation was making a wrong strategic move. It can be argued that as the transnational media undergo the process of capital accumulation, they must first acquire relationship and goodwill capital as a precursor to profit. Since the profit is not guaranteed, we could say that the cultural capital could be exchanged or realized only in as yet unknown future markets.

The illustration of the entry of Viacom's Nickelodeon to China may provide a clue to the answer about prospective revenues and the complex state-capital relationship. As the leading producer of original programming for children, Nickelodeon targets 2- to 11-year-olds, and has an audience base larger than the three major broadcast networks combined.[17] Nickelodeon used to rely on a local company, Tanglong, which had the legal rights to distribute its programmes to Chinese television stations. But since 2003, Nickelodeon has directly collaborated with the state-owned Shanghai Audio-Visual publisher to distribute DVD and VCD versions of popular cartoons. Nickelodeon's entry is also consistent with the move of CCTV, since 2004, to broadcast the original American series Cat Dog on the CCTV children channel.

Youth culture used to be a citadel of the state that was not open to outside interference. Nonetheless, Viacom has been allowed to extend its influence into this virgin territory. The theoretical question here is no longer a simple issue of political economy and media access but a question of the political economy of hybridization (cf. Wang, 2004)[18] that involves more than an integration of cultural forms and contents. It now involves the synchronization of the state and its ability to flexibly accommodate global capital. In this sense the state's approval of foreign culture is not a satisfaction of external pressures or an unavoidable WTO requirement to meet transnational needs. Rather, Nickelodeon's presence in China might be conceived as a long-term resonance of the state's agenda with a commercial interest. The strategic collaboration between the state and transnational capital takes part on the infrastructural level in the first order and then in relation to the cultural content.

In this case, the importation of (non-hybridized) Western cartoons and their subsequent broadcast in the Chinese media is not just an integration of the West and the East on the cultural level (as most

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postmodern analysis would argue). What is hybridized and of interest is the engine – which occurs in different forms and structures – that drives the content production and delivery. The prerequisite for this hybridization is the previous experience, rapport with the government, and the goodwill that the transnational corporations have accumulated. When the state has a need at a particular moment, then the cultural chemistry begins and the cultural products sell. If asked what the MTV Channel and other transnational corporations look for in China, it is clear that they are producing Chinese popular culture; emerging and growing as it is, it may only be fully embraced by the next generation who has just started to watch Nicktoons. If Generation Y does not bring profit to MTV, then Generation Z will. The state is now defining popular culture without reference to the past chaotic historical events such as the Cultural Revolution or the 4 June 1989 incident. The new generation will have to find this history elsewhere.

Conclusion

With the MTV channel as a case, this article illustrates the localization strategy of a global media corporation. The culture requires the ability to achieve a smooth hybridization between the state and global capital that works through various economic constraints and political forces. It is not that the global capital kowtows to Chinese authorities; or that the state backs down to allow their entry. Both these arguments are simple. The state for its part is not reluctant to accept globalization, and the political and economic forces are not inherently contradictory. Nowadays, transnational media corporations and the Chinese authorities work in tandem to produce a state-global media complex. In China, the state in fact works to accelerate the localization of the transnational cultural forms that these global media are dedicated to bringing into China. Global capital on the other hand operates in such a way that it promotes the state (or at the very least does not provoke it). This conclusion disputes the assumption that in authoritarian and closed nations, either the state counters the global capital, or the liberating force democratizes the state.

It is unrealistic to assume that any nation-state can maintain itself as a fortress against these new and accelerated global capital flows. Transnational capital establishes no territorial centre of power and does not limit itself with fixed boundaries or barriers. It is decentred and deterritorializing and progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, embracing and expanding frontiers (Hardt and Negri,

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2001: xii). Chinese leaders have long known of its inevitable and inexorable reach into China, and so the question became: in what forms will it be allowed to exist?

It is also a mistaken idea that the only option China can adopt is an internationalist strategy that counter-hegemonizes capital's globalization (Hardt and Negri, 2001: 43). Once China opened to the West, resisting the global would mean that China would be continuously on the defensive. Instead, we can reconceive of China as another global cultural force. With its massive population both on the mainland and overseas it can define itself as the centre of Asia, and second, with its growing world influence and power (not the least of which is a huge internal market shared by global capital), China has substantial potential to cultivate its own globalization by exporting its cultural products (Sinclair and Harrison, 2004). In other words, Chinese media have also started to get into step with global capitalism to secure a global market position. Ironically, the cultural products to be exported are not entirely Chinese, but represent a hybridized form of popular culture – embedded both with hip hop and elements of Chineseness – that can be regarded as elements of the counter-hegemonic force of capitalism (Adelt, 2005).[19]

In order for this to happen, the state, through its official media such as CCTV and SMG, has to absorb and form partnerships with other globalizing capital. However, the expansion and extension of Chinese media corporations, it is important to emphasize, does not imply a wider public sphere and citizenship (Dahlgren, 1995). Nor does it mean that the party organs have abandoned their propaganda or ideological mission. Quite the contrary: in the WTO pre-free entry period prior to 2007, the state, via the Chinese media, avails itself of the opportunity to combine with foreign capital to promote the nation's image and culture. Inwardly, the state-global media complex indexes the apolitical popular culture that constitutes consumerist desires without intervening in its smooth governance. Outwardly, the state sends the message to all cultural industries that are intent on capitalizing on the Chinese market that they are obligated to re-inventing a state-global complex to help govern the society and move China into global markets.

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Notes

1 Viacom's well-known brands include MTV, the children's channel Nickelodeon, the US network CBS, Paramount Pictures, the audio-visual chain Blockbuster and the publisher Simon & Schuster, as well as Nick at Nite, VH1, BET, Infinity Broadcasting, Viacom Outdoor, UPN, TV Land, Comedy Central, Country Music Television, Spike TV and the Showtime movie channel. Under the umbrella of these businesses, Viacom owns 19 television stations and 1,300 theatres, and together with all its assets, in 2001 had an estimated worth of $87 billion, ranking it 85th in terms of value by *Fortune*. In 2003 the annual income of this media empire exceeded $26 billion.

2 To be globally competitive as a transnational media corporation, the gambit of MTV is to localize their business and musical tastes with the establishment of regional music television channels, which besides the American MTV Channel, comprise MTV Asia, MTV Australia, MTV Brasil, MTV Europe, MTV Latin America and MTV Russia (cf. Gershon, 2000).

3 Recently, Nickelodeon also planned to enter China. The deal is yet to be approved by the Chinese authorities.

4 By indirectly acquiring the ownership of the STAR group in 1995 with $624.8 million, Murdoch's News Corporation was the pioneer among transnational media corporations entering China. Such a move also signified China's implicit approval of foreign capital's influx into its cultural market (Fung and Lee, 1994).

5 For example, in 2001, AOL Time Warner also invested in China in a $100 million collaboration with Lenovo, a Chinese computer company which now owns the IBM personal computer business.

6 Interview with Marilyn Wu, the marketing and communication director of MTV, 23 April 2004, Beijing; one of a number of interviews with Wu.

7 A total of 80 percent of Viacom's production was made outside the US (Cunningham, 2003: 188).

8 The German-based Bertelsmann which is now the shareholder of Beijing 21st Century Jinxiu Book Chain Shop Limited is an equivalent example and one on the largest scale of this kind in the book distribution industry.

9 The rest are from Hong Kong and Taiwan.

10 Interview with Silvia Goh, creative and content director of MTV China, 23 April 2004, Beijing.

11 They are the two global awards (out of seven) given by MTV International in China.

12 For example, MTV also created a Chinese version of its AIDS information portal 'staying alive'.

13 According to the creative and content director of Viacom, corporate marketing, arranging regular visits with media and the government, is important in China (interview with Goh).

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14 The name of the interviewee has to be kept anonymous.
15 Zhao Huayong, head of CCTV, in a public speech said that creating the atmosphere of ethnic plurality (the national policy), serving the audience (the commercial factor), and developing international markets are the three main objectives of CCTV (Zhao, 2003).
16 Lin Yifei, Managing Director of Viacom said at a public event that their profit revenue came largely from advertising, and the dependence on advertising seems to be declining (down more than 50%).
17 Its famous programmes include animation Nicktoons, variety and game shows, as well as adventure and news magazine shows.
18 Jing Wang (2004: 15) called the phenomenon of the renovation of creative industries for better feedback on market demand a kind of asset hybridization.
19 Ulrich Adelt (2005) argues that German hip hop and the newly hybridized local products as a result of the development of network MTV Germany, might eventually serve to counter the hegemonic global forces.

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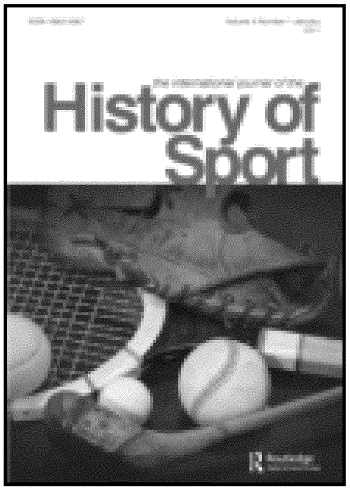
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Glocalisation of Sport: The NBA's Diffusion in China

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Glocalisation of Sport: The NBA's Diffusion in China

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This paper aims to examine the process of the National Basketball Association's (NBA) glocalisation in China. By analysing its two contextualising phases: the reach – globalising the American basketball commodities in Chinese territory, and the response – reinventing tradition and reconstructing modernity of Chinese sport, the authors argue that the presence of the NBA in China has greatly remoulded the previous norms of Chinese basketball and sport culture. However, the NBA has not resulted in homogenisation of Chinese basketball, as local resistance from the Chinese Basketball Association has correspondently risen.

Keywords: glocalisation; American basketball commodities; NBA in China

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Introduction

Globalisation, which is defined as 'a process through which space and time are compressed by technology, information flows and trade and power relations, allowing distant actions to have increased significance at the local level',[1] has to a great degree driven American sports commodities to be exported to Asian countries with the trend of new global capitalism since the late 1980s. This process of sport globalisation has also encompassed a complicated field of global–local sportscape, linking wider societal aspects to the local context politically, economically and culturally. Glocalisation, a term generally considered to have been advanced by Roland Robertson in 1995,[2] has been extensively used to explicate the global circulation and consumption of American cultural commodities and their accommodations to local contexts. Some scholars in sport sociology have concerned on the links between globalised American sports and local responses to them with this conception of sport glocalisation.[3] For instance, Cho uses the lens of glocalisation to explore how the expansion of US sports in South Korea since the late 1990s influences the de/reconstitution of the national among local sports fans.[4]

The authors will provide another case of the diffusion of American sports commercial vehicle in Asia, particularly in East Asia with a historical perspective. The diffusion of the NBA in China is selected to explore to what extent such American sports commodities have accommodated and reconstructed indigenous norms, and how indigenous congeneric commodities have responded. The paper will begin with an introduction to the trajectory of Chinese basketball. In what context and how the NBA debuted in China will be discussed in the following section. The authors will then outline the strategies of how the

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NBA implants into and reshapes Chinese basketball culture, followed by a representation of the Yao Ming phenomena. Next, the paper will turn to the Chinese sports market that the NBA unfolds and then end with a discussion on the resistance of Chinese professional basketball against the American commodity.

Prelude: A Chinese Basketball Saga

Distinct from other successful globalised American cultural commodities in China, such as rock music, Hollywood films, jeans and McDonald's or Kentucky Fried Chicken, the NBA's proliferation embraces a more solid cornerstone – a century's popularisation of Chinese basketball. J.A. Mangan argued that the diffusion and acceptance of sports in modern Asia was propelled by imperialism and nationalism.[5] Basketball was no exception, as Judy Polumbaum has also put it, 'the introduction of basketball overseas was a logical extension of new conceptions of the relationship of body and soul emerging in Protestantism in the mid-1800s and subsequently enshrined in YMCA philosophy'.[6] Basketball was introduced to China by the Tianjin YMCA in late 1895 when the Old China was under an ideological trend of 'Learning from the West'. Dr Willard Lyon, who was an American missionary, organised a basketball exhibition to celebrate the establishment of a YMCA's medical school four years after the game was invented, marking the inauguration of Chinese basketball.[7]

YMCA's contribution to the initial development of sports including basketball in modern China was significant. Basketball was one of the major physical activities in the YMCAs and missionary schools. For example, in 1908, Shanghai YMCA was established and a physical education department was set up, providing handball, volleyball and basketball courses.[8] The first national game was organised by the YMCA and basketball was selected as a formal competition. The YMCA even appointed a Chinese national basketball team that participated in the first Far Eastern Championship Games in 1913 in Manila.[9]

Chinese nationalism sprung up with the breaking out of the May Fourth Movement in 1919. The Rights Back and Anti-Christian Movement afterwards greatly weakened the power of the YMCAs and missionary schools on Chinese modern sport. However, the consequence was that, this conflict between tradition and modernity did not slow down the pace of the promotion of Western sports. Modern sport became a major part of modern Chinese culture, although no substantial replacement of traditional sport was simultaneously witnessed.[10] Thus, basketball survived and further diffused throughout the country. Furthermore, China began to participate in basketball competitions on the international stage. Chinese basketball was dominant in Asia during the 1930s. During the 1936 Olympic Games, China joined the International Amateur Basketball Federation and participated in the first ever basketball competition in Olympics. Four Chinese basketball referees, including Dong Shouyi, were recruited by the International Basketball Referee Association.[11]

Even during the wartime of Anti-Japan and Civil War from 1937 to 1949, basketball was attached as a great utility by Nanjing National Government and Communist Party for military and leisure necessity. Mao Zedong personally played basketball and helped to judge the Huichang Wenwuba Soldier's Basketball Games. Other significant revolutionaries, such as Zhou Enlai, Zhu De and Helong, were basketball enthusiasts. [12]

Basketball, as it had been since the late 1890s, remained a most popular sport after the establishment of the People's Republic of China. 'Fazhan Tiyu Yundong, Zengqiang Renmin Tizhi' (to promote sport and enhance people's body) was the slogan for sport by the new Chinese Government. Basketball soon developed into a nationwide game.

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Whether at elite level or in mass sport or school sport, basketball is an extremely popular sport among Chinese people. He Long, the first director of Chinese Sports Committee claimed, 'San Da Qiu Bu Fan Shen, Wo Si Bu Ming Mu!' (I won't die with peace without the booming of football, basketball and volleyball), which demonstrated the Chinese government's determination of promoting basketball.[13]

And one of these sports soon would be utilised by the Chinese Community Party (CCP) for building the country's reputation on the international stage. Even before the formal announcement of the new government on October 1, a basketball team was assembled by the Communist Youth League to attend the World Student Games in Hungary from August 14 to 28, coached by Mou Zuoyun. During only six years between 1949 and 1955, Chinese basketball teams participated in 16 international games, helping the CCP to establish mutual relationships with other countries, as well as impressing the world with active enthusiasm in joining world sport, though the teams were unable to show sufficient competitiveness in the games.[14]

The All China Sport Federation (ACSF) soon realised the gap and turned to the Soviet Union model for elite basketball. A basketball delegation from the Soviet Union, including 21 expert coaches and prominent players, was invited to impart experience in promoting basketball in 1950. Domestic basketball competitions of all levels were held extensively by the ACSF from 1950s to mid-1960s. In order to win more international games and improve domestic basketball competitions, the State Physical Culture and Sports Commission (SPCSC) and local commissions set up basketball teams at every level and formed basketball departments in sport colleges. As a result, the figure of provincial and military regional teams that participated in the National Jia Ji (Premier) League Competition went up to 20 in 1956, while the figure for National Yi Ji (Secondary) League Competition was 54.[15]

Chinese basketball, particularly at the elite level, looked promising before the breakout of the Cultural Revolution. But during this disastrous political movement, all basketball competitions, nationwide and internationally, were aborted by the Red power.[16] A number of basketball athletes, coaches, referees and other contributors of elite basketball were sent to be re-educated. The early 1970s saw the overall recovery and consolidation of the basketball system inspired by two significant events. One was that Comrade Chiang Ch'ing granted a warm interview to the visiting American basketball players in 1972[17]; the other was the attendance of CCP's central leaders, including Prime Minister Zhou Enlai, at the 1972 Five Ball Games Meeting. In the same year, the SPCSC set out a three-year plan for basketball, volleyball and football. According to the plan, the men's national team should contend for the top 10 in the world and the first in Asia within one year, then for the top 8 in the world within two years. The women's national team should contend for top 5 in the world and the first in Asia within one year, then for the top 3 in the world within two years.[18]

Although this aim seemed to overestimate the competence of the national teams, the plan accelerated the building of Chinese basketball for more than a decade. At the end of the year, the SPCSC assembled the national teams and six top-level basketball teams in Beijing, Shanghai and Jilin. In the early 1973, eight teams in Jiangsu, Liaoning, Hebei and Tianjin were added. The national basketball games, basketball competitions in the National Games and the army games were recovered from 1973. This centralised training system spurred Chinese national basketball teams to a dominant place in Asia and made them competitive worldwide since the late 1970s. The women national team achieved a third place at the ninth World Women Basketball Championship in 1983 in Brazil. The

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men team came ninth in the World Men Basketball Championship in Spain three years later.[19]

The nationwide training and selection system meanwhile has facilitated the promotion of basketball for non-professionals, making basketball one of the most played games around the country in new China. A report based on the fourth survey on the statistics of China's playgrounds conducted by the Planning and Financing Department of the SPCSC in 1995 showed that the figure of the playgrounds for basketball was on the top of all sports played by Chinese.[20]

In sum, even if basketball was a national pastime of Old China, introduced by the hated and hegemonic American imperialists, this did not damage the game's utility in the new PRC state; until the soccer boom of the 1990s, basketball was clearly the most popular sport, at elite and popular levels, in China.[21] On May 16, 2005, Li Yuanwei, former director of Chinese Basketball Management Center, declared at the 2005 round table conference during the Global Fortune Forum, 'Basketball has made the first sport in China!' He put forward five arguments: basketball has the most participants, stadiums, media coverage, potential market and international influence among Chinese sports.[22] In another survey carried out by Sina.com on August 8, 2006, more than 60% of people voted basketball as the most popular sport in China.[23] Regardless of whether the most popular sport in China is basketball or football, the fact that basketball has deeply rooted in China is undisputable.

Breaking the Ice: A Basketball Diplomacy

Before the NBA implemented global strategies in mid-1980s, some NBA teams had been making global appearances, referred to as 'goodwill trips' by the league, for over a decade. The most notable had occurred in 1979 when the Washington Bullets travelled to China, according to Frank P. Jozsa. Although those 'goodwill' games were often considered 'little more than exhibitions put on by what were then the best basketball players in the world',[24] the Bullets' exhibitions in China, however, had some degree of political connotation attached.

In the early 1970s, the Ping Pong Diplomacy brought political interlocution between China and the USA, and opened the door for Chinese sports. In 1979, China witnessed the implementation of the reform and opening-up policy, commencing with the establishment of a Sino-US diplomatic relationship, from two countries with entirely different social ideologies and political regimes. Thereafter, the two governments undertook a great deal of official or non-governmental bilateral visits to each other in order to enhance state relationships.

Sport built a bridge for them again. On January 29, 1979, Deng Xiaoping, then vice prime minister of the PRC, was invited by the US government to watch a basketball exhibition by Harlem Globetrotters[25] during his state visit to the USA. Before that, President Carter viewed Deng's visit a vital event in his political career; he took charge of the reception three weeks before Deng's arrival and addressed Chinese people through Chinese broadcasters, stressing the significance of the new relationships between China, the USA and the world. At that time, 'zuo' (left, conservative) ideology remained in Chinese politics. Chinese people could hardly accept such Western-style basketball performance with 'hot basketball girls' and 'hippie show'. However, Deng was so excited on the exhibition that he was laughing, clapping and cheering, which demonstrated his acceptance of Western culture and dismissiveness of the 'zuo' ideology to some extent.[26]

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Deng's response emboldened the US government greatly. It was in this context that the NBA landed in China. In return, on April 9 of the same year, an American basketball team comprising NBA stars was sent to China and competed with Chinese basketball teams in Beijing and Shanghai.[27] The Washington Bullets, led by Wes Unseld and Head Coach Dick Motta, visited China in August and played two exhibition games against the Chinese National basketball team and the Bayi Army team. These bilateral friendship tours in sport, together with the ever-improving Sino-US relationship, was the cause of China and the USA boycotting the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games to a great extent.[28] In the summer of 1985, as part of the cultural and educational agreements between China and the USA, the Chinese national basketball team arrived in New York to begin a month of training and practice against NBA teams, including New York, New Jersey, Indiana, Chicago, Washington and Cleveland. Known as the NBA-China Friendship Tour, the Chinese team trained with the then Boston Celtics assistant coach Ed Badger while getting special instruction from NBA legends Red Auerbach and Pete Newell.[29]

Even though those initial interactivities between the NBA and China are considered political events, it had on one hand facilitated American's approach to the new China with basketball, while on the other hand it fulfilled China's necessity to learn more about Western culture in the early phase of Reform and Opening-up. Furthermore, the introduction of the NBA showcased Chinese people not only fancy individual basketball skills and game strategies, but also an innovation of sport industry.[30] At that time, Chinese people were viewing sport as a tool for building national pride at elite level, while mass sports were undertaken with the slogan of 'Friend First, Matches Second'. Sport had little association with commercialism. Even the top Chinese basketball players were provided unadorned sports gear, such as 'Meihua' white knit vest and 'Huili' cloth shoes. The American players, however, had showed their socialist opponents fashionable apparels and sneakers which were sponsored by transnational companies, such as Converse, Adidas and Nike.[31]

Transplanting the NBA Celebrity: A Chinese Basketball Spectacle

The NBA's intention of global outreach in reality did not commence until David Stern took over the commissioner's chair in 1984. The NBA was set up by the owners of 11 professional hockey arenas on June 6, 1946, to fill up the idle arenas on the days on which hockey matches were not held. However, the NBA ran dismally in its early days with most teams losing money resulting from low attendance and television coverage. And the league, teams and players had little commercial sponsorship without national broadcasting. In the 1980s, however, the NBA evolved into a comprehensive cultural and commercial carrier, sharing the American sporting market with other major professional sports leagues such as the National Football League (NFL) and Major League Baseball (MLB), with revenues increased significantly in the era of US' economic stagnation. The NBA's success in 1980s was due to debut of the three outstanding basketball superstars from the late 70s and early 80s, Magic Johnson, Larry Bird and Michael Jordan, who had showed the world fantastic basketball rivalries. More importantly, David Stern implemented a series of revolutionary professional sports management rules and regulations.[32]

Henceforth, David Stern reorganised the league into a new entertaining company, while beginning to peddle his commodity of exciting basketball matches and features to the global market with transnational sporting goods companies, such as Nike, and the help of the fast-growing media industry and satellite technology. The NBA also established offices outside America, such as Paris, Geneva, London, Barcelona, Melbourne, Hong Kong, Mexico City, Taiwan, Tokyo and Toronto. These regional offices are staffed by

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business operations and marketing and international relations experts, in order to expand the television coverage and marketing partners. In this way, NBA games, teams and stars were implanted into the minds of young people around the world. The NBA achieves global capital accumulation by outputting cultural commodities.[33]

Furthermore, the NBA became a proactive actor in integrating with world basketball to further promote the game of basketball. NBA preseason games, even regular games, are held outside the USA every year. The NBA also collaborates with the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) to hold basketball training camps to promote basketball throughout the world. In addition, the NBA organises professional and amateur basketball activities in many countries, so that more consumers are able to participate in the NBA experience, these activities include NBA Basketball Challenge, NBA2ball, NBA Jam Session and so on.[34]

Promoted by the integration of the global economy and sports globalisation, the NBA, assisted by efforts of commercial manipulation and by mass media, has now made itself a world-famous brand that blurs the boundaries of sport movements, mass media and entertainment industries, which have simultaneously diffused social-phenomenally throughout the world, as well as a significant symbol in the process of world globalisation.[35]

The NBA's ambition of opening Asian market was revealed as early as David Stern's global plan was implemented, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, which is now a major overseas market for the league. In 1990, Phoenix Suns and Utah Jazz tipped off the new NBA regular season in Tokyo, Japan. It set a precedent that an American professional sports match was held outside North America. Similar to Japan, NBA events, such as NBA games, NBA Jam Session, NBA Madness, are popular in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea since the early 1990s, as well as licensed accessories of the NBA teams or stars. NBA's penetration in Asia has now expanded to the south. Philippines professional basketball league is a big market comparing to other professional sports. The Pro Star Sports Goods Co. Ltd. has been multi-year partner with the NBA since 2000 to manufacture and promote NBA-licensed apparels and accessories in Philippines.[36]

China, as the opening and fastest growing economic giant in the world, now has become the most influential overseas market to the NBA. In China, NBA culture is a basketball spectacle, thriving in Chinese sport history as social, economical and cultural spectacle in the past two decades.[37] NBA has been a symbol of Western culture in China, particularly for the younger generation. A survey carried out by NBA.com in 2005 claimed that:

- 83% of Chinese males aged 15–24 years said that they are NBA fans, more than 40% stated that basketball is their favourite sport to play and four of their top five athletes stars are NBA players.
- NBA games are watched by more than 30 million viewers per week in China.
- NBA.com/China averages over 3 million page-views per day.
- NBA merchandise is sold in more than 20,000 locations throughout the country.

As the authors finally failed to verify the accuracy of those statistics, ethnological data collection about the fans community might be a better argument. The following is a story of a Chinese NBA fan:

> Bo Man, a 27-year-old Chinese, took a 20-hour flight from Beijing to Indianapolis to realize his dream of 17 years, to watch a NBA game of the Indiana Pacers. On the interview with Fox Sports during the game, he said:

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> '(I follow the Pacers) mostly because of Reggie Miller, you know, everybody loves Jordan, but I don't want to follow everybody, I love the feeling of being enemy, so I love Reggie since 1994 till now.'
>
> 'It's some kind of believe, it supports me to move on, Reggie, if you are watching this, I have some words for you, you have so many fans in China, they are diehard fans. We love you from our hearts. We love being the enemy with you Reggie.'
>
> 'Reggie, thank you, you are my idol, you are my power of going on ...'[38]

Reggie Miller, one of the best shooters of all-time in NBA history, attracted his Chinese fan base mainly during the second half of 1990s when the Indiana Pacers and Chicago Bulls were battling in a heated series for the Eastern Finals. Michael Jordan was at the height of his career while Reggie Miller was renowned as 'being the enemy' of Jordan. Behind Bo Man, there is a solid fans community called ChinaPacers, members of which talk on the Pacers via a QQ Group and a forum. They organise a gathering each year, fans of the team come from all parts of China. Some of them may take a train taking more than 30 hours. In the party, the fans play 3–3 or 5–5 games in their Pacers-logo apparel and sneakers endorsed by Pacers players. They share their experience of following the club. Compared to other big franchises such as the Los Angles Lakers and the Chicago Bulls, or lately the Miami Heat, however, the Indiana Pacers are not as popular among Chinese fans.[39]

Beyond stardom and fan loyalty, the daily life of Bo Man is another good example to illustrate the commercial spectacle of the NBA in China. In the morning, Bo Man takes 300 ml Mengniu milk for breakfast, which is endorsed by the NBA. He surfs online for news about the NBA and basketball with his Lenovo laptop, also endorsed by the NBA. During the afternoon, Bo Man keeps eyes on the NBA games, particularly on the Pacers. Getting back from office, he serves himself a bottle of NBA-endorsed Yanjing Beer, then turns on his high-definition Haier television, also endorsed by the NBA, to watch the playbacks of today's NBA games. Like other NBA fans in China, Bo Man loves basketball a lot as he plays the game with his friends at least twice a week. Bo Man is keen on collecting NBA star-signed cards, Pacers' jerseys and Air Jordan sneakers. This hobby costs about half of Bo Man's salary every month. When the Indiana Pacers visited Beijing for their China Games in 2009, the front-row ticket cost Bo Man two months' salary, but 'no problem, it's worthwhile, as long as I can see my home team in a short distance, I want to welcome them in Beijing!' Bo Man said.

Media Network

The NBA's popularity arguably owed to its extensive engagement with Chinese television broadcasters. But David Stern might never have imagined the NBA's dramatic media exposure in China back in 1989, as he had to wait for three hours before he could talk to the China Central Television (CCTV) executives so as to peddle his NBA broadcast contract. Before that, only several videotapes of 1985 NBA Final Games were shown in 1986, and the 1987 NBA All-Star Games were broadcasted on Chinese television screen. He offered them a revenue-sharing deal for broadcasting a game or two each week from 1990, plus the NBA would convey the free-of-charge signal to CCTV.[40] But what CCTV signalled appeared to be an unprecedented openness to Western media culture. For decades, CCTV and other Chinese television stations had produced their own content exclusively, blending the political assumptions and ideas of China into the media they produced and broadcasted. And while the NBA deal certainly built on the popularity and importance of sport in contemporary China, David Stern's product featured something entirely new.

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The games being shown featured no Chinese athletes and were being played in a country half way around the world. Where Chinese sports broadcasts had previously focused almost exclusively on Chinese National teams and athletes, contextualising their actions with the logic and ideology of the PRC, the NBA represented a media discourse without nationalist Chinese overtones.[41]

With the emergence of China's market economy in the mid-1990s, Chinese no longer see sports as merely a national game. Sports tended to be some kind of leisure consumption. In 1994, CCTV broadcasted Game 1 of the NBA Finals live. The network also broadcasted all seven games of the NBA Finals, marking the first time every game of the NBA Finals had ever been carried live in China. After its establishment in 1995, the first sport channel in Chinese history, the CCTV-5 signed with the NBA a long-term contract to broadcast NBA's regular games, play-offs, finals and the All-Star games since 1996. At that time, the CCTVs had covered at least 90% of households throughout the country.[42]

Establishment of the CCTV-5 provided a successful paradigm for provincial and municipal TV broadcasters. They set up their own sports channels one after another. Forty-two sport channels throughout China were set up by 2003.[43] The combination of national and local broadcasters increased the amount of programming available to fans across China. More than 250 games were broadcast in China during the 2005–2006 season, including up to four games per week televised nationally on CCTV-5. In addition to NBA games, CCTV is co-producing NBA Time, a 90-min NBA highlight program, which airs every Friday during prime time. Hosted by local basketball commentators and experts, the show recaps a week of NBA excitement and action, news and local NBA events such as the NBA Jam Van, Junior NBA China and off-season news and player tours.[44] The figure of total NBA television partners in China skyrocketed to 54 for the season of 2010–2011 (Figure 1).

Print publication and new media such as the Internet have seen another transformation of Chinese leisure entertainment with the NBA. In May 1999, 'NBA Shi Kong' (NBA Space & Time), a Chinese version of 'Hoop' magazine, debuted in China. It marked NBA's first publishing licensed agreement in Asia. Since then, tailored newspapers and magazines for NBA have mushroomed and remain hot sellers, such as Lanqiu Xianfeng Bao, Koulan SLAM, MVP and Lanqiu.

Internet and mobile phones are two new information carriers for diffusing NBA culture globally. To support the growing interest of Chinese fans, NBA.com established NBA.com/China in 2003. On March 21, 2005, the NBA launched the first-ever NBA Fan Day voting on NBA.com/China. NBA fans in China could vote for their favourite game and watch the game of their choice. The NBA game match-up with the most votes was carried live by CCTV-5 nationwide on April 2, 2005 (Beijing Time). NBA Fan Day voting on NBA.com/China was presented together by Sohu.com, CCTV-5 and Red Bull Vitamin

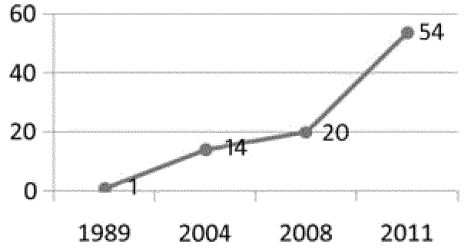


Figure 1. Number of television broadcasters showing NBA games in China. (Huang, "A History of the NBA.")

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Drink Co., Ltd. More than 20,000 fans cast their votes on NBA.com/China from March 18 to March 23, with the New Orleans at Houston match-up receiving the most votes, at 11,000. To better serve Chinese fans, on April 25, 2005, NBA.com/China launched Play-By-Play Game Statistics in Simplified Chinese, marking the first time the NBA.com Network is providing a real-time text play-by-play service in a language other than English.[45]

Sponsors, Stars and Fans

In his book *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*, Walter LaFeber stated: 'It's not supervised for them (remote Tibetans) knowing Michael Jordan. He was the most famous athlete and one of the most recognisable people in the world. Jordan and his "Red Oxen", as his team was known much in Asia, had gained renown for their basketball championships.'[46] Walter added, 'But Jordan was especially famous for another reason: he was the superhuman who flew through the air in television advertisements as he endlessly and effortlessly dunked basketballs and, simultaneously, sold Nike sneakers.'[47] It is true that sponsorship from corporate advertisers also plays a decisive role in popularising the NBA stars. As Time magazine noted, 'If Michael Jordan is God, then Phil Knight put him in heaven.'[48] In highlighting the popularity of Michael Jordan and the win–win situation between NBA stars and the transnational corporations (TNCs), Andrew Morris commented,

> Nike, author of this seamless Jordan mythology and modern sporting goods marketing as we know it, is such a unanimous choice among these basketball players/fans that its swoosh, not the PRC's five gold stars, has perhaps become the most enduringly hegemonic symbol in China today.[49]

Besides bombarding NBA stars' images on Chinese television screens, print and cyber space, sponsors of the NBA or players put every effort to make face-to-face communications for the NBA stars and fans during the summer, usually in the name of promoting basketball. For example, during August 25–31, 1997, center David Robinson of the San Antonio Spurs and forward Joe Smith of the Golden State Warriors held basketball clinics with thousands of kids in Taipei, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Beijing, and officiated at the opening ceremony of NBA Taiwan office. During August 10–14, 2001, L.A. Lakers guard Kobe Bryant travelled to Hong Kong and Beijing to promote the sport of basketball. During July 24–26, 2002, Vince Carter was invited by Nike to visit Beijing, Hong Kong and Taipei. The main objective for this trip was to express Carter's support for Chinese youth basketball. Carter donated a basketball backboard to the Chinese Basketball Association (CBA) and then was featured as a judge for a youth slam-dunk contest at the National Badminton Training Hall. On August 3–6, 2005, LeBron James toured Yokohama, Japan, Beijing and Hong Kong on behalf of Nike.

In addition, the NBA is promoting Chinese basketball with schools in China to further expand its fan base, such as the China Junior NBA, an event that the NBA and Amway China undertook in partnership with the Ministry of Education's China School Sports Federation (CSSF). The inaugural China Junior NBA took place from August 31 to December 18, 2005. The league was composed of three divisions with 120 schools in 15 cities participating, and it was divided into four stages – School Stage, City Stage, Regional Stage and National Stage. The winning team, coach and chaperone were rewarded with a trip to NBA All-Star 2006 in Houston.[50]

The NBA in China is not only basketball games but also challenges and entertainment for the youth. NBA Jam Van, the NBA's premier interactive touring program, made its first overseas tour to China in 2005. The Jam Van travelled to 11 Chinese cities, tipping off

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on July 28 in Shanghai and running through until October 2 in Beijing. The journey covered 8175 km, including three municipalities and six provinces in its quest to bring the NBA experience to fans all over China. On May 16, 2004, the Playoffs Viewing in Beijing featured more than 250 fans at the Sports City Bar for Game 5 between the Wolves and Kings. The half-time entertainment featured Chinese rapper using 'Kings & Wolves' and 'NBA China Games' theme in their lyrics to work up the crowd. They were accompanied by playground ballers showcasing flashy ball-handling skills.[51]

The Ming Dynasty

The NBA understands the power of an icon. When Michael Jordan retired from basketball, the league's ratings began to fall. To bounce back, the NBA expanded its overseas squad and lured foreign talent to the game. And there is no one who is as big an ambassador as Yao Ming. The NBA sees its salvation in the 7-foot, 6-inch Chinese sensation – and in 1.3 billion hoops fans.[52] Yao Ming, who was born in Shanghai, started playing for the Shanghai Sharks as a teenager, and played in their senior team for five years in the CBA, winning a championship in his final year. After negotiating with the CBA and the Sharks to secure his release, Yao was selected by the Houston Rockets as the first overall pick in the 2002 NBA Draft.[53] When Yao Ming finally landed in Houston, a new era of the NBA and Chinese basketball was tipped off, as the welcoming slogan of Houston city saying "be part of something big!"

Yao's debut in NBA games above all made the league further popular in China. According to a research report by Hoopchina[54], which was based on the methods of polls and online desktop research applications in January 2011, 37.8% of the basketball fans said they started watching NBA games because of Yao, while only 9.5% of them said they would give up watching NBA games if Yao retired. One-third of the interviewees showed interests in products endorsed by Yao.[55]

The statistics in Figure 2 show at least 56.6% basketball fans (blue) and 58.7 sports fans (red) started following the NBA games after Yao became a player of the NBA. The diagram used 4 years as a period and it was found that the fan base was steadily expanding after that until 2007–2010, when the number of new fans decreased to less than half of that in the time span from 2003 to 2006.

Figure 3 shows the different percentages of online traffic that goes to Yao in different periods from September 2009 to December 2010. It can be concluded that through the entire 2009–2010 season, online exposure dropped steadily because of Yao's injury.

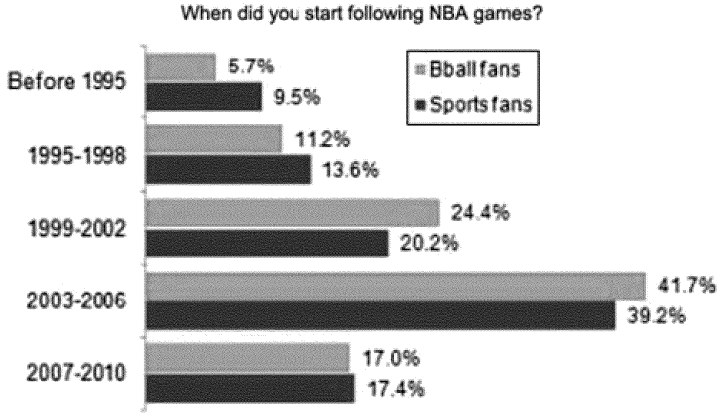


Figure 2. When did you start following NBA games?

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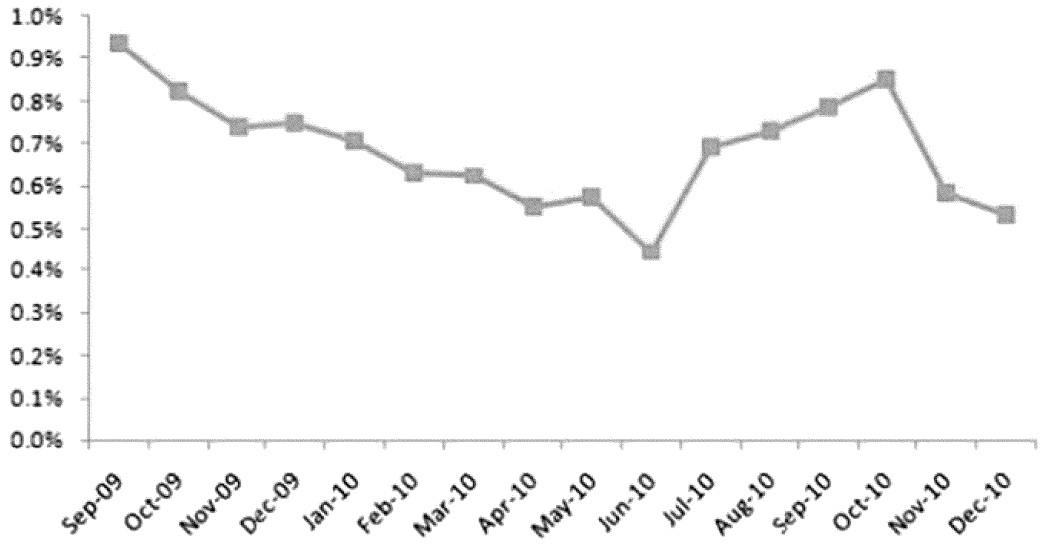


Figure 3. Popularity rates comparisons: Yao versus other NBA players.

Interest in Yao plummeted to the lowest point around the Final series. A sudden dramatic increase occurred when Yao came back to the court at the beginning of 2010. But it started to drop again after another injury of Yao.

Another case to show Yao's appeal to Chinese fans is that on November 9, 2007, Yao played against fellow Chinese NBA and Milwaukee Bucks player Yi Jianlian for the first time. The game, which the Rockets won 104–88, was broadcast on 19 networks in China, and was watched by over 200 million people in China alone, making it one of the most-watched NBA games in history. [56]

The Yao mania has made him one of the richest athletes in the world. As of 2009, he had led Forbes' Chinese celebrities list in income and popularity for six straight years, earning US $51 million in 2008. A major part of his income comes from his sponsorship deals, as he is under contract with several major companies to endorse their products. He was signed by Nike until the end of his rookie season. When Nike decided not to renew his contract, he signed with Reebok. He also had a deal with Pepsi, and he successfully sued Coca-Cola in 2003 when they used his image on their bottles while promoting the national team. However, he subsequently signed with Coca-Cola for the 2008 Olympics. His other deals include partnerships with Visa, Apple, Garmin and McDonald's. On July 16, 2009, Yao bought his former club team, the Shanghai Sharks, which were on the verge of not being able to play the next season of the CBA due to financial troubles.[57]

Yao's influence off the court is even more significant. Yao has also participated in many charity events during his career, including the NBA's Basketball Without Borders program. In the NBA's offseason in 2003, Yao hosted a telethon, which raised US $300,000 to help stop the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome. In September 2007, he held an auction that raised US $965,000 (6.75 million yuan), and competed in a charity basketball match to raise money for underprivileged children in China. He was joined by fellow NBA stars Steve Nash, Carmelo Anthony and Baron Davis, and movie star Jackie Chan. After the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, Yao donated $2 million to relief work, and created a foundation to help rebuild schools destroyed in the earthquake.[58]

Extensive publicity of Yao Ming in America has impelled much positive understanding of Westerners towards China, and Yao is another cultural ambassador, as

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Brook Larmer stated, 'in the United States, a new demo-graphic of Asian fans has flocked to stadiums to watch the giant stride across court, offering an image of China that has nothing to do with Chairman Mao or massacres at Tiananmen Square'.[59]

The Gold Rush II

A solid basketball grassroots and fan base, universal media network and the appeal from local hero Yao Ming, have collectively made NBA's Chinese territory a most profitable market for the league.[60] According to a report by Bao Mingxiao, a senior researcher for the State Sport General Administration, on the second Chinese Basketball Culture Forum, which was held in Soochow University in December 2007, it was estimated that NBA's net income from China in 2006 was 500 million Chinese Reminbi (RMB), comparing to that of 15 million RMB by the CBA professional league (CBAPL). This income mainly came from tickets, broadcasters and licensed products. However, taking into account that the revenue from NBA China Games which were absent in that year, the total income the NBA makes in China could be at least double the figure.[61] For instance, the historic NBA China Games 2004 were played on October 14 at the Shanghai Stadium with a capacity of 11,500 seats, and on October 17 in Beijing at the Capital Stadium with a capacity of 17,500 seats. Tickets were sold out a month before the games. Since then NBA China Games were played almost every year (Table 1).

Compared to these figures, however, the NBA-China industries is more incentive at a transnational level. Even though there is no accounting of the sports economy at a global level and most of the economic data related to sports, which are circulated by mass media are simply rough estimates,[62] the sport market that the NBA generates relating to Chinese market is evidently globally profitable. In October 2008, the NBA and the Anschutz Entertainment Group (AEG), one of the leading sports and entertainment presenters in the world, announced plans to design and operate at least 12 arenas of at least 19,000 seats in China. Huang Jianhua, who is the biggest shareholder of Cleveland Cavaliers with 15% stock, took over the National Basketball League (NBL) in 2009. NBL is the second largest basketball league in China, affiliated to the CBA, and another CBA team, Jilin Tiger, as well. Yao Ming purchased the Shanghai Sharks for about US $3 million in 2009.[63]

Besides direct investment, sports goods manufacturing is another way the NBA affects China's and America's economy. As everyone knows, China has been the biggest original equipment manufacturer and export country over these two decades. The sports industry is no exception, particularly since the mid 1990s. For example, the alignment of Nike, as a major sports goods manufacturer, with the coastal cities where local economies rely heavily on exports, has taken advantage particularly in China's low-pay labour-intensive resources industries. China has been the biggest manufacturer of Nike for more than two decades.

Table 1. The NBA China games.

Year	Host cities	Games no.	Visiting teams
2004	Shanghai, Beijing	2	Houston Rockets, Sacramento Kings
2007	Shanghai, Macao	2	Cleveland Cavaliers, Orlando Magic
2008	Beijing, Guangzhou	2	Golden State Warriors, Milwaukee Bucks
2009	Beijing	2	Denver Nuggets, Indiana Pacers
2010	Beijing, Guangzhou	2	Houston Rockets, New Jersey Nets
2012	Beijing, Shanghai	2	Miami Heat, Los Angeles Clippers

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The twenty-first century began with China's involvement in the WTO, providing transnational companies much opportunity to tap into the Chinese basketball market. Reebok was the earliest global sponsor by virtue of Yao's charisma, putting Yao's signature sneakers into Chinese market as soon as Yao Ming played his first NBA game. In 2003, Reebok and Yao Ming signed a new contract aimed towards Pan-Asian market. Up to 2006, there were more than 150 Reebok chain stores selling apparel, sneakers and accessories. China is also the biggest market for NBA's official basketball sponsor, Spalding. Besides these companies, some other TNCs, particularly in sportswear and drinks such as Nike and Coca Cola, are also playing a considerable role in the Chinese market.[64]

Meanwhile, Chinese enterprises have made good use of NBA's coverage nationally and internationally to establish partnerships with the NBA for publicity. For instance, Yanjing Beer signed a six-year contract worth 7 million dollars with Houston Rockets in 2002 to advertise its brand logo in Toyota Center Square. NBA stars regularly sign endorsements with Chinese sport makers, such as Jason Kidd for Peak, Kevin Garnett for Anta. The professional basketball league in China has now been a major destination for out-of-contract NBA players. More and more NBA players and coaches are being hired by CBA teams, even star players such as former first-pick player Steve Francis and Kenyon Martin. Stephen Marbury, in particular, has been playing in the CBAPL since 2009 and has recently brought the Beijing Ducks a champion title, meanwhile doing his business of selling basketball gears with his own brand 'Starbury' (Table 2).[65]

Table 2. NBA marketing partners from China in 2006.

Sponsors	Industry category	Country
China Mobile	Telecommunication	China
Li Ning	Sports Apparel	China
Haier	Electrical Appliance	China
RedBull	Sport Drinks	China (base)
Tsing Hua Tong Fang	Computer	China
Lenovo Group	Computer	China
Mengniu	Food and Milk Industry	China
Vancamel	Casual Wear	China
Peak	Sports Apparel	China
Hornitex Industry	Wood Industry	China
Airborne Networks	Network Media	China(base)
SOHU Networks	Network Media	China
NuSports	Network Media	China
NBA Hoop	Graphic Media	China
Adidas	Sports Apparel	Germany
Nike	Sports Apparel	American
Coca Cola	Sports Drinks	American
Nokia	Telecommunication	Finland
DHL	Logistics Transportation	Germany
Amway Nutrilite	Health Drinks	American
Gatorade	Sport Drinks	American
Macdonald's	Catering Industry	American
Reebok	Sports Apparel	American
Southwest Aviation	Transportation	American
Toyota	Car Manufacturer	Japan
Federal Express	Logistics Transportation	American

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Overwhelming Penetration versus Local Resistance: A Voice from the CBA

The trend of NBA's hegemonic infiltration in China within the form of a cultural production is inexorable. Central to the discussion on this glocalisation process is that whether Chinese basketball culture has been homogenised or whether the indigenous congeneric product – CBAPL – has retained the heterogeneity of Chinese basketball.

The CBAPL is a general name used in this dissertation to indicate the premier professional basketball league organised by the Chinese Basketball Association (CBA), the governing body of China's basketball, for the name of the past seasons has varied in different ways with different corporate sponsors. The CBA was established under the leadership of the ACSF in June 1956. Although the CBA had claimed jurisdiction over all Chinese basketball activities from late 1950s, it was not until late 1970s that the CBA was endowed with power in managing Chinese basketball when, in 1978, it was granted an official charter. The CBA was finally recognised by FIBA while Taiwan's membership was successfully exempted. According to the current structure, the CBA is defined as a nationwide non-governmental sports organisation with independent juridical qualification; a non-profitable association comprising a hierarchical system of provincial, autonomous regions and municipalities, basketball associations or corresponding sports departments of the People's Liberation Army; a member of the ACSF; an Olympic organisation recognised by the China Olympic Committee; and the only legitimate Chinese organisation qualified to participate in the International Basketball Federation and the Asian Basketball Confederation.[66]

Three forces – the emergence of China's market economy, the Olympic Strategies[67] and the acceptance of professional players into FIBA from the late 1980s to early 1990s – enabled the CBA to undertake a breakthrough reformation of professionalisation and marketisation for Chinese basketball. Football was in the forefront of professionalising Chinese sports in 1994. Following the footstep of the CFA, on December 20, 1994, Yang Boyong, Deputy Chairman and General Secretary of the CBA announced the nationwide basketball tournament would be arranged 'professionally' from 1995 at the annual meeting for training of basketball, so as to be self-supported.

The primary approach of the CBA was to reformat the former premier national competition, the top-eight tournament, into a professional basketball league (CBAPL). The 1995 Chinese professional basketball season, however, was rather remaining a sport tournament (Jia Ji) than transforming into a normative professional league except for running the home-guest regulation. Also named 'Top Eight conference' or 'initial season', it lasted for only two months from early February to early April 1995. The participated teams were the top eight of 1994 Jia Ji competition, five of which were army teams and the other three were provincial teams. Before the 1995–1996 season started, the CBA had made a number of changes for the league to be professional. For instance, the CBA issued three regulations respectively on the competition routines of the league, trading rules of players and the rules on administrating the clubs. In the first decade since its birth, the CBAPL followed the European professional team sports model in organising the league. The main characteristic was the adaptation of a promotion and relegation system.

A major turning point came in 2004 when the new director of the Chinese Basketball Management Center (CBMC) Li Yuanwei implemented a North Star Plan to further reform the organisation and started a commercialisation strategy for the CBAPL. Notwithstanding the North Star Plan was an instant duplication of the NBA, which successfully pushed the CBAPL further, as Li stated, 'in my opinion, there is no authentic

"professional" league in China, but the reason why the CBAPL surpass professional football league to be the first professional sports league in China is that we base on the NBA's experience. Our key is "nalai zhuyi" (to learn, duplicate and adjust).'[68] The reason for why the CBAPL is not a normative professional sports league as Li commented is mainly resulting from the league's governance, the role of government in operating the league is overplayed.[69]

Admittedly, the CBAPL still remains quasi-professional or, at most, a professional league with socialist characteristics in the organisational dimension so far. Either, this league can hardly compare to the NBA in terms of athletic performance and commercial promotion. But the CBAPL will never be eliminated or replaced by the NBA's presence, since this is the only Chinese professional basketball league, and, more importantly, on the earth of China. There are at least two disadvantages for the NBA to get over: less governmental support and few Chinese players can be recruited. The fzormer is a matter of course since the government itself is the dominant power and one of the major actors in Chinese professional basketball; the latter is also evident when the CCTV-5 arranged more CBAPL games than NBA games in reaction to Yao Ming's retirement and Yi Jianlian's return to Guangdong. The CBAPL, on the contrary, may still maintain its local taste for Chinese supporters. This also echoes the words of Li Yuanwei for David Stern when he denied the NBA's proposal of building a NBA-like professional basketball league in China: McDonald's is popular in Shanghai, but it does not affect the business of Shanghai food.[70]

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Conclusion

Basketball, which was introduced by Western imperialist power in modern China, has rooted in Chinese society and has become a most popular sport today. This century-long obsession has furnished a steady cornerstone for the diffusion of the modern-day American basketball commodity. Since its inauguration in China in 1979, the NBA has not only witnessed the solid footsteps of China's reformation, opening-up and fast-growing economies, but also infiltrated into Chinese society politically, economically and culturally. The NBA has reshaped Chinese basketball culture and modernised the conception of Chinese sport industry and entertaining sport. Indigenous basketball commodity by the CBA, meanwhile, is promising in retaining its domains with the redefinition of its basketball culture and the assumption of the NBA's paradigm.

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Notes on Contributor

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Notes

1. Giulianotti and Robertson, *Globalization and Sport*, 131.
2. Robertson, "Glocalization."
3. See YoungHan, "The Glocalization of US Sports in South Korea;" Andrews and Ritzer, "The Grobal in the Sporting Glocal;" Giulianotti and Robertson, "Introduction: Sport and Globalization: Transna-tional Dimensions;"
4. See YoungHan, "The Glocalization of US Sports in South Korea."
5. Mangan, *Sport in Asian Society*.
6. Polumbaum, "Evangelism to Entertainment."
7. *A Development History of Chinese Basketball*, 3.
8. Liang, *PE Department of Shanghai YMCA*.
9. *A Development History of Chinese Basketball*, 7.
10. Hong and Hua, "Sport in China."
11. *A Development History of Chinese Basketball*, 13.
12. Ibid., 17.
13. Ibid., 30.
14. Ibid., 31.
15. Ibid., 33.
16. See Hong, "Not All Bad!"
17. See Zhang, "My Diplomatic Anecdote." Section 161.
18. *A Development History of Chinese Basketball*, 53.
19. Ibid., 47.
20. *The 4th Statistics of Nationalwide Sports Playgrounds*, 319.
21. Morris, "I Believe You Can Fly."
22. Li, Speech on the Word Fortune Forum.
23. http://sports.sina.com.cn/cba/2006-08-18/22466421822.shtml, retrieved October 12, 2009.
24. Kirchberg, *Hoop Lore*, 202.
25. The Harlem Globetrotters are an exhibition basketball team that combines athleticism, theatre and comedy.
26. The China Youth Daily, "The Policy Research Centre of the Sports Ministry."
27. Ibid.
28. Huang, "NBA in China."
29. http://www.nba.com/global/, retrieved October 12, 2009.
30. Zheng Shangwu, Interview on July 23, 2010.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Huang, "NBA in China."
36. http://www.nba.com/global/, retrieved October 12, 2009.
37. Huang, "NBA in China," 33–5.
38. *Fox Sports TV*, February 5, 2011. Recorded from an interview with Bo Man during the live games.
39. Chinapacers.com, data gathered with my participative observation.
40. *New Sport*, "NBA and TV," April 21, 1998.
41. McCune, "Slam Dunking in Beijing."
42. *World Sport Weekly*, "NBA and China," November 20, 2003.
43. Ibid.
44. Huang, "NBA in China."
45. Ibid.
46. LaFeber, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*, 15.
47. Ibid.
48. *Time*, June 17, 1996, 79, quoted in ibid.
49. Morris, "I Believe You Can Fly."
50. Xiaoxiao, "Youth NBA should be integrated into school education."
51. http://www.nba.com/global/, retrieved October 12, 2009.
52. Larmer, "The Center of the World."
53. http://www.nba.com/global/, retrieved October 12, 2009.

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54. Hoopchina is a leading professional sports portal that serves as an online community for sports fans. The site covers the NBA, CBA games as well as football matches and F1 races. They are facilitating online and offline interactions ranging from forum discussions to offline and highly active sports fan clubs in over 200 cities in China.
55. This research has targeted internet users and the researcher retrieved 51,474 questionnaire samples.
56. Zhang and Liu, "Yao Ming Pheonomena."
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Larmer, "The Center of the World."
60. A gold rush is a period of feverish migration of workers to an area that has had a dramatic discovery of gold deposits. Major gold rushes took place in the nineteenth century. A large group of Chinese immigrated to the US between the start of the California gold rush in 1849 and 1882.
61. Bao Mingxiao's report. The 2nd Chinese Basketball Culture Forum, SooChow University, China, December 27, 2010.
62. Andreff, "Globalization of the Sports Economy," 14.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. *The Chinese Basketball Association Charter.*
67. To cover selected Olympic sports and to centralise all resources throughout China for victory on international competitions.
68. Li, *Basketball Road*, 269.
69. Hong and Huang, "Sport Governance."
70. Li, *Basketball Road*, 291.

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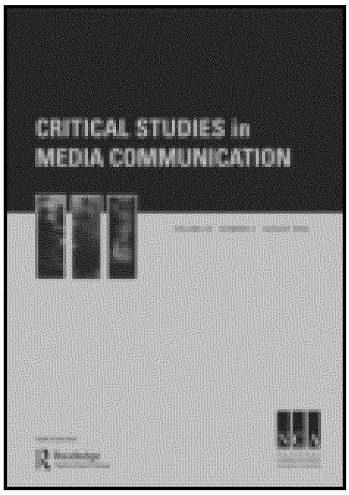




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Sonic Sturdiness: The Globalization of "Chinese" Rock and Pop

Jeroen de Kloet

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To theorize further global and regional flows of popular culture, this article provides a critical analysis of "authentic" rock music from Beijing as well as "commercial" pop from Hong Kong. Following Appadurai, I theorize rock as a hard cultural form, which, under the scrutinizing eyes of the West, demands localization when it travels to places outside its perceived homeland, the West. By comparing hardcore punk from Beijing to Cantopop, I discuss whether the soft relates to the hard as pop does to rock. I conclude it does not. The transient, intertextual, and multivocal opaque voice of pop demands a different theorization. I therefore recast Appadurai's hard–soft distinction into a clear–opaque dualism as a more accurate theoretical tool for understanding cultural globalization.

Keywords: Globalization; China; Hong Kong; Appadurai; Beijing Punk; Cantopop; Anthony Wong; Opacity

Sonic Flows

However far-fetched drawing a parallel between cricket and rock music may seem, both share a similar perceived origin (the West), and both traveled quite successfully to the East (India and China). This article analyzes rock music in Beijing and pop music from Hong Kong, critically interrogating Appadurai's (1996) distinction between hard and soft cultural forms. Commenting on cricket's embeddedness in 19th-century Victorian values, Appadurai proposes the notion of "hard" cultural forms to understand the cultural flow of cricket. "Hard cultural forms are those that come with a set of links between value, meaning, and embodied practice that are difficult to break and hard to transform" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 90). Intuitively one would expect that cultural forms like cricket, which are so tightly packaged in terms of symbolic meaning, "ought to resist indigenization" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 90). And

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indeed, in the high period of the Raj between 1870 and 1930, "for Indians to play cricket was to experiment with the mysteries of English upper-class life" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 90). Over the 20th century, however, cricket became profoundly indigenized and decolonized, becoming part and parcel of the (mediated) project of the modern Indian nation-state. To explain this puzzle, Appadurai interprets the localization of cricket as a postcolonial experiment with modernity in which the empire, the nation-state, patronage, commerce, and the mass media play pivotal roles.

Following Appadurai's notions, rock can be considered a hard cultural form, with rock mythology—the narratives that constitute rock as a distinct music world, as I will explain later—as its set of links between value, meaning, and embodied practice. It imposes a relatively rigid repertoire of styles, which have their perceived origins in the West, upon musicians active in the rock culture. As such, rock "changes those who are socialized into it more readily than it is itself changed" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 90). Hence the striking similarities in both sound and image, for example, of hard-rockers from Beijing and their colleagues in Jakarta or Seattle, with their leather jackets, long hair, and unruliness on and offstage. However, precisely because of the globalizing force of rock mythology, Beijing musicians want to localize rock's sound and image. In order to become and remain authentic, the hard force of rock—a force with a strong imagined sense of origins in the West—demands localization when the sound travels to places outside the West.[1]

The emergence of rock in China in the 1990s, however, coincided with the rapid processes of a state-supported urban consumerism that is deeply embedded in an increasingly globalized capitalist economy (Hui, 2003; Wang, 2001). In particular, China's youths have been at the forefront of the closely intertwined dynamics of globalization and urban consumerism (Z. Zhang, 2000). Popular culture is pivotal in these processes. For example, like their Western contemporaries, Beijing youths watch *The Matrix* and the *Lord of the Rings*; play the latest X-Box and Playstation; and listen to Jennifer Lopez and System of a Down. Unlike their Western contemporaries, however, they also immerse themselves in pop from Hong Kong and Taiwan as well as rock from their own city.[2]

Backed up by transnational capital, flows of popular culture not only run from the West to the rest but also from, for example, Taiwan and Hong Kong to mainland China. Beijing rock musicians negotiate the perceived roots of rock, the West, through localization. They also differentiate themselves from what they consider to be the commercial and inauthentic sound of Cantopop and Mandapop: the pop from Hong Kong and Taiwan that largely exceeds rock in audience appeal. The pop–rock divide in China reifies dominant popular stereotypes of the cultural north (with Beijing as the signifier of an "authentic" Chinese culture) and the commercial south (with Hong Kong as the signifier of a commercial Chinese culture). It also articulates differences between what is considered an original, authentic West and a non-West that constantly risks being a mere copycat. I will show how the scrutiny of Western journalists and academics strengthens these differences.

Appadurai's theorization of hard cultural forms helps explain the localizing urge of Beijing rock culture. When it comes to the soft, however, Appadurai offers no

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examples. He only remarks that soft cultural forms "permit relatively easy separation of embodied performance from meaning and value, and relatively successful transformation at each level" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 90). This vagueness suggests not only the need to consider soft forms more specifically, but also to rethink the hard–soft distinction. Consequently, the second part of my analysis recasts Appadurai's hard–soft distinction as a clear–opaque dualism. The transient, intertextual, and multivocal opacity of pop subverts the hegemonic forces that propel the globalization of clear, hard cultural forms like rock. As such, opaque cultural forms offer a hitherto underestimated prism for studying cultural globalization.

Pop and Rock

The birth of Chinese rock can be traced back to the mid-1980s, when the hoarse voice of Beijing rock star Cui Jian stirred up the waters of Chinese popular culture. Cui Jian's song "Nothing to My Name" became an instant hit in 1986 and was one of the anthems of the student protest movement in 1989. In Cui Jian's wake, a vivid rock culture emerging in Beijing conquered mainland China and, although to a far lesser extent, Taiwan and Hong Kong. By now, the label "rock" (*yaogun yinyue*) is too broad to capture the diversity of music styles currently in vogue in the mainland, such as hardcore punk, folk rock, and deep house. Nevertheless, the label retains some of its significance in Beijing record stores, which group together rock tapes and CDs, as distinguished from what is categorized in popular discourse as pop music (*liuxing yinyue*). The latter is perceived to be the inauthentic Other of rock. Essentially, this rearticulates the old dichotomy between "authentic," "rebellious" rock and its commercial constitutive outside "pop."[3] Authenticity is the key term for unpacking the pop–rock dichotomy. As Herman and Sloop (1998, p. 2) say, the ideology of authenticity provided the ground for a practice of judgment through which musicians, fans, and critics could "distinguish between 'authentic rock,' which was transgressive and meaningful, and 'inauthentic rock' (or 'pop'), which was co-opted and superficial." This pop–rock divide is thus not at all a Chinese invention. Instead, it is a globalized dichotomy whose origin (imagined or not) is in the West (Frith, 1996). Rock is accepted as sincere and authentic. Kurt Cobain's desperate screams signify a tormented soul, ultimately verified by his suicide. The plastic voice, face, and body of Britney Spears carry a mass-produced product.

Although the generic demarcation is global, the merchandise displayed in Beijing stores underlines another, more locally specific demarcation—a geographical one. Whereas most rock comes from the north, Beijing, the pop music that hits the mainland charts generally comes from the south, Taiwan or Hong Kong (hereafter grouped under the label *Gangtai* pop).[4] Mainland pop is popularly conceived of as a meager copy of *Gangtai* pop.[5] Consequently, the global rock–pop divide has a geographical dimension that resembles and hence reifies popular stereotypes about the cultural north and the commercial south. The northern sound of rock is framed by what I call the rock mythology (de Kloet, 2000). This mythology consists of a set of narratives that produce rock as a distinct music world that is, first and foremost,

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authentic, but also subcultural, masculine, rebellious, and (counter) political. Not surprisingly, the perceived authoritarian character of the Chinese regime feeds the popular imagination—in particular in the West—to relive the rebelliousness of the rock mythology.

The pop–rock dichotomy dominates academic and journalistic discourses, both Chinese and non-Chinese. It is a crucial marker of distinction for musicians, producers, and audiences. Pop, framed in popular discourse as the primary constitutive outside of rock, is anything but authentic (Herman & Sloop, 1998). The words of Cui Jian are indicative: "Pop music as a strictly commercial product, that is for money only, I am not interested in and am indeed opposed to" (quoted in Barmé, 1999, p. 361). Likewise, Sar, drummer for the Beijing rock band Thin Men, says:

> Rock music is totally different from pop. Rock comes from our souls, it is original music, composed and played from the same heart. Pop is the ultimate assembly-line product. . . . There is nothing genuine about it. It is not about expressing your truths but about manipulating consumers. (quoted in Kovskya, 1999)

Both Steen (1996) and Jones (1992) reify the pop–rock distinction by arguing that, when it is not yet commodified, rock is potentially subversive and emancipatory—qualities that pop cannot possibly offer. "Apart from the marginal and marginalized niche market of heavy metal and rock, it is the sickly sweet songs of Canto-pop that fill the airwaves" (Dutton, 1998, p. 239). Such crude judgments and classifications, expressed by rock musicians as well as Western academics, represent the typical opinion of Chinese pop as overtly commercialized and lacking creativity.

Indeed, when it comes to sales figures, Chinese pop by far outweighs rock. Pop attracts a large audience among all generations across national boundaries, including diasporic communities across the globe. The rock audience, on the other hand, remains comparatively small. Nevertheless, it is rock that mainly attracts the attention of Western observers. Several books, articles, and documentaries try to grasp the significance of rock in China (e.g., Baranovitch, 2003; de Kloet, 2000, 2003; Efird, 2001; Huang, 2001, 2003; Jones, 1992, 1994; Lanning, 1991; Lee, 1996; Steen, 1996, 2000a; Yan, 1999, 2004). Only a few embark on an analysis of *Gangtai* pop (Chan, 1997; Chu, 1998; Ho, 2000; Khiun, 2003; Lee, 1992). In the latter case, analysis is generally guided and confined by parameters set by the rock mythology, privileging the political aspects of pop. For example, Lee (1992) links *Gangtai* pop to the June 4th movement of 1989. Among the few studies that move beyond a political reading of *Gangtai* pop, Witzleben (1999) explores the stardom of Anita Mui, pointing out her own agency. Erni (1998) interprets Cantopop as "a cultural surface upon which Hong Kong's uniquely contradictory colonial experience finds its own expression" (p. 57).

To unravel the global and local flows of popular music, the perceived origin of rock (and of its mythology) in the West is crucial. Whenever rock travels outside its perceived homeland, the West, it demands localization in order to retain its authenticity. A second important point concerns the particular spatial dimension

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of the pop–rock distinction in the Chinese context—the articulation of Beijing rock versus Hong Kong and Taiwanese pop, or the cultural north versus the commercial south. Both reify cultural stereotypes and reinforce particular political boundaries.

Hegemony and Mimicry

Given the perceived Western roots of rock, that rock is labeled and criticized by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as representing spiritual pollution from the West is predictable (Leng, 1991). However, the CCP is not alone in drawing its harsh judgment of Chinese rock from its supposed Western origin. Musicians and observers, both inside and outside China, do the same. Reviewing a documentary on Chinese rock music, a Dutch journalist makes what is "original" into "superior": "China is lagging behind in popular music and will never be able to make up for it. It is unclear whether Chinese youth actually wants such music" (Kamer, 1997, p. 16). Shown music videos of Chinese rock, Dutch students are generally dismissive; they consider Chinese rockers to be, at best, bleak, old-fashioned copies of the supposedly real rock from the West.[6] Both the journalist's as well as the students' comments can be read as a Western, more than a Dutch, response. The mimicry of the Other—here Chinese rock musicians—meets with resistance and disapproval from Western audiences and music critics. I consider this, following Bhabha, to be a hegemonic, colonial attitude: "Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*" (1994, p. 86, italics in original). Chinese rock often sounds and looks the same, but not quite. Both the journalist and my students articulate this difference in a temporal way, by labeling it "old-fashioned." On this difference, this slippage of meaning from "real rock" to "old fashioned rock," rests the hegemonic defining power of the Western gaze. "Mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86).

Chinese analysts also subscribe to the hegemonic assertion of the West as the one and only center of real rock. For example, two of the main rock magazines in China—*Music Heaven* and *Modern Sky Magazine*—offer the Chinese gaze on the West (in extensive coverage of Western rock), and the Chinese gaze on an assumed Western gaze (in reports that question whether or not rock in China is "just" a copy).[7] Given its status as rock's homeland, the West not only establishes the criteria for what rock ought to be, but is also imagined to be the omnipresent judge of Chinese rock.

Copying the West is presumed, in the West as in China, to result in a loss of authenticity, the driving force of the rock mythology, as well as an ideological betrayal of China's assumed uniqueness. Bands in Beijing often accuse one another of copying the West. In the West, accusations of copying are invariably based on comparisons between individuals or bands. In the case of Chinese rock, the danger of copying is not merely individual and creative but collective and ideological. A Chinese rock band must safeguard authenticity by distinguishing itself from other Chinese bands and from the West. In other words, the global sound of rock must be indigenized in

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China to maintain its claim to real Chinese rock. Refusing to sinify a sound—to add presumed Chinese characteristics to it—risks copying the better West, a refusal which leads to accusations of inauthenticity. Through sinification, musicians aspire to make Chinese rock that sounds and looks quite different, hence avoiding the hegemonic force of mimicry.

In a report in *Modern Sky Magazine* on hip hop in China, Y. Zhang (2000) expresses the general angst: "Compared to Western music, we will always be in a state of copying. When we have something new, we will throw away the old one. We have all sorts of music, but none is properly digested by us" (p. 19). Chinese music magazines contain elaborate references to generic labels from Western popular music and to Western bands.[8] The Chinese gaze on Western rock shows that Western sounds travel well to China, but this is mainly a one-way sonic flow. Although Western academics and journalists might privilege both the rebelliousness and Chineseness of Chinese rock, the music itself is rarely taken seriously. A telling account by the Chinese female vocalist Long Hun, entitled "Go West!", articulates her frustrations when introducing the Beijing rock she "is so proud of" to friends in London:

> But their reaction is always: "Well, it's OK." To them, these punk bands are just another group of punk bands, Tang Dynasty is just another heavy metal band, and they just don't have a clue to what's so good about Zhang Chu and Cui Jian. It really annoys me. I can only say: "You don't understand." Only some songs of Supermarket [an electronic band] still interest them, saying: "This is interesting, strange music." Also the tape of Chinese *guqin* [a "traditional" Chinese string instrument], they play it over and over again. Strange, if it shows that there are indeed boundaries in music, why does foreign music manage to excite us and feel close to us? (Long, 1999, p. 24)

Her last outcry underscores the crux of the globalization of popular music: Why are Chinese rock and pop fans so eager to listen to Western sounds, but the reverse is rare? Why have Chinese musicians and audiences developed an aesthetic sensibility toward popular "Western" sounds but not the other way round? To Western eyes and ears, the only appealing sounds and images are either political (Beijing rock—but only when sinified) or exotic, rather than the familiar and the popular.

The cultural sharing that takes place when the sound of rock globalizes conspicuously does so on Western terms (Kraus, 1989). U.S. journalist Caroline Cooper downplays Chinese pop, the "slapdash Spears rip-offs and the bleating of Hong Kong pop stars" (2000). She subsequently celebrates the Beijing rock band Thin Men, a band that, according to her, is "jumping between classical Chinese Mandarin and the Mongolian dialect of lead singer's Dai Qin's home region, and often featuring traditional Mongolian sounds alongside classic electric guitar and keyboard" (Cooper, 2000). To her, sounds that lack Chinese characteristics are "slapdash Spears rip-offs," or pop singers. Yet they could be a rock band lacking Chinese characteristics. The moment, however, that rock is sinified—classical Chinese Mandarin, Mongolian dialect, traditional Mongolian sounds—it becomes praise-worthy.

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The Chinese gaze upon this Western gaze makes the fear of copying—or of mimicry—a pressing matter, as the idea of being watched and judged renders it all the more urgent to localize rock. The following study of the hardcore punk scene in Beijing will demonstrate how Chinese musicians negotiate the demands of authenticity by the localizing tactic of sinification.

Hardcore Punk

The hardness of punk already finds its way in the term *hard*core. If sounds were categorized on a scale of sonic sturdiness that runs from soft to hard, punk would be at the very hard end. Punk (*pengke*)—journalists and bands sometimes add the label hardcore (*yinghe pengke*) to differentiate it from pop-punk (*liuxing pengke*)—is marginal in China in terms of number of bands and listeners, yet it is highly visible, given its extravagant styles. The hardcore bands of the Chinese punk scene typically adopt names such as Anarchy Jerks, Brain Failure (*Naozhu*), Reflector (*Fanguangjing*), and 69. These four are also collectively known as the "Senseless Contingent" (*wuliao jundui*), under which name they released a compilation CD in 1999. There is an all-female punk band called Hang on the Box (*Guazai hezishang*).[9] The flyer for a Halloween punk party graphically captures their anarchistic aspirations (Figure 1).

The flyer's design is typical of an underground event. The text says, in clumsy English: "Will Hold Power, Just Saying 'No' to Leader." Such a provocative statement is not repeated in Chinese. That would be too risky. The Chinese text, then, simply announces a punk party. More than being a conscious political statement against the CCP, both this text and the design of the flyer, like the names of the bands themselves, signify anarchy and rebelliousness—two core elements of the punk idiom. Not surprisingly, when Western reporters cover Chinese rock, punk is often their preferred focus, as the punk scene ties in best with the desired countercultural pose. And the bands perform accordingly. Peter, the angry vocalist for the band 69, says defiantly:

> Many people don't understand punk. I think punk is necessary for Chinese society. Chinese people valued patience for about 5,000 years. Patience makes Chinese people like animals, like slaves. They need punk, they need punk to fight for what they want. If you don't want to be a slave, you should be punk. (personal communication, April 18, 2000)

So he makes punk music, while stock-trading and working for an advertising agency.[10] However, under the scrutinizing Western gaze, being angry and rebellious is not enough. Chinese punk bands must be angry and rebellious in a different way from their Western colleagues. They localize (or, to use Appadurai's term, indigenize) by sinification. Though the name 69 refers to sex, it also refers to the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), thereby revealing the band's sinification. In addition to the name, 69 frequently adopt revolutionary classics—communist military songs used during the Cultural Revolution celebrating Mao Zedong and communist ideology—and transform them into quick, short punk songs. Peter says: "69's music is . . . 1970s

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Figure 1. Flyer for a 1997 Halloween Party.

music, the British punk combined with the Cultural Revolution, it's a mixture. I also use traditional Chinese music, because I think punk is white music, just as reggae is black music" (personal communication, April 18, 2000). Since the Chinese are not white, some "yellow" elements must be mixed into white punk.

Other Chinese punk bands also indigenize themselves by incorporating images and sounds from the Cultural Revolution. The cover of an "underground" punk-zine titled *Building Up* (*Jianshe*)—copies of which circulate at bars and among the members of the punk scene—depicts a Communist soldier leading his troop. Mocking the jargon of the Communist Party, the cover text runs (in English, thus itself indicating the Western gaze for Chinese punk):

> In our great motherland a new era is emerging in which the broad masses are grasping punk thought. Once punk thought is grasped by the broad masses it becomes an inexhaustible source of strength and a spiritual atom bomb of infinite power.

Another example comes from another punk-zine *SP-PNUK* from May 1999, written by Hang on the Box vocalist Wang Yue (the italicized sentence was already in English):

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> The birth and growth of Chinese punk germinates the explosion of a cultural revolution, a counterculture, an anti-popular consciousness, and a great movement breaking entirely away from decayed and dated thoughts. . . . At the same time, let us all shout: Long live world peace! *Long live anarchism! Long live Chinese punk!*

Again, the reference to the Cultural Revolution sinifies punk. Li Peng—who shares his name with the former Chinese leader—is guitar player for different bands and reporter for this punk-zine. Writing on 69 in the punk-zine, he points to the Chineseness of the band's invocation of the revolution:

> The band, whether intentionally or not, has integrated Chinese musical elements into punk music. (It's not like some bands who only use *erhu* or *guzheng* to display their Chineseness.) The elements they use are mostly from the 50s and 60s, which makes their style revolutionary and powerful!

Li's view typifies Chinese rock bands' double urge: to differ from bands that use traditional Chinese instruments, as well as from the West so as to avoid mimicry (thus the invocation of revolutionary China). The quote shows how the demand for localization is consciously negotiated within Beijing rock culture and forms one of its dividing principles. Not only does the pop–rock dichotomy set Beijing apart from Hong Kong and Taiwan, but specific appropriations of the "Chinese" musical heritage mark a distinction, in this case, between punk and, for example, folk-rock music where sounds from ancient China are used. Punk can be considered a very hard cultural form. This explains the power of the punk aesthetic, which travels so well globally, yet also confirms the argument that hard cultural forms in particular are being eagerly localized. Because it is considered Western, punk, as a hard cultural form, demands localization.

Searching for the Soft

The hard–soft distinction helps explain the dynamics of hard cultures like cricket or rock music when they traverse cultural boundaries. What about the soft? Does the hard–soft theorization offer equally relevant insights for understanding the globalization of the soft? Perhaps implicitly acknowledging the dichotomy is imperfect; Appadurai offers no parallel inquiry regarding the soft, nor does he name any concrete soft cultural form. Cryptically, he remarks that soft forms "permit relatively easy separation of embodied performance from meaning and value, and relatively successful transformation at each level" (1996, p. 90). Given the juxtaposition of rock versus pop, and the difficulty of identifying a coherent set of narratives that constitute, for instance, the pop mythology, regarding pop as a soft cultural form seems logical. Pop's meanings and values seem, relatively speaking, easily separated from its embodied performance.

Yet following this theoretical line risks not only reifying the pop–rock dichotomy, but also, more importantly, ignoring one fundamental difference: While rock musicians are preoccupied with articulating their distinction from *Gangtai* pop (the south) and from perceived origin (the West), pop artists rarely display the same

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urgency. Pop stars in Hong Kong and Taiwan, for instance, are concerned about their direct competitors, also from Hong Kong and Taiwan, rather than their loud northern colleagues. Instead of marking themselves out from the West by localizing tactics, pop stars wouldn't care less about recreating the latest fads in the global pop scene. The discourse of localization traced above for rock is absent in pop. Neither in imagery nor in sound (apart from the Cantonese and Mandarin lyrics) is there an articulated attempt to localize *Gangtai* pop. Pop musicians do not debate their Chinese characteristics, as do Beijing rockers. This, however, does not imply that pop is not a globalized sound. On the contrary, as noted earlier, it is precisely the sound of pop that is popular among the diasporic Chinese communities across the world. While acknowledging the theoretical value of the hard, its "obvious" soft opposition does not bring us very far in thinking through the globalization of pop.

If the hard cultural form of rock is embedded in its meanings and values (authentic, rebellious, political), pop defies being straitjacketed in a cluster of negatives (inauthentic, non-rebellious, apolitical). If rock musicians in China continue to perceive their musical origins in the West, *Gangtai* pop willingly collapses the West with the rest. Cultural forms are perhaps like snow: crystal clear when hard(ened), opaque when soft. This opacity explains why Appadurai remains silent regarding the soft.

The transparency of the voice of rock, with its insistence on authenticity, may be productive in creating rock as a distinct music world; it simultaneously confines the proliferation of meaning. The clarity of rock is countered by the opacity of pop. To appropriate de Certeau's thoughts on the everyday power of popular culture: The sound of pop "ceaselessly recreat[es] opacities and ambiguities—spaces of darkness and trickery—in the universe of technocratic transparency, [it] disappears into them and reappears again, taking no responsibility for the administration of a totality" (1984, p. 18). In the terms of Mikhael Bakhtin, the rock mythology is authoritative discourse (1984). Its unitary language lacks ambiguity and results from hegemony. According to Bakhtin, transparency in language represents a hegemonic closure of meaning; it signals the power of social interests on discourse (Garvey, 2000). To Bakhtin, "a unitary language gives expression to forces working toward concrete verbal and ideological unification and centralization" (1984, p. 271).

Absolute transparency is not possible, however. Unitary language must still navigate the multiple forces of *heteroglossia*—the contextual conditions that ensure that words uttered at different times, under different conditions, by different people, will gain a different meaning. Utterances are therefore "fundamentally 'impure' or hybridized constructions, complex amalgams of different points of view," evincing a multiplicity of actual and potential meanings (Gardiner, 2004, p. 37). By acknowledging the opacity of pop, I aim to explore the possibility of the appropriation and remolding of words and sounds, which increases the multiplicity of meaning; it propels (or in Bakhtin's language, seizes) the possibilities of new dialogues. Pop's opacity unfolds the *heteroglossia* of everyday life, as opposed to the unitary language of rock that represents "the ideological control of signification" (Garvey, 2000, p. 380).

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Theorizing the Opaque

> "I adore simple pleasures, they are the last refuge of the complex" (Oscar Wilde quoted in Sontag, 1964, p. 288).

Hong Kong-based pop singer, songwriter, and producer Anthony Wong offers a particularly relevant case for analyzing opaque cultural forms. In 1985, Anthony Wong formed, with Tats Lau, Tatming Pair; the duo scored numerous hits in Hong Kong over the next five years. After the electronic duo split up in 1990, Anthony Wong continued as solo artist and producer.[11] Wong's Tatming period has received some scholarly interest, again privileging its political and rebellious dimension (Chu, 2000; Lok, 1993). However, Wong's solo performance remains surprisingly understudied, as if the embedded meaning and values of the hard remain the major legitimizing force for studying *Gangtai* pop. Three planes can be mapped out that together constitute the opaqueness of pop: transient, intertextual and multivocal.

Transient Opacity

Pop captures the feelings of urban life, in particular its fluidity and mobility. Today's pop songs are widely known. Imposed on audiences in taxis, shops, and bars, their banal melodies are usually considered outdated within a few years. Anthony Wong's song "Ave Maria" is illustrative:[12]

> I want to be high every day/And change by night and day/Like Maria reincarnated/Pregnant by night and day/Look at the glamorous goddess/Forever branded on my skin/You look so beautiful/(illness contracted in daylight always breaks out in the dark)/I exist till now.

The song captures the sense of living in a state of flux, an experience characteristic of urban clusters like Hong Kong. Celebrated here are the banal, the temporal, the fluid, and the superficial. It might well be the power to spectacularize the present that makes pop so pervasive. The catchy sound that accompanies "Ave Maria" is as banal as it is effective. Once it settles down in the sonic parts of the brain, it is difficult to drive out. If we hear the same song a few years later, the sound will remind us of the year 1995, when the song hit the charts. The banal sound will have become old-fashioned, albeit heartily evoking memories of a time past. Pop's temporality paradoxically immortalizes it. To invoke the classic Kantian categories of time and space: whereas rock especially relates to space, pop relates to time.[13]

Anthony Wong claims to be inspired by the sounds of a German conductor, whose orchestra plays easy listening music.[14] This is merely one source of inspiration. Some songs reinterpret existing, older songs, some from the late diva of *Gangtai* pop, Teresa Teng, others from a popular Kung Fu series that Wong turns into an anthem for the street kids of Hong Kong; still others draw on the old decadent songs from Shanghai.[15] Anthony Wong is not so much defamiliarizing the familiar sounds of Hong Kong from the past and the present as playing with those sounds.

"I exist till now," Wong sings in "Ave Maria." The transient reinvention of the self is accomplished by conspicuous consumption, the driving force of Hong Kong culture.

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The familiarity of the song resembles a culture in constant flux: Its smooth surface comforts the listener when shopping, taking a taxi, or queueing up for the latest McDonalds Happy Meal. The song, which had "Day and Night of Causeway Bay" as its working title (Causeway Bay being the primary shopping area of Hong Kong), describes the fantasy of a girl about becoming a star. Whereas Maria's metamorphosis was destined by divine conception, the girl's transformation is induced by mundane shopping.[16] Given the song title, everyday banality is imbued with a sense of religiosity, but a religiosity that aspires not to eternity but to the here and now.

Intertextual Opacity

Pop stars often appear in movies, TV series, and commercials; they show up constantly in the tabloids and in TV quizzes. Thus, they are more media personalities than musicians. Pop stars are intertextual chameleons. They provide multiple possibilities for identifications and as such create a universe of their own (Witzleben, 1999). The world of *Gangtai* pop star Leon Lai is complex. It is at times sexy (when he dances in a wet shirt in his videoclip), violent (in his movies), or virtuous (when he helps UNICEF save the world in Brazil). He may motivate us to buy a new mobile phone, when he appears in an advertisement for the Orange network.

The intertextual dimension of pop intersects with a discourse of inauthenticity: pop is regarded as a plastic, commercial sound. If a pop singer can also be a movie star or an actor in commercials, he or she is not purely a musician, but fake. The self-referential, inauthentic aesthetics of pop challenge the notion of the authentic artist and the idea that true art is everlasting. Pop's artificial intertextuality counters the authenticating drive of other art worlds like rock. Pop not only refuses to disguise the importance of packaging, control, and artificiality—as rock does in order to produce the authentic artist—but even celebrates it. The pop song author—a crucial actor in the construction of authenticity—is absent and impossible to define, because the composer, lyricist, artist, record company, and producer are all intimately involved in producing the music.

During a 1999 performance in Berlin, Anthony Wong disappeared into a corner of the stage and continued singing, while an actor, centerstage, mimicked him. This act deliberately played with the artificiality of pop and celebrated the unnatural. In confusing the real with the fake, it was self-reflective. In a creative, self-reflective move, pop turns authenticity into a style. And in the pop world, style prevails over content, just as aesthetics triumphs over morality (Sontag, 1964).

Pop parodies the ideology of authenticity. In pop, Grossberg states, "the only possible claim to authenticity is derived from the knowledge and admission of your inauthenticity" (1993, p. 206). But, rather than reading it as a performance of inauthenticity, I read it as a Bakhtinian means of unfolding the different authenticities within popular music. I contend that pop's fiddling around with rock's unified language of authenticity is a parodic-ironic re-accentuation that, by making both listener and performer aware of the hegemony inscribed into the idea of

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authenticity, opens up ways to rethink it. This rethinking emerges from ironic laughter, a liberating, transcending, and uniting force (Bakhtin, 1986).

Multivocal Opacity

Given the disappearance of "the author" in pop, speaking pop in different voices becomes possible. Pop singers do not pretend to sing in one voice, but in many. In one song they may be entirely disillusioned about love, in the next entirely sanguine, then very strong, and then so fragile. This multivocality is further multiplied by the karaoke phenomenon, where each and every karaoke singer may appropriate songs with his or her voice. Karaoke enables Maria, who was walking in Causeway Bay in the shopping mall, to slip into her desired star persona for a few minutes. A K-song (*k-ge*), a relatively new term in the *Gangtai* pop music scene, refers to a pop song that is particularly good for karaoke, in the sense of sentiment and vocal range. The high proportion of duets in *Gangtai* pop follows the popularity of karaoke, further stimulating the multivocality of pop.

Wong remains deliberately ambiguous—or better, opaque—about his sexual identity, but he incorporates clearly homosexual themes. Such themes are never fixed, but are always open for negotiation, redefinition, and reinterpretation (Hawkins, 1997). Wong's play with the sexual self indicates his multivocal, ambiguous play with identities. He eroticizes his image, adding a queer layer to it, while resisting coming out as gay. Again, karaoke is important, since karaoke enables listeners to become implicated in that same play, to perform different sexual selves behind the doors of a karaoke bar that otherwise they cannot perform in public spaces.

In particular, since live performances are important sites for such identity plays, pop performances offer spectacular displays of the multivocal pop aesthetics. Performances by pop stars are above all visual and musical spectacles; the audience demands entertainment. Gone is the importance of "real" live music; playing endless riffs on a guitar until your clothes are soaked with sweat is not necessary to authenticate yourself. What counts in the world of pop is pleasure. The better you entertain the audience, the better you are. Just as he constantly changes his hair color, Anthony Wong changes his extravagant clothes several times during a performance. He wears a shiny silver outfit, then a costume of white feathers, and then a suit with the colors of the British flag.

Clarity and Opacity

Reading rock as hard cultural form explains the localizing aspirations of Chinese punkers. But Appadurai's conceptualization of the soft proves untenable. A large domain of popular culture, including the opaque sound of pop, remains under-theorized. I therefore propose recasting the hard–soft distinction into a clear–opaque dualism, to subvert this privileging of the hard, to offer a theoretical tool better geared to globalized cultural forms, and ultimately to reshuffle the (global) power mechanism often inherent in the option for the clear and hard.

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The rock mythology can be considered a hegemonic unified language, or, again using Bakhtin's words, an authoritative discourse. Since the imagined roots of this language are in the West, when Chinese rockers mimic the West, they are dismissed as merely copying the real West. Mimicry involves a hegemonic slippage of meaning that reifies the West as rock's center. Consequently, rockers attempt to sinify the sound of rock. In doing so, they try to gain their authenticity under the scrutinizing eyes of the West. Localization results in a profound hybridization of the Western sound. Chinese rock—and the popular and academic discourses surrounding it—thereby reifies two different authenticating boundaries: the real West versus the fake East, as well as the cultural north versus the commercial south, with the latter signified by the presumably commercial sound of *Gangtai* pop.

The "problem" of Chinese rock, and most likely of other similar clear, hard cultural forms, is not its praxis, but its discursive framing. This reifies the aforementioned ideological and spatial boundaries. Critiquing the global distribution of discursive power over cultural forms, I argue that foregrounding the opaque sound of pop opens up mental pathways for rethinking the discursive clarity of rock. Pop unfolds what Bakhtin may call the generic *heteroglossia* of popular music, and consequently renders the clarity of the rock mythology more opaque. Pop does not use the direct shock tactics of punk or the anger that characterizes much rock music. The topics are more mundane. Like the sounds, pop lyrics often constitute a surface, transient noise that resonates deeply with everyday life. Those lyrics and sounds are not only knots of a wider intertextual web, they also speak in different voices, through different media. As an opaque cultural form, pop is characterized by a transient banality, an intertextual artificiality, and a multivocal ambiguity.

Pop performs an artificial self; it spectacularizes the present. Pop's banality and artificiality render the music profoundly ambiguous, and it is this ambiguity that makes pop such a popular yet opaque musical form. Whereas the clear sound of rock is eager to localize itself, the sound of pop remains opaque and ungrounded. Rock has its imagined center in the West, whereas pop is neither here nor there. Pop is located everywhere. Above all, it is located in the present. Pop relates to time as rock relates to space. Studying the indigenization of pop will be difficult, just as articulating the coherent set of meanings and values that constitute the pop mythology will be difficult. But precisely because of this opacity, I want to plead for a deeper theoretical understanding of the globalization of opaque cultural forms. But here lies the academic challenge: how to theorize the sound of pop, which so easily traverses geographical boundaries? How to capture its sonic power, as reflected by its sheer popularity? How to translate an analysis of the opaque into a critical interrogation of the clear and hard?

Studying a hard cultural form like rock risks reiterating, if not reifying, the paradigm imposed by the hard itself, situating the West once again at the center, as its perceived origin. The shift towards the opaque, not the constitutive soft of the hard, is a shift towards the non-authoritative global, an initiation of an unclear but essentially different set of meanings and values with multiple centers. This may help interrogate

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the unitary language of the rock mythology and its constitutive hegemonic (Western) forces.

Notes

[1] "The West" is as problematic a category as "the East" or "Asia." In the case of rock music, the United States and the United Kingdom are, in particular, considered the authentic homeland.

[2] It is now a truism in academic writing (though far less in journalistic writing) that, rather than producing a homogenized world, globalization leads to increasing heterogenization in terms of culture, economy, and politics (Appadurai, 1996; Colista & Leshner, 1998; Hannerz, 1992; Kraidy, 1999; Robertson, 1995).

[3] I use Derrida's idea of constitutive outside to acknowledge how the Other, here pop, is crucial and hence constitutive for the formation of a "self," here rock. In the words of Mouffe, "By affirming that an object has inscribed, in its very being, something other than itself and that as a result everything is constructed as *difference,* the notion of the 'constitutive outside' reveals that being cannot be conceived as pure 'presence' or 'objectivity'" (2000, p. 147). The difference is, in the case of rock, hegemonic, as rock mythology downplays pop as rock's inauthentic Other.

[4] Combining the *Gang* of Xiang Gang (Hong Kong) with the *Tai* of Taiwan. Music magazines as well as radio stations have their own music charts in mainland China.

[5] As explained by the creative director of Sony Taiwan (personal communication, June 8, 2004). This article is based on field research in Beijing and Hong Kong in 1997 (six months), 1999 (one month), 2000 (two months), and 2004 (three months), during which research assistant Qin Liwen was of invaluable help.

[6] Although I am aware of the danger of essentializing notions such as "the West" versus "the East," given the cultural proximity of continental Europe to the UK and the U.S., the Netherlands can be (and in China certainly is) considered a part of "the West."

[7] Both magazines are in Chinese, but their names appear on their covers in English as well as Chinese. *Modern Sky Magazine* applies a more fashionable style, and is directly linked to a record company. *Music Heaven* is more sober. By 2004 both titles were defunct. Two new magazines are *So Rock! Magazine* and *Rock*. Like their predecessors, the covers of both magazines present Chinese and English bands and an accompanying CD introduces both Western and Chinese rock music. Interestingly, *So Rock! Magazine* gives a lot of attention to bands from outside Beijing.

[8] Examples of translations of genre terms are: underground punk (*dixia pengke*), punk pop (*liuxing pengke*), thrash metal (*bianchi jinshu*), hardcore punk (*yinghe pengke*), and drum'n'bass (*guyu beisi*) (Yuen, 1999).

[9] Both on concert flyers and on CD jackets, band names are often indicated in Chinese and English.

[10] The ideological horizon of punk in Beijing is remarkably broader than that of its Western counterparts, just as its class background differs: punk in Beijing is merely a middle- and upper-class phenomenon. By 2004, Peter had left the punk scene to work for an advertising agency.

[11] In December 2004, the duo played four reunion concerts, all sold out, at the Hong Kong Coliseum, accommodating 10,000 fans per show.

[12] Translated by its lyricist, Chow Yiufai.

[13] I am indebted to Giselinde Kuipers for this observation, which deserves further study.

[14] To Anthony Wong, the music of James Last, who leads a German orchestra known for its easy listening music, resembles the muzak played in Hong Kong shopping malls.

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[15] Under diverse colonial influences in the 1930s and 1940s, Shanghai produced its own music stars whose songs resemble those of, for example, the German diva Marlene Dietrich. The best known singer of that period is Zhou Xuan (Steen, 2000b).

[16] The interpretation of this song is based on an interview (March 3, 2003) with its lyric writer, Chow Yiufai.

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MEDIA CULTURE &SOCIETY

Hybridity and the rise of Korean popular culture in Asia

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Over the past few years, an increasing amount of Korean popular cultural content – including television dramas, movies, pop songs and their associated celebrities – has gained immense popularity in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and other East and Southeast Asian countries.[1] News media and trade magazines have recognized the rise of Korean popular culture in Asia by dubbing it the 'Korean wave' (*Hallyu* or *Hanryu* in Korean). The Associated Press reported in March 2002: 'Call it "kim chic". All things Korean – from food and music to eyebrow-shaping and shoe styles – are the rage across Asia, where pop culture has long been dominated by Tokyo and Hollywood' (Visser, 2002). According to *Hollywood Reporter*, 'Korea has transformed itself from an embattled cinematic backwater into the hottest film market in Asia' (Segers, 2000).

Yet a few years ago Korean popular culture did not have such export capacity, and was not even critically acclaimed by scholars. For example, *The Oxford History of World Cinema*, published in 1996, is alleged to have covered 'every aspect of international film-making' but does not make any reference to Korean cinema, although it pays tribute to Taiwanese, Hong Kong, Chinese and Japanese films (Nowell-Smith, 1996).[2] Korean music was also ignored by researchers, as can be seen in the following comment in *World Music: The Rough Guide*, published in 1994: 'The country has developed economically at a staggering pace, but in terms of popular music there is nothing to match the remarkable contemporary sounds of Indonesia, Okinawa, or Japan' (Kawakami and Fisher, 1994). The tremendous disparity between such evaluations as noted above, and the recent success of the Korean media, has stimulated

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me to learn, theorize and explain their growth and increased circulation in Asia.

The major frame of reference in international communication research today is globalization, a word that has become part of everyday vocabulary. The term refers to the process and context of the world becoming integrated, and it is most exuberantly used in corporate slogans. If we are satisfied with this uncritical discourse of a seamless globe, our understanding of globalization will be entrenched in the image of Chinese (or Thai) people patronizing Starbucks – an image that appears on a regular basis in the mainstream media (see, for example, Truehart, 1998).

There are roughly three strains of globalization discourse. The first approach views globalization as an outgrowth of cultural imperialism following the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) discussions of the 1970s. According to this approach, forces of globalization are usually American, and they subjugate weaker, national/cultural identities. While this approach has retained considerable resonance within the political discourse of developing countries, especially with the rise of foreign television programming in their territories, it has been critiqued by some scholars as being overly simplistic (Chadha and Kavoori, 2000; Morley and Robins, 1995). In fact, it is no longer the case that a one-way flow of Western media content exists due to the increasing contraflow in international media (Thussu, 2000) and the growing plurality of regional media players based on what Straubhaar (1991) calls the 'cultural proximity' factor (also, see Hoskins and Mirus, 1988). In addition, this approach has missed the complexity of audience reception of media content (Wasko et al., 2001). Finally, there is a danger of romanticizing and fetishizing 'national' culture (Morris, 2002).

In the second view, globalization is understood as an outcome of the workings of the project of modernity (Giddens, 1991). According to Tomlinson, it is 'the spread of the culture of modernity itself. This is a discourse of historical change, of "development", of a global movement towards . . . capitalism' (1991: 90). This argument is already visible in Weber's (2000) idea that capitalism is a natural extension of the progress of reason and freedom associated with the Enlightenment. In more recent sociological studies, Harvey (1990) and Jameson (1996) argue that humanity has entered a new historical epoch since the 1970s (moving from modernity to postmodernity; from capitalism to late capitalism), made possible by the development of new technologies. Some political economists critique this notion by arguing that the conflation of modernity with capitalism is wrong. According to Wood (1998), when the 18th-century French bourgeoisie – supposedly the source of the project of modernity – fought against the aristocracy, they fought for universalism and human emancipation. On the other hand, the main aim of capitalism is not the improvement of humanity, but the improvement of property. Therefore, if

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capitalism has anything to do with modernity, it is that capitalism has destroyed modernity. Wood argues that the geographic term 'globalization' is imperfect as a description of and explanation for the present era. It is better characterized as the universalization of capitalism, with capitalism penetrating into every aspect of life, society and culture. In a similar vein, McChesney (1998) criticizes the notion of globalization as an outcome of modernity because it tends to provide an aura of 'inevitability' to the rise of neoliberalism and concentrated corporate control (and hyper-commercialization) of the media in the present era.

The third approach comprises discourses that identify cultural hybridity and investigate power relations between periphery and centre from the perspective of postcolonial criticism (Kraidy, 2002; Shome and Hegde, 2002). Paradoxically, globalization encourages local peoples to redicover the 'local' that they have neglected or forgotten in their drive towards Western-imposed modernization during the past decades (Featherstone, 1993; Robertson, 1995). There are two distinct modes of re-localization in non-Western political and cultural formations. While some forces and groups – such as Hindu nationalists in India, and the Taleban in Afghanistan – campaign for a return to the imagined 'good old days', others – such as the Asian tiger economies – revisit or strengthen their own developmental routes by embracing and utilizing the new glocal economic situation (Chadha and Kavoori, 2000). In this transnational context of a meeting between the periphery and the centre, hybridity reveals itself as new practices of cultural and performative expression. For example, locals appropriate global goods, conventions and styles, including music, cuisine, cinema, fashion and so on, and inscribe their everyday meaning into them (Bhabha, 1994; Young, 2003).

In engaging the postcolonial notion of hybridity, I do not view it simply as a descriptive device, but as a 'communicative practice constitutive of, and constituted by, sociopolitical and economic arrangement' (Kraidy, 2002: 317). Therefore, the political economic relations immanent in the first and second lines of discourse are inevitably involved in an under-standing of Korean media development as a metaphor for thinking about the complex relations of cultures to the forces of globalization. It is also important to reveal the political potential inherent in hybridity, following Bhabha's (1994) observation that natives and minorities strike back at imperial domination by recourse to the hybridization strategy. Given this, the Korean wave phenomenon is an interesting case to study in the context of international communication. First, we shall examine the role of the Korean state in order to understand how the periphery addresses the context of global media power differences. And, second, we shall inquire into how Koreans appropriate global popular cultural forms to express their local sentiment and culture.

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This article is composed of the following sections: (1) What is the Korean wave?; (2) Korean media liberalization and development; (3) Cultural hybridization and the Korean pop music industry; and, finally, (4) Conclusion and discussion. In the next section, I will examine the processes by which Korean television dramas, music and movies have come to appeal to audiences in neighbouring countries. Through this, we shall understand the degree of popularity that Korean media content and its associated celebrities have enjoyed, and the reactions of Korean businesses and the government to this surprising 'national' achievement.

What is the Korean wave?

For a start, the Korean wave is indebted to the media liberalization that swept across Asia in the 1990s. The Korean wave seems to have come into existence sometime around 1997, when the national China Central Television Station (CCTV) aired a Korean television drama *What is Love All About?*, which turned out to be a big hit. In response to popular demand, CCTV re-aired the program in 1998 in a prime-time slot, and recorded the second-highest ratings ever in the history of Chinese television (Heo, 2002). In 1999, *Stars in My Heart*, another Korean television drama serial, became a big hit in China and Taiwan. Since then, Korean television dramas have rapidly taken up airtime on television channels in countries such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Vietnam and Indonesia, which saw media liberalization beginning in the 1990s. In addition, the recent economic crisis in Asia has brought about a situation where Asian buyers prefer the cheaper Korean programming; Korean television dramas were a quarter of the price of Japanese ones, and a tenth of the price of Hong Kong television dramas as of 2000 (Lee, 2003). Korean television programming exports have increased so dramatically that in 2003, they earned $37.5 million, compared with $12.7 million in 1999 (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2004).[3]

In the late 1990s, a regional music television channel, Channel V, featured Korean pop music videos, creating a huge K-pop fan base in Asia.[4] In particular, the boy band H.O.T. found itself topping the pop charts in China and Taiwan in 1998; the band was so popular that album sales continued to surge, even after the band's break-up in mid-2001. Following H.O.T.'s successful concert in Beijing in February 2000, many K-pop stars such as Ahn Jae-wook (an actor-cum-singer who starred in *Stars in My Heart*), boy bands NRG and Shinhwa, and girl band Baby V.O.X. have held concerts in China, attracting crowds of more than 30,000 Chinese youth for each concert (Seoul Broadcasting System [SBS], 2001). In 2002, Korean teenage pop sensation BoA's debut album reached the number one spot on the Oricon Weekly Chart, Japan's

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equivalent of the American Billboard Charts; this firmly established BoA in the Japanese music market (Visser, 2002). Now, most of Korea's top-notch singers take their concerts to Beijing, Hong Kong and Tokyo and often record their albums in the local languages before marketing their albums in these countries.

In 1999, a Korean blockbuster, *Shiri*, was shown in Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore, receiving critical acclaim and drawing large audiences (for example, it earned $14 million at the Japanese box office) (Kim, 2000). Since then, Korean films have become regular fixtures in cinemas across Asia. For example, among the nine movies screened on 9 August 2003 at the cinema Cathay Cineleisure Orchard, Singapore, three were Korean, including *Conduct Zero*, *Marriage is a Crazy Thing* and *My Tutor Friend* (sneak preview). When the Korean film *Joint Security Area* opened in Japan on 26 May 2001, it became the first Asian import in the Japanese film market to be shown on as many as 280 screens (Kim, 2001). The success of Korean cinema in Asia has now spread to North America and Europe, with more and more Korean films attracting theatre-goers in these continents (Frater, 2003a). Major US-based distribution companies such as Fox and Columbia have started to take Korean movies on for their global distribution runs (Frater, 2003b). Furthermore, Hollywood studios are eager to buy remake rights to Korean films. For example, DreamWorks SKG paid $2 million for the remake rights to the Korean horror film, *A Tale of Two Sisters*; that is twice what the studio paid for the Japanese horror movie, *The Ring*, a few years ago (Ho, 2003).

Against this backdrop, Korean pop stars have become cultural icons in the region. One example is Ahn Jae-wook, who has commanded tremendous popularity in China, as evidenced by his clinching number one spot in a poll of the most popular celebrities in 2001, even surpassing Hollywood actor Leonardo DiCaprio who was then at the apex of his global popularity (*Australian*, 2002). Korean stars have had a big impact on consumer culture, including food, fashion, make-up trends and even plastic surgery. It is not uncommon to find Asian youth decorating their backpacks, notebooks and rooms with photographs of Korean stars. In the streets of Hanoi and Beijing, it is common to find young members of the 'Korea Tribe', or Koreanophiles, sporting multiple earrings, baggy hip-hop pants, and the square-toed shoes of Seoul fashion. So popular are Korean actresses Lee Young-ae, Song Hae Gyo, Kim Hee Sun and Jeon Ji-hyun that it has been reported that their wanna-be fans in Taiwan and China request their facial features when going for cosmetic surgery (Joins.com, 2001; *Straits Times*, 2002a, 2002b).

Given their infatuation with Korean culture, the regional fans are eager to learn the Korean language and travel to Korea (SBS, 2001). For example, at Inlingua School of Language in Singapore, the number of students learning Korean had increased by 60 percent in 2003 compared to

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2001 because of the interest generated by Korean dramas (Sage, 2005). When Ahn Jae-wook held a weekend 'Meet Ahn Jae-wook camp' in a resort near Seoul in August 2001, about 250 Chinese youth participated in it. They willingly paid a fee of $465, which was several times the average monthly salary in China (Joins.com, 2001). Quite a few travel agencies in the region sell television drama-themed group tours to Korea with titles like 'Best of Korean drama trailer deluxe tour'.[5]

Park Young Su, assistant bureau chief at the Korea National Tourism Organization (KNTO), said: 'Thanks to the success of shows like *Autumn in My Heart* and *Winter Sonata*, we've had 130,000 tourists from China, Taiwan, Hongkong, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand coming to visit the locations where the dramas were filmed' (Lee, 2003). The number of Taiwanese who visited Korea in 2003 totalled 180,000, a 50 percent increase from the previous year's figure of 120,000 (Park, 2004).

In this context, Korean big business is making efforts to transform Korean wave fans into consumers of Korean products and services. Samsung Electronics in China successfully took advantage of Ahn Jae-wook's popularity by hiring him as a model for its computer monitor commercials. In Vietnam, LG Household and Health Care saw its sales skyrocket after it featured Korean actress Kim Nam-ju in its advertisement. Since then, LG has 'notched the first place in brand recognition among foreign cosmetic brands in Vietnam', recalls Oh Kang-kook, public relations manager of the company (Joins.com, 2001). In order to reinforce the existing 'Korean boom' in Vietnam, LG Electronics is reported to have provided Vietnamese television stations with several Korean television dramas for free, even covering the cost of dubbing (*Nae-oe Economic Daily*, 2001). The Koreans have just begun to realize that culture can be as profitable as semi-conductors or cars.

The growing popularity of Korean pop culture has more implications than simply earning foreign currency, especially considering that the country has had some diplomatic friction with its neighbours in the past decades. The Vietnamese still vividly remember that Korean soldiers fought against their Liberation Army during the Vietnam War. The Taiwanese have felt betrayed by Korea ever since Seoul suddenly severed its diplomatic relations with Taipei in order to establish new ties with Beijing in 1992. In this respect, Korean pop stars have contributed to improving Korea's foreign relations. In one instance, Korean actor Jang Dong-gun and actress Kim Nam-ju enjoy such popularity in Vietnam that the Vietnamese have even labelled them their 'national' stars. The then Korean president, Kim Dae Jung, even invited the pair to the dinner he hosted for Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong when the latter visited Korea on 23 August 2001 (*Australian*, 2002). BoA, who made the cover of the French *Le Monde* in July 2002 as an icon of cultural exchange between Korea and Japan, were invited to the two countries' summit conference in

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June 2003 in Tokyo; Japan was responsible for a brutal occupation of Korea during the period between 1910 and 1945 (Macintyre, 2002). In all, Koreans heartily welcome the fruits of the Korean wave in the midst of recovery from the 1997 economic crisis, and the subsequent International Monetary Fund (IMF)-directed economic restructuring, which they often refer to as 'national humiliation'.

Is the Korean wave simply a fortuitous event or well-timed phenomenon? In the next section I argue that the current commercial success of Korean media is an outgrowth of Korea's struggle for cultural continuity when confronted by the threat of global cultural domination.

Korean media liberalization and development

The period from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s was an important turning point for the Korean media, with the introduction of liberalization in the sector. Until 1987, only domestic film companies were allowed to import and distribute foreign movies in the market. Under US pressure, in 1988 the Korean government allowed Hollywood studios to distribute films directly to local theatres and, by 1994, more than 10 Korean film importers had shut down their businesses. This opening of the market to Hollywood majors affected the vitality of the local film industry in general, such that the number of films produced annually fell from 121 in 1991 to 63 in 1994. In 1994, Hollywood's market share in the local market reached 80 percent, from 53 percent in 1987 (Shin, 1995; Yi, 1994). Therefore Korean cinema, which was ignored by local audiences, who considered it poorly made, boring and often maudlin, was drawing its last breath.

A rapid increase in foreign television programming as a result of television channel expansion was also a matter of concern. In its first year of cable television services in 1995, Korea imported $42.82 million worth of television programming, marking a sharp increase from the previous year's foreign programming import figure of $19.86 million (Korea Press Foundation, 2002). Further, the spillover of satellite broadcasting, such as NHK Satellite and Star TV, posed a serious challenge to political sovereignty and cultural integrity.

In this context, two factors awakened Koreans to the importance of culture and its industrial development. In 1993, when the common view was that there was no hope for the revival of the local film industry, the film *Sopyonje* unexpectedly topped the box-office chart with more than a million admissions – the first Korean film ever to attract such a large audience. The film also received unprecedented invitations for screenings in art theatres, and on college campuses in Japan, the United States and some European countries. *Sopyonje* is a film about an itinerant family that earns a living performing *pansori*, the traditional popular musical form of

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Korea in which a story is sung by a singer, accompanied by a drummer. Although *pansori* was designated as a national cultural treasure by the government, it was neglected once the country was subjected to American culture.[6] The film, which portrayed a declining or 'derelict' traditional folk music genre, and was largely shot in a beautiful rural landscape, revived nostalgia for and public interest in 'our culture'; the family in the film, on the verge of starvation, symbolized the fate of Korean cinema embattled by Hollywood. *Sopyonje* was released when people were beginning to pay attention to leisure, culture and 'self' – aspects they had gone without during the decades of Korean industrialization.

Against this backdrop, a government report awakened the Korean people to the cultural industry's potential contribution to the national economy. In 1994, the Presidential Advisory Board on Science and Technology submitted a report to the president suggesting that the government promote media production as the national strategic industry by taking note of overall revenue (from theatre exhibition, television syndication, licensing, etc.) from the Hollywood blockbuster, *Jurassic Park*, which was worth the foreign sales of 1.5 million Hyundai cars. The comparison of a film to Hyundai cars – which at that time were considered the 'pride of Korea' – was apt enough to awaken the Korean public to the idea of culture as an industry. This revelation became a household topic for quite a long time, in accordance with the globalization-cum-information age discourse. Following the report, the Korean government established the Cultural Industry Bureau within the Ministry of Culture and Sports in 1994, and instituted the Motion Picture Promotion Law in 1995 in order to lure corporate and investment capital into the local film industry.

In their efforts to create a cultural industry, Koreans emulated and appropriated the American media system with the mantra 'Learning from Hollywood'. It was argued that Korea should promote large media companies as well as a more commercial media market. A media policy report submitted to the Korean government in 1995 reads as follows: 'Korea needs to encourage vertically integrated media conglomerates. . . . While there is a concern for the projected monopoly of information, in order to cope with the large-scale TNCs, we need media conglomerates to match their size and resources' (Kim, 1996).[7] In this regard, sprawling family-owned, big business groups in Korea, or *chaebol*, such as Samsung, Hyundai and Daewoo, to name a few, expanded into the media sector to include production, import, distribution and exhibition. In the process, the conventional Korean developmental regimen of an export-oriented economy continued, as evidenced by a remark made by a senior manager of the Daewoo group's film division: 'It is our duty and responsibility to export Korean films overseas' (Groves, 1997). In the context of the public's rising interest in 'our culture' provoked by *Sopyonje*, and the improved film-viewing environment enabled by *chaebol* investment, including expanding

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film choices and more convenient theatre facilities, Korean cinema gradually began to attract local audiences. Yet the *chaebol* participation in the media ended suddenly with the economic crisis that began in late 1997. Many *chaebol* folded their media businesses under the IMF-directed restructuring mandate (Shim, 2002).

The short-lived cultural (especially film) industry boom of the mid-1990s characterized by government promotion and entry of the Korean big business was, however, a 'workout' that strengthened the Korean film industry. Big business introduced sophisticated business know-how, such as audience research in film production and marketing, to the mom-and-pop Korean film industry; as noted by a film producer: 'Like Hollywood, we are spending a lot on marketing and research, so our data on the audience is very exact' (Chon, 2001: 49). Each stage in the film-making process became more rigorous; it was reported that the scenario for *Friend*, a 2001 Korean blockbuster, was revised 21 times. Further, in order to better analyse and exploit audience trends, audiences are often invited to become involved in scriptwriting, script revision and editing processes (Shim, 2001).

Since the mid-1990s, there was an unprecedented entry of fresh talent, such as MBAs and graduates from prestigious universities, into film companies, which offered decent pay and promised secure 'life-time' employment under *chaebol* ownership. When many *chaebol* folded their film businesses in the vortex of the Asian financial crisis, some of these big-business-trained personnel remained in the film industry at large, playing pivotal roles in leading Korean cinema into the 21st century. Besides, this period saw a new generation of creative young directors, actors and other personnel with formal training from film schools all over the world enter the local film industry, which had long been dominated by those who had learnt their craft on the job (Oh, 2001). When *Cine 21*, a major weekly film magazine, compiled 'Top 50 powers in the Korean film industry' in its 1 May 2001 issue, seven of the top ten most influential persons were in their 30s (*Cine 21*, 2001). Enjoying the more lenient censorship policy, the new generation dealt with such sensitive issues as North–South Korean relations and homosexuality. The long-awaited Korean cinema renaissance was on the horizon.

In 1999, to everyone's surprise, the Korean action thriller *Shiri* attracted 5.8 million theatre-goers (with 2.44 million in Seoul alone),[8] surpassing the local theatre attendance record set by the Hollywood film *Titanic*. It was revealed that a venture capital firm, KDB Capital, invested $333,000 in the movie and earned returns of more than 300 percent. The financial vacuum left by the exit of the *chaebol* was filled by venture capitalists and investment firms. After having waited so long for alternatives to Hollywood fare, local audiences responded favourably to new Korean cinema, which was equipped with cash, management capacity and creativity. In

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February 2001, a military mystery entitled *Joint Security Area* broke the box-office record set by *Shiri*, drawing an audience of 2.5 million in Seoul. Another venture capital firm, KTB Network, earned a return of 250 percent profit for its $707,000 investment in this film. In summer 2001, a gangland saga, *Friend*, again beat the box office record by selling 8.2 million admission tickets nationwide (Leong, 2003).

As proof of the improved quality of Korean cinema, a number of Korean movies have been invited to compete in top-class film festivals around the world each year, and have won awards. In 2002, Korean director Im Kwon-taek won the Best Director award at the Cannes Film Festival for his film *Chihwaseon*, and Lee Chang-dong won the award for Best Direction at Venice Film Festival for *Oasis*. In 2004, director Park Chan-wook won the Grand Prix (second prize) for his film *Old Boy* at Cannes, and Kim Ki-duk won the Best Director awards at both the Berlin International Film Festival (for *Samaritan Girl*) and Venice (*Bin Jip: Empty House*). Interestingly, Koreans have garnered best director awards at the three most prestigious international film festivals within a span of two years.

In 2004, Korean cinema was swept up in the box-office success of two local films. In February 2004, *Silmido*, the film about a secret project to assassinate former North Korean leader Kim Il-sung in the early 1970s, set a new box-office record by attracting 10 million theatre-goers. On 3 April 2004, *TaeGukGi: The Brotherhood of War*, which is about two brothers whose lives were torn apart by the Korean War, smashed the box-office record with 11.09 million admission tickets nationwide. The movie was even expected to reach the 12 million theatre-goer mark (B. Kim, 2004). Aided by a string of blockbusters, Korean-made films came to occupy 53.5 percent of the market share in terms of admissions in 2003, up from 15.9 percent in 1993. Korea is now the seventh largest film market in the world, with the total number of theatre audiences nationwide in 2003 standing at around 119 million, up from 47 million in 1992. Following domestic success, the Korean film industry exported 164 movies earning a total revenue of $30,979,000 in 2003, which was a huge increase from 1993's figure of 14 movies and $173,838 in earnings (Korean Film Council, 2004). Korean cinema especially won the hearts of Asian audiences, with sales to the Asian region occupying more than 60 percent of its total foreign sales; this resulted in Korea being touted the 'New Hong Kong' (Leong, 2003).

The Korean government's support of the cultural industry was noteworthy. President Kim Dae Jung, who called himself the 'President of Culture' when he inaugurated himself as president in 1998, established the Basic Law for the Cultural Industry Promotion in 1999 by allocating a total budget of $148.5 million to this project (Choe, 1999). In this favourable environment, a number of international film festivals have sprouted up in Korea, such as Pusan International Film Festival, which is now considered

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the best of its kind in Asia. Through these, foreign buyers are exposed to Korean films (Shin, 2003). During the Kim Dae Jung administration, the cultural sector's budget relative to the total government budget per fiscal year increased from 484.8 billion won, or 0.60 percent of the total government budget in 1998, to 1,281.5 billion won, or 1.15 percent of the total government budget in 2002 (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2003).[9]

As noted earlier, in developing their cultural industry, Koreans have emulated and appropriated American cultural industries with 'Learning from Hollywood' as a slogan. Through this learning process, Koreans have provided their own twists to the foreign styles and forms, by blending and adding their indigenous characteristics and unique flourishes in innovative ways. The next section provides a discussion of Korean pop music as an illustration of such cultural hybridization and examines the transformation of the music industry.

Cultural hybridization and the Korean pop music industry

Until the 1980s, the Korean pop music scene had been dominated by what were loosely categorized as Korean ballads and *ppongjjak*. The Korean ballad is characterized by mellow sounds and amorous lyrics influenced by Western styles such as easy listening and American folk music (for example, songs by Simon and Garfunkel). *Ppongjjak* is what Koreans onomatopoeically call the Japanese *enka*-influenced musical style, assimilated into Korea around the turn of the 20th century.[10] Largely associated with the pathos of the older generation, *ppongjjak* has experienced periodic ups and downs, with the government banning some of the hit songs in the genre for having elements of 'morbid' Japanese aesthetics (Provine et al., 2000).

In general, the Korean pop music market was not vibrant before the 1990s. Korean youth preferred American pop songs to local ones; live concerts were not common and, when they were held, they were on a small scale. In fact, the two public television networks, Korea Broadcasting System (KBS) and Munhwa Broadcasting Company (MBC), controlled music distribution and held sway over the direction of music consumption. There was no authoritative record sales chart, except for weekly chart shows on television, which served as the only criteria by which songs and singers were judged popular, and by which audiences decided which albums they should buy. Furthermore, musicians were required to perform with the television networks' in-house studio bands and dancers, which deprived the country of the opportunity for diverse elements of local pop music to grow spontaneously. These conditions influenced musical styles to fit into the specifications of the television medium, such that songs usually had a long instrumental introduction and an extended fade-out, to allow

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emcees to make some announcements, or a link between one song and another (Howard, 2002).

Transformation comes from the 'new and unexpected combination of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs' noted by Rushdie (1991: 394), thus changes originating from globalization trends and democratic reforms began to transform the local music market. After Seoul's 1988 lifting of restrictions on foreign travel, the country became more exposed to the outside world. With the sharp rise in disposable income in the early 1990s, many Koreans purchased satellite dishes to pick up Japanese stations and Star TV. Against this backdrop, Korean music fans came to have a better grasp of global music trends, and hungered for new tunes from local musicians. According to Howard: 'Political freedoms were mirrored by musical experimentation, as musicians began to realize that they had to attempt to be distinct if they were to succeed in gaining an audience. . . . [M]ore and more musicians appropriated foreign music styles' (2002: 88–9). In this context, the three-man band Seo Taiji and Boys, composed of underground bassist-singer-songwriter Seo Taiji and two rapper-dancers, released the single 'I Know' in 1992. This was arguably the first rap track in Korea, and it excited local music listeners, who were fed up with the ballads and *ppongjjak* that lacked dynamism and musical experimentation.

Until the group disbanded in 1996, Seo Taiji received tremendous support from Korean music fans. The fans were so ardent that when the Korean Broadcasting Ethics Committee ordered that the lyrics of the song 'Regret the Times' be changed before public release in 1995, the enraged fans protested and eventually the government had to abolish the censorship system. Seo Taiji's music was so critically acclaimed that in 1998, when a group of music critics and industry people compiled the best 100 albums in Korean music history, all four of the band's albums were included. Furthermore, Seo Taiji was chosen by *The Monthly Joong-Ang* in 1994 as one of 50 people who had changed Korean society since 1945 (Taiji Mania, 2003). Seo Taiji and Boys literally revolutionized the Korean music industry as we know it on the following grounds.

First, Seo Taiji and Boys' popularity was based on innovative hybridization of music. The band creatively mixed genres like rap, soul, rock and roll, techno, punk, hardcore and even *ppongjjak*, and invented a unique musical form which 'employs rap only during the verses, singing choruses in a pop style' (Morelli, 2001: 250) with dynamic dance movements. Each of their albums was in itself a musical experimentation. In their first album, they showed how Korean rap would sound. In their second, they experimented with a crossover between 'high and low' music by inviting the traditional Korean percussionist Kim Deoksu and modern jazz saxophonist Lee Jeongsik to play for their album recordings. From their third album, they became 'vocal' in sending out social messages, with an attempt at

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gangsta rap. Since Seo Taiji, the syncretism of a wide range of musical genres in one album has become commonplace in Korea. What has come into existence is a hybrid but distinctively Korean pop style.

Second, Seo Taiji and Boys not only expanded the scope of K-pop but also the scale of the music market. In the small, dormant market, the group's first album was 'the fastest-selling record since 1982' (Suh, 1992). During its four years of activity, the band was estimated to have earned more than 10 billion won from record sales (6 million copies of their four albums), music video sales, concerts and other commercial activities (Byun, 1998). With an endless crop of imitation groups of Seo Taiji and Boys, sales of home-grown pop acts have since outpaced foreign albums by four to one, the Recording Industry Association of Korea reports (Hau and Madden, 2001). As of 2002, Korea is the second largest music market in Asia with $300 million album sales per year (Macintyre, 2002).

Third, Seo Taiji and Boys did not sing of romantic (and often sad) sentiments, as did the singers of ballads and *ppongjjak*; rather, they represented adolescents' thoughts and emotions in their songs. They criticized the ills of the education system, taunted adults for their snobbery, and showed the people's desire for North–South Korean unification, thus increasing social consciousness of pop music. The fact that Seo Taiji was a high school dropout but managed to earn social respect and succeed financially influenced parents' ideas about stardom. In a country where the average family viewed university entrance examinations for children as being of the utmost importance, stardom came to be considered a new option for success. It was reported that some parents even constructed spaces in their homes for their children to practise dancing, which exemplified a shift in the Confucian values of society (Morelli, 2001).

Finally, Seo Taiji and Boys challenged the broadcasting network-controlled music market. As Seo Taiji chose the other members of the band based on their dancing abilities, the band did not need the resident dancers of the television networks. Since he owned a personal state-of-the-art music studio, Seo Taiji did not rely on television networks' facilities and music directors. The group were the first pop stars to enjoy freedom from television networks' direction, deciding by themselves when they would appear on television shows. As the networks' influence weakened, the paths to stardom diversified to expand the roles of record companies and talent agencies expanded. Since the mid-1990s, record company scouts have held dance competitions and mass auditions, which have led to the manufacture of boy bands such as H.O.T., Sechs Kies, Uptown and Shinhwa; these would probably never have developed without Seo Taiji's success.

If Seo Taiji is credited with transforming Korean pop music, elevating its status in society and setting the standard for Korean dance music that would later suit the tastes of Asian fans, it is Lee Suman, founder of SM

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Entertainment in 1989, who is credited with the industrialization of the star-making process in K-pop. In a market in which the door to stardom was largely controlled by the networks, Lee challenged the system by 'cloning' talent and grooming pop stars. The best representation of Lee's products is H.O.T., a boy band that debuted in 1996 and exploded in popularity, with more than 10 million CD and record sales in Korea during its existence between 1996 and 2001. Before manufacturing H.O.T., Lee conducted a survey of teenage girls to find out what they wanted from their idols. Armed with knowledge from his research, Lee sifted through thousands of raw audition tapes and selected aspiring idols based on their looks as well as on their dancing and singing abilities. After almost two years of rigorous training in singing, dancing and other aspects to elevate them in the music market, SM Entertainment released H.O.T.'s first album, which sold 1.5 million copies (Howard, 2002; Macintyre, 2002)

Following the success of his boy band, Lee has captured the market with other properties, such as all-girl trio S.E.S., and BoA. Eyeing the Asian market, Lee made his teenage band members go through language training. In fact, two members of S.E.S. were selected partly because of their fluency in Japanese and English respectively. From the beginning of BoA's music career, Lee sent the pop sensation to Japan during school recesses to learn the language and to tap into the Japanese market. After achieving some success there, SM Entertainment is currently sounding out the possibility of BoA becoming a success in the Chinese market. With a series of successes in its portfolio, SM Entertainment became the first Korean entertainment agency to be listed on Korea's KOSDAQ stock market. Following SM's success, many like-minded talent agencies have, through similar star-making processes, appeared and gradually transformed the entertainment market (Jeon, 2003; Macintyre, 2002).

Through the above experiences (hybridization of music forms and organization of star-making processes), Korean popular culture has prepared itself for forays into regional markets.

Conclusion and discussion

Korea is not a traditional powerhouse of popular culture in Asia. However, the country is emerging as what Chen (2000) calls a 'sub-Empire', enjoying the historical juncture of media liberalization in Asia starting in the 1990s. In this article, we have examined the Korean struggle for cultural diversity in the face of a possible erosion of their cultural particularity. In the process, cultural hybridization has occurred as local cultural agents and actors interact and negotiate with global forms, using them as resources through which Koreans construct their own cultural spaces, as exemplified in the case of rap. By this, we understand that the

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globalization, particularly in the realm of popular culture, breeds a creative form of hybridization that works towards sustaining local identities in the global context.

As to the extent that audiences derive similar identities from watching the same programs, it is also possible to think of 'imagined communities' in Asia. According to Iwabuchi, regionally circulating popular cultural products provide 'a sense of living in the shared time and common experience of a certain (post)modernity which cannot be represented well by American popular culture' (2001: 56). Ang notes that 'popular pleasure is first and foremost a pleasure of recognition' (1985: 20). In other words, how audiences can identify themselves with what they see is most important in their construction of pleasure from media consumption. Hong Kong-based film critic Law has the view that Korean popular culture's success arises from its ability to touch the right chord of Asian sentiments, such as family values (in Chon, 2001). In contrast to common prejudices about boy bands – that they appeal to their fans with rebellious lyrics and gaudy dances – the hit songs from Korean rap band g.o.d. include 'To My Mother', a rap song about a sacrificial mother. Its lyrics are as follows:

> Mother, I miss you.
>
> My family was too poor to eat out.
>
> While mother went to work, I used to cook instant noodles by myself.
>
> Sick and tired of them, I once pestered mother to eating out.
>
> She had to use emergency fund to go to a Chinese restaurant.
>
> Mother ordered Jajangmyon[11] but curiously she didn't eat.
>
> She simply said, 'I don't like it. Eat more.'
>
> She simply said, 'I don't like it. Eat more.'
>
> She simply said, 'I don't like it. Eat more.'
>
> . . .
>
> Mother I love you.
>
> I regret that I haven't said this to you before.
>
> I love you. May you rest in peace.

The factor of 'cultural proximity' is not enough to explain the success of K-pop across the region. According to a Chinese K-pop fan: 'Korean pop

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culture skillfully blends Western and Asian values to create its own, and the country itself is viewed as a prominent model to follow or catch up, both culturally and economically' (quoted in Choe, 2001). This explanation is most appropriate in Vietnam where 'South Korean TV dramas provide the tightly controlled communist country with an enticing glimpse of the outside world' (Visser, 2002). As such, the 'vision of modernization' inherent in Korean popular culture plays a part in making it acceptable in some Asian countries.

The development of Korean media industries and their advance into regional markets is clearly a sign of resilience of the subaltern – and of the 'contamination of the imperial', considering the context of decades-long American domination of global cultural industries. However, while Korean cinema is enjoying success, the all-or-nothing blockbuster business has caused concern over a narrowing of diversity. It is reported that, as of early February 2004, *TaeGukGi: The Brotherhood of War* was playing on 110 screens while *Silmido* was being shown on 53 screens, combining to take up nearly 92 percent of Seoul's total 178 screens. Industry observers have begun to say, 'What Korean cinema needs now is not one movie that attracts 10 million viewers, but 10 movies that attract 1 million viewers' (J. Kim, 2004; K. Kim, 2004). We need to be reminded that, until now, all the outcries against cultural imperialism have been made to protect 'diversity' and the 'coexistence' of cultures. Similarly, the commercial drive of the Korean media is also a cause for concern for the media performance. No longer constrained by the obligation of public service, media companies indulge themselves in pursuing profit maximization by getting their products and services to the largest number of consumers, not only in Korea but also overseas, and this kind of capitalist activity has been justified in the name of national interests. However, it is time for us to ask what constitutes national interests.

Are the arguments presented here on Korean popular culture's hybridity limited to describing the Korean mainstream media's co-opting of a hybridity strategy, without any clear sign that they are also serving *popular* interests? The topic of hybridity as a *popular* appropriation of content originating from both TNCs and the local mainstream media is under-explored. I hope that future scholarship will take up these challenges.

Notes

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1. Here, Korea refers to the Republic of Korea, or South Korea. Korean names are given throughout this article in their original Korean form, that is, surname first

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followed by given name. Other transliterations from Korean have been made according to guidelines suggested by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism during the Kim Dae Jung administration.

2. The quote is inside the back cover of the book.

3. Throughout this paper, $ refers to the US currency.

4. In Southeast Asia, Korean pop music is called K-pop, while Japanese pop music is called J-pop.

5. Tradewinds Tours & Travel ran an advertisement in the Singaporean daily, *The Straits Times* (29 April 2003).

6. On 7 November 2003, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated *pansori* as an intangible world heritage treasure.

7. My translation.

8. In Korea, official statistics for film viewership are based on Seoul theatres alone.

9. The won is the basic unit of money in South Korea, with $1 roughly valued at 800 won before the financial crisis in 1997. It has been about 1,190 won to the dollar since mid-1998.

10. Some argue that the melody had already existed in Korea before Japanese influence.

11. A Korean-style Chinese noodle dish with fermented black soy bean sauce, onions and chunks of pork.

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WEEK 6

Youth Culture and Popular Music

In many different parts of the world popular music is a primary, if not *the* primary, leisure resource for young people. Popular music features in young people's lives in a variety of different ways and in a diverse range of contexts. From nightclubs, live concerts, cinema films and TV commercials to what Japanese music theorist Hosokawa refers to as the 'autonomous and mobile' form of listening facilitated through the invention of the personal stereo, for a great many young people, popular music is an omnipresent aspect of their day to day existence (1984, p. 166). The significance of popular music as an aspect of youth culture can be traced back to the advent of rock 'n' roll in the early 1950s. Prior to rock 'n' roll popular music comprised, to use Middleton's description, 'a relatively narrow stylistic spread, bounded by theatre song on the one side, novelty items deriving from music hall and vaudeville on the other, with Tin Pan Alley song, Hollywood hits and crooners in between' (1990, p. 14). With the arrival of rock 'n' roll, however, not only did the stylistic direction of popular music radically alter but it also acquired a distinctly youth-orientated and oppositional stance. This manifested itself during 1956 with the release of *Rock Around the Clock*, a feature film scripted around live performances by artists of the day such as Bill Haley and the Comets, the Platters and Tony Martinez (Denisoff and Romanowski: 1991). Early screenings of the film in the US and Britain resulted in unruly behaviour in cinemas as young audiences danced in the aisles and ripped out seats (Street: 1992, p. 304). Across Europe *Rock Around the Clock* sparked off reactions that were, in some cases, even more extreme than those witnessed in Britain and the US. In the West German city of Hamburg cars were overturned and shop fronts and street signs vandalised by young people as police used water cannons in an attempt to quell the unrest (Krüger: 1983). In Holland, where *Rock Around the Clock* was banned in several major cities, 'young

people took to the streets to demonstrate for their right to see the film' (Mutsaers: 1990, p. 307).

If rock 'n' roll music and the sensibilities that it had apparently inspired were incomprehensible to the parent culture, then the development of subsequent genres, such as psychedelia, punk and, more recently, acid house, has continued to drive a wedge between the generations and to mark off youth from the parent culture ever more dramatically. The cultural impact of post-war popular music on young people has also posed a series of questions for popular music theorists. Indeed, the continuing centrality of popular music in youth culture since the 1950s has underlain much of the theoretical debate about how to approach the study of popular music and the various stylistic sensibilities to which it has given rise. In this chapter, I want to both examine and critically assess some of the theoretical approaches that have been put forward in an attempt to explain popular music's socio-cultural significance for youth. I will begin by considering the contrasting views of Adorno and Benjamin, whose work on mass culture during the first part of the twentieth century continues to inform much of the research on popular music in the related fields of sociology, cultural and media studies. This will be followed by a review of some of the most important contemporary popular music studies with particular reference to the ways in which these studies have attempted to deal with what continues to be a highly problematic issue, that is, how to reconcile popular music's position in the marketplace with its function as a potentially counter-hegemonic cultural resource. In addition to drawing upon examples from Britain and the US, I will also consider aspects of music production and consumption in Holland, Germany, Japan and Australia. Similarly, the chapter will also look at how popular music has featured in key moments of social change in countries such as Russia, China and the former East Germany.

Popular music and the work of Adorno and Benjamin

Much of the current debate concerning the socio-cultural significance of popular music derives directly from a polemical discussion on the nature of mass culture between Adorno and Benjamin during the 1920s and early 1930s. In order to properly understand the ideas of Adorno and Benjamin it is necessary to briefly relate their work back to the theoretical tradition with which it is most strongly associated, the mass cultural critique of the Frankfurt School. Founded during the 1920s, the Frankfurt School, whose leading theorists also included

Horkheimer, Marcuse and Habermas, was chiefly concerned to study the negative social effects that, they argued, were produced as a consequence of modern society's increasing reliance upon mass cultural commodities. According to the Frankfurt School, the mass cultural profile of modern society signalled the fate of individual autonomy, this being steadily replaced by a 'scientific-technological rationality' (Bottomore: 1984, p. 41). The implication here is that with the rise of mass culture the individual is denied any possibility of creative participation in leisure activities and becomes simply a cultural 'dupe'. Thus, as MacDonald argues, expounding a view clearly inspired by the Frankfurt School's approach: 'Mass Culture [sic] is imposed from above. It is fabricated by technicians hired by businessmen; its audiences are passive consumers, their participation limited to the choice between buying and not buying' (1953, p. 60).

Each of the Frankfurt School theorists varied in their account of the way in which mass culture served to suppress individual autonomy. Adorno was particularly concerned with the fetishising effects of mass culture upon art. In the case of music, argued Adorno, because it 'had been invaded by the capitalist ethos, its fetishisation was almost total' (Jay: 1973, p. 190). At the centre of Adorno's argument lies a distinction between serious 'art' music and commercial 'pop' music. The social reception of music, he suggests, is essentially pre-programmed, musical composition and production following precise guidelines which are calculated to produce a specific and uniform response among listeners. However, according to Adorno, in the case of art music, meaning becomes apparent to the listener only after a considerable degree of listening skill has been applied, this being essential if the essence of a given musical piece, its 'concrete totality', is to be properly understood (Adorno: 1941, p. 303). In the case of popular music, however, no such listening skill is necessary as, according to Adorno:

> The composition hears for the listener... Not only does it not require effort to follow its concrete stream; it actually gives him models under which anything concrete still remaining may be subsumed. The schematic build up dictates the way in which he must listen while, at the same time, it makes any effort in listening unnecessary. Popular music is 'pre-digested' in a way strongly resembling the fad of 'digests' of printed material (ibid., p. 306).

Adorno goes further in his critique of popular music, suggesting that it also plays a role in maintaining the social relations of capitalist production. According to Adorno, popular music does this in two main

ways. First, it acts as a form of distraction, in unison with other forms of mass-produced leisure, ensuring that working-class consumers remain oblivious to the mechanisms of oppression that underpin the capitalist mode of production. Second, the 'patterned and pre-digested' nature of the music offers relief 'from both boredom and effort simultaneously' with the result that periods of leisure can be tailored to provide maximum relaxation and refreshment for the workforce (ibid.).

Adorno's work poses a number of problems for contemporary theorists seeking to explain the cultural impact of popular music since the post-Second World War period. In particular, by concentrating on the alleged regulating and standardising effects of popular music, Adorno closes off any possibility of social actors themselves playing a part in determining the meaning and significance of popular music genres and texts. Consequently, the work of Adorno has been taken to task on a number of occasions. Middleton, for example, argues that 'the reception of cultural products' cannot, as Adorno contends, be taken to 'represent a direct appropriation of the consumer into a pre-given framework but is *mediated* by other, varied interpretative assumptions associated with other social institutions and values' (1990, p. 60). Similarly, Frith argues that Adorno's theory of consumption reduces 'a complex social process to a simple psychological effect' (1983, p. 57). In attempting to rethink Adorno's interpretation of the effects of mass culture upon the individual, some theorists have turned to the work of Benjamin. In contrast to Adorno, Benjamin argues that 'technological *re*production gives back to humanity that capacity for experience which technological *production* threatens to take away' (Buck-Morss: 1989, p. 268). Although none of Benjamin's work focused upon music as such, his ideas can be easily applied to the study of music, especially mechanically reproduced music. A particularly effective demonstration of this is offered by Middleton, who compares Benjamin's thesis on the film audience to the listener's reception of a piece of recorded music. Thus, observes Middleton:

> Benjamin sees the film audience, detached from the moment of production, as being in the position of a *critic*, identifying with the analytical work of the camera rather than with the experience of the characters. The transparency of technique and the ubiquity of the reproductions turns everyone into an *expert*, hence a potential *participant*... This approach has enormously suggestive potential for analysis of listening, for it fully accepts the significance of new perceptual attitudes and situations while by-passing or at least putting into question the usual, too easy Adornian assumptions of passivity (1990, pp. 65–6).

To some extent the ideas of Benjamin, as interpreted by Middleton, enable popular music theorists to overcome the more restricting aspects of Adorno's work by awarding the music listener a degree of participation in the construction of musical meanings. The problem remains, however, to determine the degree of freedom that individuals have in constructing meanings around a form that '[subsists] within the nexus of capitalist production processes' (ibid., p. 66).

The contested nature of popular music

In tackling this issue, the starting point for many popular music theorists has been the music industry itself, or rather the opposing interests around which the modern music industry is constructed. Again, the cultural impact of rock 'n' roll on young people in the 1950s serves as a useful introduction to this issue. Thus, while music 'was a commercial product long before rock 'n' roll', the arrival of the latter together with its pronounced cultural effect upon young people created a number of problems for the music industry (Frith: 1983, p. 32). Of these, the crucial problem was how to market a music that was clearly viable as a commercial product but at the same time highly controversial. In particular, the nature of its partly African-American roots[1] made rock 'n' roll vulnerable to a range of accusations, particularly in the USA, its place of origin. The Reverend Albert Carter of the Pentecostal Church, Nottingham, for example, expressed the view that: 'Rock 'n' roll [was] a revival of devil dancing... the same sort of thing that is done in a black magic ritual' (Street: 1992, p. 305). Likewise, rock 'n' roll was criticised by the parent culture because of the damage it was perceived to be causing to the moral fabric of white US society, allegedly inciting teenagers to unruly behaviour (Hill: 1992, pp. 52–3). Indeed, such antagonisms were shared by the industry itself. Thus, the initial reaction of record companies was to attempt to clean up rock 'n' roll for white teenage consumption. However, this move on the part of the music industry proved contrary to the wishes of white teenage audiences themselves. Thus, as Gillett explains:

> The implication was that people didn't want their music to be as brash, blatantly sexual, and spontaneous as the pure rock 'n' roll records were. But although the position was maintained through to 1963, the success in the United States around this time of British groups with similar qualities suggested that the audience still did prefer this kind of music, if it knew about its availability (1983, p. 41).

A parallel example of this music industry response to rock 'n' roll is illustrated in a study by Mutsaers on the Dutch rock 'n' roll scene of the late 1950s and early 1960s. As Mutsaers points out, rock 'n' roll music in Holland was performed largely by Indonesian immigrants (Indos) whose 'apparently natural musical abilities' and affinity with the guitar – which was used in traditional Indonesian music – enabled them to monopolise rock 'n' roll music in Holland (1990, p. 308). Indobands were, however, very hard to work with in the recording studio; their inability to read music meant that they could not follow music scores and, consequently, were unable to produce the clean, predictable three minute *takes* that studio producers were looking for. Similarly, there were concerns over reactions of audiences to the live shows of Indobands. At dance halls where the groups played there were often violent clashes between white Dutch boys and 'Indo' boys, who, it was alleged, were 'stealing' the girlfriends of the white boys (ibid., p. 310). The point remained, however, that Indobands were extremely popular and thus highly lucrative, both in Holland and in neighbouring Germany, with the result that they continued to play a central role in the Dutch music industry up until the 1960s when their appeal was eclipsed by Merseybeat.

The way that rock 'n' roll music crucially differed from earlier forms of popular music was in the reflexivity of the discourse that was established between rock 'n' roll and its newly emerging youth audience. Indeed, despite the apprehension of the culture industries regarding the potential threat of rock 'n' roll, the visual representation of rock 'n' roll stars in film and on TV also did much to tie the cultural bond between artists and audience. Moreover, it wasn't simply the visual representation of artists themselves that counted in this respect. Thus, as Shumway explains with reference to the early TV appearances of Elvis Presley:

> When Elvis is featured on national TV programmes, the audience becomes part of the show... the film cuts between shots of Elvis and shots of the audience, not as a large mass of indistinguishable faces, but of particular faces whose response tells us of the excitement the performer is generating... These pictures showed other fans how to respond appropriately to rock acts (1992, p. 127).

Ehrenreich *et al.* (1992) have noted a similar process at work with the arrival of the Beatles in the US where fans already knew how to respond to the group having watched TV footage of the Beatles performing in Europe, such footage being similarly intercut with scenes from the

audience. The meaning of rock 'n' roll then could not be separated from the contexts in which it was consumed and this has been a continuing feature of subsequent post-war and contemporary popular music styles. This aspect of popular music's cultural significance is particularly well summed up by Grossberg, who argues that the latter 'involve[s] more than just the relationships between logics of production and logics of consumption [but] define[s] particular ways of navigating the spaces and places, the territorializations of power, of daily life' (1994, p. 48). Like other forms of post-war popular culture then, popular music has become an increasingly contested medium. Thus, as Garofalo points out, popular mass culture is:

> one arena where ideological struggle – the struggle over the power to define – takes place. While there is no question that in this arena the forces arrayed in support of the existing hegemony are formidable, there are also numerous instances where mass culture – and in particular popular music – issues serious challenges to hegemonic power (1992a, p. 2).

The ability of popular music to serve as an effective platform for the delivery of such challenges is, in turn, further enhanced by the uncertainty of the music market itself. If the music industry was relatively unprepared for the arrival of rock 'n' roll, then this scenario has since been repeated on numerous occasions, for example by punk rock in the mid-1970s and acid house in the late 1980s. In his study *Sound Effects*, Frith suggests that: 'Record companies by nature don't much care what forms music takes as long as they can be controlled to ensure profit – musics and musicians can be packaged and sold, whatever their styles' (1983, p. 32). Another way of stating this argument would be to say that all the recording industry can maintain with certainty is that it is in place to package and market forms of popular music. Beyond this assertion, however, the trajectory of popular music's stylistic development and its impact upon audiences becomes rather less of an exact science. Indeed, as Attali has pointed out, the music industry occupies a particularly precarious position situated 'on the borderline between the most sophisticated marketing and the most unpredictable of cottage industries' (1985, pp. 102–3). Thus, while record companies would like to think that they are able to predict which artists and musical styles will prove to be the most commercially viable this remains largely an erroneous game of intuition.

Herein lies the central contradiction in modern music marketing, for in attempting to work as closely as possible within the 'organisational conventions [and] commercial logic of capitalism' the music industry is

at the same time forced to exercise a looser control over the commodities that are marketed, the performing artists themselves (Negus: 1992, p. vii). In the final analysis, it is the stylistic or ideological appeal of performing artists and their music that generates profit for the industry. Harron, for example, has stated that in the wake of the 1960s hippie movement 'record companies... were confused and even alarmed by the strange groups whose music was so profitable [and had to] bring in young outsiders to tell them what would make a hit' (1988, p. 184). This tendency on the part of record companies to hire in 'street wise' youngsters in order to keep up with the rapidly shifting nature of the youth music market has continued. Thus, for example, Negus relates a discussion with an executive from a top record company who had launched a new 'dance label' and brought in 'dance specialists' on the grounds that he didn't 'know that market' (1992, p. 54).

Perhaps more than any other mass-produced commodity then, popular music is a contested form. While successful artists may generate vast amounts of income for the record companies to which they are signed, at the same time they frequently utilise the mass dissemination of their music or the magnitude of their public profile to communicate a variety of socio-political issues 'that have implications beyond their immediate impact on mass media entertainment' (Ullestad: 1992, p. 37). This aspect of popular music performance has manifested itself at regular intervals during the last fifty years. I have already discussed the socio-cultural impact of rock 'n' roll upon young people from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s. During the late 1960s, popular music became increasingly controversial as artists aligned themselves with a variety of socio-political issues. In the US this was evidenced for example in James Brown's 'Say it Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud', a tribute to the Black Power movement, and Country Joe and the Fish's 'Fixin' to Die Rag', a powerful anti-Vietnam War song which contained the line 'You can be the first ones on the block to have your boy come home in a box' (Gleason: 1972, pp. 139–40). As Gleason points out, this song was 'heard and understood by millions' with the effect that there was no 'comparable medium' for the anti-war message (ibid., p. 139).

The subversive quality of popular music has also been witnessed in Britain, the possibilities for pop expression having been further enhanced by the art school training of many leading exponents of British pop. Since the 1950s, art schools have produced a succession of musical innovators, such as John Lennon, who, according to Frith and Horne, 'inflected pop music with bohemian dreams... and laid out the

ideology of "rock"' (1987, p. 73). The artistic training of such musicians prompted them to experiment with different musical styles and to begin using the medium of song as a means to communicate a whole new range of sentiments, feelings and viewpoints. Thus, as Frith and Horne suggest, 'pop rhetoric – once concerned solely with sentimentality, the language of love, dancing and having a good time' suddenly acquired a whole new level of significance (ibid., p. 66).

In other parts of the world popular music has become a key medium in the articulation of socio-political causes and the fight against forms of political extremism. Wicke, in a study of music's role in the political disintegration of the former East Germany, argues that East German popular music groups and artists 'helped prepare the ground for the heightened popular political consciousness' that resulted in the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 (1992, p. 196). Similarly Easton's study of the Soviet 'rock community' during the mid-1980s suggests that rock groups such as Aquarium played an important role in articulating the disillusionment of Soviet youth with the communist system. Moreover, according to Easton, attempts by the Soviet government to outlaw the performance of rock groups merely 'created a sense of confinement and repression in which underground movements flourish[ed]' (1989, p. 58). Ching-Yun Lee also examines the potential of popular music for political comment in her study of Cantopop, a mainstream style of Cantonese popular music in Hong Kong. As Ching-Yun Lee points out, in the period immediately following the violent military oppression of the Chinese student uprising in Beijing's Tiananmen Square during May 1989, Cantopop lyrics became increasingly supportive of the Chinese student movement, for example, by ridiculing the Chinese government, mourning the students who died in the uprising and pledging support for the democracy movement (1992, p. 129).

A further example of popular music's potential for the articulation of socio-political statements is provided in Davies's study of Aboriginal rock music in Australia. According to Davies, much of this music is linked with the Aborigines' attempt to recover their cultural homelands from white landowners. As Davies explains: 'Cultural survival for the Aboriginal Australians is tied to land rights, to origins, to a cultural integrity beyond contemporary industrial arrangements' (1993, p. 253). As such, argues Davies, Aboriginal rock music performs two main functions above and beyond its status as a commodity form. First, the music represents a form of empowerment through its 'reversal and decentering of colonial social relations' (ibid., p. 256). Second, when

the music of Aboriginal rock bands is distributed through mainstream channels such as national radio and MTV, the usually marginalised Aborigine community is given the opportunity to voice its discontent through a central and highly strategic medium (ibid., p. 257).

Between the mid-1980s and early 1990s, the relationship between popular music and socio-political issues took a new turn as pop became the focus for a series of 'mega-events' beginning with Live Aid in July 1985 (Garofalo: 1992b). Live Aid was a globally televised live music event – in aid of the famine in Ethiopia – that brought together 'stadium acts' of the day, such as Queen, Elton John and David Bowie, with a view towards using the medium of a live music performance as a way of simultaneously increasing public awareness of the famine and raising funds to fight it. The success of Live Aid as a media spectacle led to a series of similar events including Farm Aid, which aimed to raise funds for small independent farmers in the US after the Regan administration withdrew its subsidisation of small farming concerns, and the two Nelson Mandela concerts – the first held in 1988 to mark the imprisoned ANC leader's seventieth birthday and the second in 1990 to celebrate his release from prison. The Mandela concerts were also intended to promote human rights issues on an international scale (Garofalo: 1992c).

Audience reception

If the ideological views of performers are one way in which popular music's commodity function is problematised, then audience reception is another. In an account of the cultural significance of progressive rock, Frith argues that, from the point of view of the audience, how the music is actually 'made' and distributed becomes rather less important than how it 'works... the question of *how* music comes to represent its listeners is begged' (1981, p. 159). According to Frith, in the case of late 1960s and early 1970s progressive rock, it was the aesthetic discourse established between audiences and performers that became centrally important in that it combined folk and art ideologies. Thus, argues Frith, 'as folk music rock is heard to represent the community of youth, as art music rock is heard as the sound of individual, creative sensibility' (1987, p. 136). In this way, maintains Frith, the apparent contradictions between progressive rock's status as a commodity and an authentic art form dissolve as, from the audience's point of view, it is the music's deemed 'authenticity' that assumes central importance. In a similar fashion, Negus has argued that: 'It is an irony of consumption that, as

audiences, we acknowledge that our favourite artists, whether Bob Dylan, Public Enemy or Madonna are studied, calculated and hyped in various ways, but at the same time we accept them as "real"' (1992, p. 70). Again, Negus's argument suggests that, from the point of view of the audience, the processes that underlie the production and distribution of popular music are rather less important than its value as a cultural resource, that is, as a form that can be appropriated and reworked to serve particular collective purposes.

By the same token, however, it is important not to overstate popular music's utility in this respect. In the process of producing and marketing pop, the music industry clearly imposes structures of meaning on particular genres and sounds which in turn serve to frame audiences' uses of popular music. Thus, as Frith argues 'we are not free to read anything we want into a song... music is obviously rule-bound. We hear things as music because their sounds obey a particular, familiar logic, and for most pop fans (who are technically, non-musical) this logic is out of our control' (1987, p. 139). Similarly, a number of theorists have pointed to the role of the music industry in the construction of male and female gender identities through its promotion of particular styles and images. A particularly illustrative example of this is provided by Frith and McRobbie, who argue that:

> Not only do we find men occupying every important role in the rock industry and in effect being responsible for the creation and construction of suitable female images, we also witness in rock the presentation and marketing of masculine styles. And we are offered not one definitive image of masculine sexuality, but a variety of male sexual poses which are most often expressed in terms of stereotypes (1978, p. 374).

More recent work has served to challenge such observations, suggesting that as public perceptions of gender and sexuality have changed this has, in turn, prompted changes in the ways in which they are represented through the popular music medium. Thus, for example, in her study of MTV, Kaplan argues that: 'The plethora of gender positions on the channel is arguably linked to the heterogeneity of current sex roles and to an imaginary constructed out of a world in which all traditional categories, boundaries, and institutions are being questioned' (1987, p. 90). Similarly, Geyrhalter's study of contemporary British groups the Cure and Suede points to the way in which the male frontmen in each of these groups 'challenge gender stereotypes [and] flirt with the sexually ambiguous without declaring a fixed sexual identity' (1996, p. 217). Hill makes a parallel observation in relation to

the gender experimentation of Eurythmics' singer Annie Lennox in promotional videos such as that which accompanied the song 'Love is a Stranger' where Lennox is seen with short cropped red hair and wearing a business suit. According to Hill: 'Annie's haircut made a big contribution to the vogue for gender confusion. Most participants were men who looked like women. Lennox was the reverse' (1986, p. 32).

Despite such shifting perceptions of gender, considerable emphasis continues to be placed by the music industry on the promotion of traditional gender stereotypes. An effective example of this is provided by recent work on the cultural significance of heavy metal music. According to Walser, heavy metal music acts to 'reproduce and inflect patriarchal assumptions and ideologies' which underpin late modern western society (1993, p. 111). Walser suggests that heavy metal groups produce tactics for the legitimisation of male power and control in society through 'misogyny as well as "exscription"' (ibid., p. 110). Misogynistic themes, according to Walser, are often present in heavy metal lyrics and in the promotional videos of many heavy metal groups. Exscription is a broadly opposite strategy to misogyny in that it involves the creation, through music, album covers and videos, of 'fantas[y] worlds without women' where male heroes battle against monsters and superhuman villains (ibid.). In Walser's view, such forms of female exscription in heavy metal result in a form of male bonding which 'excludes the threat of the feminine' (ibid., p. 115). This is not to suggest that heavy metal is an exclusively male concern. Indeed, Arnett's ethnographic research on young heavy metal audiences in the US has located a firmly established female fan base for the genre. However, as Arnett explains, many female followers of heavy metal 'become involved in it through a boyfriend or because of the sexual attraction they feel for the performers or fans [and] struggle to reconcile their enthusiasm for heavy metal with their sense of being not quite welcome in that world' (1995, pp. 139–40).

If the construction of gender and sexuality in popular music continues to promote notions of male dominance and superiority, then it is also a fundamental truism that the music industry continues to be male dominated. Certainly, the ratio of women who become successful in the music industry, both as performers and employees, remains low compared with that of men. In his comprehensive study of the music industry, Negus notes the 'subordinate position' occupied by the majority of female employees, who typically worked as secretaries, while those women with more high-profile careers were very much in the minority and had to deal with working relationships 'based around a bantering male camaraderie' (1992, p. 58). Similarly, in commenting

upon the limited career opportunities for women as popular music performers Bayton observes that:

> Women have been largely excluded from popular music-making and relegated to the role of the fan. Women performers have been more prominent in commercial 'pop' than in 'rock', but their place in all these worlds has been that of vocalist rather than instrumentalist (1993, p. 177).

Moreover, even as the presence of all-female pop groups becomes more widely accepted such groups must still contend with and learn to negotiate a number of problems relating to the male-dominated nature of the music business. Thus, as Gottlieb and Wald point out:

> Women performers go through complicated contortions as they both appropriate and repudiate a traditionally masculine rock performance position which is itself premised on the repression of femininity, while they simultaneously contend with a feminine performance position defined primarily as the erotic object-to-be-looked-at (1994, p. 260).

The music industry, then, plays a substantial role in determining how music is heard and responded to by consumers. At the same time, however, consumers of popular music are not, as has sometimes been suggested, cultural dupes but are also active in creating musical meanings. Consumers take the structures of meaning – the musical and extra-musical resources associated with particular genres of pop – and combine them with meanings of their own to produce distinctive variations in patterns of consumption and stylistic expression. It is with such processes of appropriation and the factors deemed to underlie the social uses of popular music that sociological studies of pop have been chiefly concerned.

Subcultures

One of the first attempts to consider the role of the audience in ascribing meaning to popular music forms was the work of the Birmingham CCCS. As has already been noted in Chapter 1, it is the contention of the CCCS theorists that music and style-based youth groups, such as teddy boys, mods, rockers and skinheads, served as visual statements for pockets of working-class resistance to structural changes taking place in post-Second World War British society. The implication here is that such youth cultures took the musical and stylistic commodities produced by the culture industries and constructed their own meanings around them.

Problematically, however, if popular music is considered to be central to the post-war youth phenomenon, little attention is paid in the work of CCCS theorists to its actual function as a cultural resource. For the most part, CCCS accounts focus on the issue of style with occasional, cursory, references to music being made. Thus, as Laing, whose own work on the social significance of punk rock will presently be considered, has pointed out in relation to Hebdige's treatment of punk in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979), 'for Hebdige, music is only one part of a stylistic ensemble called 'punk', and judging by the limited space he devotes to it, not the most important part. That role is reserved for the visual display of... the "punk look"' (1985, p. x).

The only subcultural theorist to have made any sustained attempt to study the social meaning of popular music is Willis (1974, 1978). In keeping with the central tenets of subcultural theory, Willis presents an interpretation of popular music's social significance that is essentially class-based. Reading the working-class motorbike boys' and middle-class hippies' uses of music in terms of their contrasting structural circumstances, Willis relates the former's preference for rock 'n' roll singles, with their straightforward musical arrangements and 'good strong beat' for dancing, to the group's need for a readily accessible 'antidote to boredom' (1978, p. 68). At the same time, argues Willis, the hippies' preference for the more melodically and rhythmically complex progressive rock reflected their desire for music that 'demanded serious listening and attention' (ibid., p. 157). Similarly, Willis argues that the hippies' desire to restructure '"normal" time' also attracted them to progressive rock, its LP format together with featured electronic effects, such as 'echo, feedback, stereo [and] loudness itself... [giving] the impression of space and lateral extension', especially when listened to under the influence of mind expanding drugs such as LSD[2] (ibid., pp. 168, 167).

Bradley's study *Understanding Rock 'n' Roll* is an interesting departure from subcultural theory in that it serves both to rethink the class-based argument of the subcultural theorists while simultaneously paying much greater attention to the role of popular music itself as a mode of youth expression. While retaining the notion of resistance, Bradley argues that the resistance that rock 'n' roll music offered to its consumers took the form of a reaction against 'the norms of privacy and "modesty" involved in... music use' adding that rock 'n' roll 'involved loudness, showing off, getting together in crowds to do uninhibited things: it even had the glamour of being widely banned in the clubs until around 1960' (1992, pp. 127, 126). Moreover, Bradley also makes

the important point that participation in such forms of collective expression was not purely restricted to followers of particular stylistic fashions. On the contrary, argues Bradley, 'this resistant element was also involved in music-use *beyond* the youth culture, among non-participants, and among ex-participants as the years went by, with the youth culture acting as a cultural example for others to follow in their musical lives' (ibid., p. 107).

A similar observation is made by Laing (1985) in his study of the social reception of punk rock. Moving beyond Hebdige's (1979) reading of punk as a working-class phenomenon, Laing suggests that the appeal of punk was rooted in 'the contrast between [its] private accessibility and its public invisibility' (1985, p. 37). The 'authenticity' of the original punk movement, suggests Laing, was unwittingly created by the broadcasting and retailing industries themselves, the latters' censorship of certain records conferring upon punk '"exclusivist" tendencies' and an outsider status thus 'consolidating a special community of punks, to whom punk rock [had] special meanings' (ibid.). Moreover, according to Laing the symbolic messages implicit in the censorship of punk were not only open to interpretation by followers of the punk style but also by the wider record buying public, this being demonstrated by the banning and boycotting of one particular punk rock song, the Sex Pistol's 'God Save The Queen'. Thus, as Laing explains:

> By defining 'God Save The Queen's' difference from the norm as total... the music industry's institutions... virtually instructed anyone with access to it that its effects on them would be totally different from the leisure pleasure provided by the context of daytime radio or *Top Of The Pops*. And of course, most of the 250 000 purchasers of the disc were not 'punks', and nor did buying it confer that status upon them. But the role offered to the listener to 'God Save The Queen' was set apart from both the established music industry and the official royalist celebrations. It was an independent and oppositional role (ibid., p. 38).

Laing's study is important for several reasons. First of all, it signifies a further break with the class-based interpretations of musical taste posited by subcultural theorists. Laing demonstrates how, as opposed to becoming a vehicle for the expression of class consciousness, the fact of musical taste can become a form of opposition which dramatically cuts across class distinctions. Thus, in endorsing the marginalised status of punk rock, audiences were assured of a ready-made source of antagonism which could then be used, if so desired, to articulate a variety of

themes and issues relating not simply to issues of class but to a whole range of collectively shared and inter-class sensibilities. Thus, to take again the example of 'God Save The Queen', it is possible that this song's message became incorporated into the sensibilities of a diverse range of disaffected social groups. The frustrated adolescent, the political activist, the atheist and anti-royalist would all have comprehended the message in 'God Save The Queen' in a similar fashion, but the significance they attached to it would have been very different. Indeed, even within the more immediate punk movement, it is arguable that a number of different sensibilities were patched together by the media to suggest a coherent 'subcultural' affiliation. During the original 'punk summer' of 1977, punk in Britain came to symbolise everything from a bizarre form of street-corner society that aimed to poke fun at the establishment, to organised anti-Fascist and Rock Against Racism events (Frith and Street: 1992).

The plurality of meanings that can be read into the punk style is further in evidence when one considers the different forms of cultural significance that the genre and its attendant visual style have acquired outside Britain. Szemere (1992) notes how the Hungarian punk scene of the early 1980s borrowed the ideology of marginalisation from the punk movement in Britain but added new dimensions to this ideology. What the Hungarian punks brought in to their reworking of the punk idea was, as Szemere puts it, 'a particular view and experience of history' (ibid., p. 95). Like youth in the USSR, during the late 1970s and early 1980s, young Hungarians watched the socialist dream collapse under the weight of its own unfulfilled promises. There was a widespread economic recession coupled with a growing sense of insecurity which was felt right across Hungarian society. The youth of Hungary were particularly affected by this. There was a commonly shared feeling among Hungarian youth that the socialist system had let them down and seemed not to care that they were left struggling in a void. For many, the punk movement represented a way in which they could begin to negotiate the situation of anomie that arose from Hungary's socio-economic decline. At first the Hungarian authorities tried to play down the punk movement in the country as right wing and fascist, a feature that was, they argued inevitable given punk's western origins. However, the Hungarian punk movement soon developed its own avant-garde, the latter possessing, as Szemere points out, 'the intellectual and political resources to challenge the official representations of the Western punk movement as fascistic [sic]' (1992, p. 99).

In Germany too, where punk continues to have a large following as evidenced by national success of German-language punk rock groups such as Die Toten Hosen and the Chaos-Tage (chaos days), an annual punk gathering in Hannover (see Geiling: 1995, 1996), the style has become an increasingly localised form of cultural expression. Studies of the German punk movement by Müller-Wiegand (1990) and Hafeneger *et al.* (1993) begin to illustrate how the relationship between punk style, locality and notions of collective identity can take on significantly different meanings even within the same country as musical and stylistic sensibilities become intertwined with the vernacular knowledges of different cities, towns and rural communities. In their comparative study of the punk scene in Frankfurt am Main and Fulda, Hafeneger *et al.* illustrate the differing forms of cultural significance that being a punk assumes in each of these settings. In Frankfurt, a major city, punks are considered by non-punks to be 'old fashioned' not only stylistically but also ideologically (1993, p. 26). Frankfurt punks react to such accusations by becoming totally committed to the punk style, placing great emphasis on the need to both behave and look like an 'authentic' punk as allegedly defined by the British punk scene of the late 1970s. Consequently, in the context of the Frankfurt youth cultural scene, punks represent, according to Hafeneger *et al.*, a culture trapped within its own 'conservatism' (ibid.). The experience of punks in Fulda, a small city approximately fifty miles to the northeast of Frankfurt, is considerably different. Here punks are ostracised not because they are considered out of step with current fashions and youth sensibilities, but because they are believed to be socially deviant. Thus, the local punk culture must learn to deal with a rather different set of social circumstances which deem that they are 'outsiders' who must keep their distance and are not to be trusted (ibid., p. 69).

Arguably, such localised instances of youth cultures and the highly particularised sets of circumstances that govern their attachment to given forms of music and visual image call for an analytical approach that is more sensitive to the role of locality in informing the cultural relationship between youth, music and style. This view is supported by Lewis (1992), who suggests that musical taste and the collective sense of identity to which such taste often gives rise may grow out of a shared sense of experience or the aesthetic and political values that members attach to a particular popular music genre resulting from circumstances encountered in specific localities.

During the course of this chapter, I have been concerned with the social meaning of popular music for young people as this has been

theorised and interpreted in the related disciplines of sociology, cultural and media studies. Beginning with an overview of the ideas of Adorno and Benjamin, I have illustrated how the opposing interpretations of mass culture expounded by these theorists have continued to inform contemporary popular music researchers as they attempt to work through and resolve the highly problematic issues surrounding the cultural significance of popular music. The final section of the chapter has centred around the contention that musical meaning, if this is to be seen as a socially constructed phenomenon, must be related to the everyday contexts in which music is heard and collectively responded to. In this respect, the argument presented here builds on that put forward in Chapter 1 by calling for a more systematic address of the local in shaping the cultural relationship between youth culture and popular music. In Chapter 3, I want to look more closely at the significance of the local as a way in which to approach the study of popular music and interpret its meaning as a cultural resource in the everyday lives of young people.

NOTES

1. Although rock 'n' roll is often supposed to have originated directly from African-American folk music, it is actually a hybrid between African-American folk and white American country and western music.
2. LSD is the popular abbreviation for lysergic acid diethylamide, the synthetic hallucinogenic drug widely used by the hippie movement during the psychedelic era of the mid to late 1960s.

"Country Roads" to Globalization: Sociological Models for Understanding American Popular Music in China

HEIDI NETZ RUPKE AND GRANT BLANK

ONE OF THE FIRST RULES OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING, AT LEAST IN CURRENT western educational theory, is taking students' needs and interests into account when planning for classes. When I began to teach English to Chinese students in a private school in western China in August 2001, I asked my eighth-grade students what they enjoyed most about their previous English classes.[1]

"Music," one student replied.

"Learning American songs," clarified another.

"This could be enjoyable," I thought, thinking of the CDs I had brought from the United States and the insight into adolescent music tastes gained from teaching high school students the year before.

"What is your favorite American song?" I asked.

"'Yesterday Once More'" Wang Xiaowang, the class leader, asserted without hesitation.

"I'm sorry, but I don't know that one," I said, puzzled. "Could you sing it for me?"

Wang Xiaowang gave the starting note and the other twelve students in the class joined in, some of them closing their eyes to sing with passion Karen Carpenter's ballad of lost love. As they sang, I wondered how *all* of these students knew this tune when I had never heard it. As I taught this class and others during my two years in China, I enjoyed singing American songs with my students, though I quickly learned that some tunes would go over well with my students, while others would induce little enthusiasm from them. The students

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had definitive tastes in American music, unexpected tastes which defied my own preferences and those of teenagers I had previously taught in the United States. After much trial and error, I narrowed the "surefire" genres of American music for Chinese students to easy listening, country, and softer covers of "oldies."[2]

Personal Context

Our interest in this topic was sparked by Rupke's experience living and teaching in the People's Republic of China from 2001 to 2003. She taught for one year in the western city of Dujiangyan and one year in Hefei, a city in central China. During this time, she had ample opportunity to interact with Chinese teachers, students, and to some extent, members of the communities where she lived.

While living in China, she observed a rapidly changing nation, full of seeming incongruities. Dirt roads connected to paved highways, and diners could choose between tiny noodle shops and the shiny McDonald's next door. Still considered a "developing" country, China has progressed from a mainly peasant society to an increasingly urban culture over the last twenty-five years. Standards of living, as well as China's GNP, have been rising steadily since Deng Xiaoping's sweeping economic reforms, which began in 1978. This "opening" to the West has included major exportation of goods, but western products and ideas have been coming into China as well. Particularly interesting is the influx of popular culture, and, more specifically, American music, and the ways that it is received in Chinese society. Rather than consuming only music that is current or popular in the West, Chinese seem to select American music according to their own tastes, choosing songs that affirm their historical values and contemporary life experiences.

Globalization processes disseminate American popular culture far from its origins. Some intellectuals in Europe and America have equated popular culture with cultural imperialism. In this view American popular culture manipulates the personal tastes of people in other countries. It destroys local, traditional values while promoting global homogenization based on American values like mass consumption and mass entertainment, which are provided by big corporations and geared to the lowest common denominator. The response of young Chinese to American popular music is a case study of how these global processes

work out in a local setting. Does the spread of American music undermine the integrity of Chinese culture and music?

Many of Rupke's Chinese students and friends held views of Americans that included simultaneous admiration and distaste. They admired the beauty and wealth of perceived American lifestyles but disliked seeming American domination and arrogance. Given these two assessments, it should have come as little surprise that Chinese students held strong opposing views of American music: some was beautiful, some was terrible. In general, music drawn from easy listening, oldies, and country genres was widely accepted by students, but other types of music were scorned, including most of the current hits on American charts. Though socially sophisticated in many respects, her Chinese students preferred music that, in American society, is associated with low levels of education and status (Peterson and DiMaggio). The popularity of easy listening and country genres above all other genres suggests there are problems with the notion that American cultural imperialists graft their musical tastes directly into Chinese youth. More complex processes are at work. To understand the influence of popular culture we look at the wider attractions of music beyond its value as entertainment. We can understand why unlikely American genres are so popular by looking at the meaning that they have for Chinese youth.[3]

Given our concern with meaning, our central discussion focuses on Chinese young people's *reception* of American popular music, with only passing comments about production and distribution.[4] We do not comment on Chinese popular music, which often seems similar to current American tastes. Much Chinese pop sounds like familiar boy band beats with Chinese words. Further, lyrics are particularly emphasized in addition to melodies and pace because they show some of the clearest connections with Chinese values and themes.

Rupke's teaching experience was with two groups of students from the interior provinces of China, one group consisting of students in grades K-12, children of wealthy—by Chinese standards—businesspeople. They hailed from a variety of hometowns, though most were from Sichuan, a rich agricultural province that borders Tibet to the east. The city where the school was located, Dujiangyan, was an hour's drive from Chengdu, a provincial capital with nine million inhabitants. Chengdu was a four-hour flight or a forty-hour train ride to Beijing. Students from her second year of teaching were rural schoolteachers

from Anhui, a province whose main trade is agriculture, and whose residents are relatively poor compared with people from coastal provinces or Beijing.

Unlike in the West, these students did not generally experience music privately, through personal music players or extensive CD collections. Even if they had money for such items, it was more common and more consistent with Chinese culture to experience music in communal ways—karaoke or loudspeakers, for example—than via individual media using headphones or speakers.[5] The American music selections she heard were not performed as covers by Chinese bands, but rather American CDs were experienced collectively. The importance of the communal experience is described in more detail below.

Chinese students know American music primarily from recordings. Live American musical performances are of little importance. These students had no direct access to western music, such as via radio broadcasts, including short-wave radios. This may distinguish the primarily agricultural interior provinces from the rapidly developing regions nearer the coast where western influences are more direct, e.g., Shanghai or Hong Kong.

Two sociological models can supply insight into Chinese behavior patterns with regards to American popular music: Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and Michael Schudson's model of the power of cultural symbols. Taking into account China's national history, and allowing some leeway for cross-cultural differences, these models demonstrate the tension between the China's past and present, and its current dilemma of preserving nationalism in an increasingly global society.

Historical and Political Background

Chinese government has traditionally consisted of a single power center—an emperor who was absolute ruler. The emperor was called a "son of heaven" and held a divine right to rule. The Chinese people depended upon their emperor for everything from wartime protection to favorable weather for their crops. The absolute power of single rulers is one factor consistent with the development of a collectivist society. Only in the last century—less than 1/40 of China's national history—has power been diffused among a political party rather than invested in

a single person. Yet the Chinese Communist government, even today, emphasizes unity above individual rights. The collective nature of Chinese society and its adherence to central control are two factors that also shed light on the relative homogeneity of Chinese answers to open-ended questions about music preferences.

In order for westerners to grasp aspects of the Chinese mind-set, they must appreciate underlying values of Chinese culture. The single most influential figure in the development of Chinese society and culture was Confucius, a philosopher who lived from 551 to 470 BC. His principles guide social, political, and familial interactions:

1. The stability of society is based on unequal relationships between people.
2. The family is the prototype of all social organizations.
3. Virtuous behavior toward other consists of not treating others as one would not like to be treated oneself.
4. Virtue with regard to one's tasks in life consists of trying to acquire skills and education, working hard, not spending more than necessary, being patient, and persevering (Hofstede 165).

From these principles, it follows that virtue is crucial to correct behavior. Further, relationships are of primary importance in Chinese society. Above laws or abstract principles, China is a society of relationships, though with a distinctly different slant than American associations.

Confucian Relationships

In China, social order revolves around the responsibilities of each person's position, whether socially high or low. The older, more experienced members of society (parents, teachers, supervisors, etc.) must take care of younger, less experienced members (children, students, employees, etc.), helping them to find work, enter key schools, and borrow money when necessary. In return, the younger set demonstrates loyalty and respect for the elders who provide for them. The influence of older people upon the young can lead to slow change in Chinese ideals as traditional ideas and views are passed along to each new generation. Consequently, music selections considered acceptable to parents will often be familiar to their children. Easy listening music, with its themes of home and love, resonate with traditional as well as

more modern-minded Chinese. Chinese children may listen to music that their parents do not listen to, but this is usually in addition to selections acceptable with the mainstream culture (i.e., that of their parents) and usually not in direct conflict with parents' beliefs, since respect for elders' wishes is a paramount Confucian value.

Although historical themes and traditional values play a role in Chinese music selections, more contemporary, proximate, sociological issues are probably more important.

Cultural Status

Pierre Bourdieu posits that capital is not only economic, but social and cultural as well. These alternate forms of capital include skills, knowledge, and experience that people possess, and these can then be converted into economic capital. Skills and knowledge, particularly knowledge of tastes, lifestyles, and interaction styles, that are highly valued by society contain much cultural capital. When these attributes are rare, their value is enhanced. Bourdieu states,

> [T]he specifically symbolic logic of distinction additionally secures material and symbolic profits for the possessors of a large cultural capital: any given cultural competence (e.g. being able to read in a world of illiterates) derives a scarcity value from its position in the distribution of cultural capital and yields profits of distinction for its owner. (245)

One such rare and sought-after competence in China is knowledge of the English language and American culture.

Knowledge of American products, including music, denotes a certain status for Chinese people. This high status is due to both its language medium (English) and its source (the United States, a country with a highly developed economy and society). In order to understand the development of this phenomenon, a bit of twentieth-century Chinese history is useful.

In China the past one hundred years have included civil and international war, invasion, and a transition from rule by emperor to warlords to the Communist party. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), a movement of political and ideological extremism, English was forbidden as the language of the capitalist West. Radio broadcasts in foreign languages were cancelled, foreign books banned,

and English courses outlawed in educational institutions (Hu 31). During this time, the Chinese government described Americans as imperialists who sought to do China ill. Mao Zedong permitted the first trickle of foreign visitors to enter in the early 1970s after allowing virtually no contact with the West for more than a decade. Mao Zedong's successor, Deng Xiaoping, was particularly interested in international economic development and opened China's doors to promote business growth. Increased economic openness has led to sharing of ideas and cultures across borders.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) retains important influence over consumption, including consumption of popular culture, however. Depending on how the United States was depicted by the Chinese government—to use Robert Entman's language, how the United States was "framed"—interest in and access to American products increased and declined. Nien Cheng reflected on these radical swings in Chinese public opinion toward Americans in her memoirs:

> Chinese throughout the ages suffered from racial arrogance. Those who had never been out of the country and had no close contact with other nationalities often thought of people in other lands as alien, therefore uncivilized, creatures with strange habits and called them "foreigners" or even "foreign devils." The self-imposed isolation during Mao Tze-tung's reign and Party propaganda on the evils of capitalism greatly reinforced the Chinese people's unfortunate state of self-delusion. When Deng Hsiao-ping threw open China's door to the rest of the world and a flood of well-meaning and obviously affluent "foreigners" came to China with money to invest and ideas to share, the Chinese people suffered such a traumatic awakening that they sunk into shame and self-reproach only to emerge with eagerness to jettison everything Chinese in order to become thoroughly "civilized." (205)

With increasing foreign trade and glimpses of the outside world, Chinese people sought to achieve the lifestyles enjoyed by people in other nations. In the early 1980s, Chinese people began to have access to western music, television, radio, and, in some areas, foreigners from the United States and Britain (Huot 155). These products, ideas, and people were allowed because they were viewed as essential to modernization and economic progress. The CCP's role in popularizing certain music selections is described below.

China's economic boom of the last several decades has prompted increasing numbers of university students to study English, as joint ventures and foreign companies need proficient English speakers (Cortazzi and Jin 179). The English language is perceived as an indispensable tool for helping the nation to further open up, reach modernization goals, and compete in the international market (Hu 33). English language on a product or sign shows sophistication, even if the direct translation from Chinese seems unusual to native English speakers.[6] Where once the culture of the United States was considered at best incompatible with Asian values and at worst, utterly evil, knowledge of American culture and contact with foreigners now carries a certain distinction. One salesperson from Shanghai expressed his view succinctly, "We young people in Shanghai like to copy Western habits" (Kang 100).

Chinese young people, curious about the West, want to know about the intricacies of the daily lives of foreigners, lives they have solid preconceived ideas of due to the tremendous influx of American movies. Often, their ideals of American life involve more fantasy than reality. One student described his feelings in a letter (Wang 2002):

> Dear Miss Rupke,
> Nice to meet you! I'm glad to have an opportunity to write to you. You are a beautiful girl just like those who are attractive feminine leads in some Hollywood movies. And now you are my oral English teacher, each time talking with you, I thought myself an actor in my own "Hollywood movie." You can know how excited I am.

Young people and college students in particular form a solid consumer base for popular culture in many societies, and China is no exception (Yardley 10). Most of the students surveyed reported that they began to listen to American music in high school or middle school, stages when many Americans form music tastes as well.

Though Chinese people have embraced some aspects of western culture quite openly (e.g. music, media, technology, fashion), there is some concern about too much foreign influence at the expense of traditional values. Guangwei Hu observes that

> [Western] culture-specific values and beliefs may clash with values and beliefs espoused by a language learner's culture and, when assimilated unconsciously, may threaten cultural identity and integ-

> rity and produce consequences of which the native culture does not approve. (42)

This opinion reveals a deep conservatism and concern that Chinese culture is being jeopardized by outside influences. It also shows an intense national pride that upholds Chinese traditions, even amid rapid development. In a similar vein, Michael H. Bond asserts that Chinese generally do not object to westernization as long as it includes aspects practical for modern living and does not detract from central Chinese values of "familism, achievement, and moderation" (111). A harmony between traditional Chinese values and western mores is expressed in the music preferences of Chinese students.

Survey of Chinese College Students

Rupke's informal observations of the preferences of Chinese for easy listening or "light" music were confirmed in an April 2004 survey given to students at the Anhui Institute of Education (AIE) in Hefei, Anhui. Hefei is the capital city of Anhui province, located approximately 450 km west of Shanghai. Hefei is the largest city—home to about four million residents—in a province known for its rich farmlands and beautiful Yellow Mountain. AIE is a two-year teacher's training college for practicing and preservice teachers who desire to pursue further schooling and/or a BA degree. Most of the students surveyed had previously taught in rural or urban schools, and had at least a high school education before entering the institute of education, placing them in an elite group among Chinese workers. Many had also attended college before studying at AIE. All were current English majors.

The survey on musical preferences was administered to three classes of students at AIE, from which we received 153 valid responses. Each class consisted of about fifty students who attended every course together. Most of the students lived in the school dormitory, enabling the class leader to contact each student personally. The students surveyed ranged in age from twenty-two to forty and roughly equal numbers of males and females were represented.

The key question asked about preferences in American music (see Table 1). Most striking is that only five songs account for almost ninety percent of the responses, and only three respondents (about two

TABLE 1
Responses to Question: "What is Your Favorite American Song?"

Song title	Artist	Students
"My Heart Will Go On"	Celine Dion[1]	56
"Country Roads"	John Denver	54
"Yesterday Once More"	The Carpenters	12
"Right Here Waiting"	Richard Marx	10
"Unchained Melody"	The Righteous Brothers	5
Other songs	Various	13
No interest in this music		3
Total respondents		153

[1]Ms. Dion is, of course, Canadian. Although the question text specifically asked about "American" music, she was mentioned in a large number of responses. One might infer two possible conclusions: first, Chinese may not realize that she is Canadian or, second, they may not make clear distinctions between Canadian and American popular singers. Since we do not know which is the case, her music will be analyzed in this study of "American" music.

percent) indicated no interest in American music. The five songs are consistent with the pattern we have been describing: a mixture of love songs and country, all with soft, easy sounds.

The previous sections of this article addressed the broader issue of cultural capital with regards to American music and products in general. The next section provides an explanation for the dominance of certain music genres among the Chinese students' favorite songs.

Cultural Power

There are no simple answers to the question why certain symbols are powerful. Michael Schudson supplies a fine-grained set of categories that direct our attention to important aspects of cultural power. This model helps us disentangle the multiple threads of contemporary and historical circumstances that give certain musical genres a special attraction to Chinese students. Schudson argues that the potency of a cultural symbol can be analyzed using five alliteratively named dimensions: retrievability, rhetorical force, resonance, institutional retention, and resolution.

- Retrievability: In order to be powerful, a symbol must reach a person. This dimension emphasizes issues that make people

aware of a symbol, and make it easily and conveniently accessible.

- Rhetorical force: Some symbols are particularly memorable or moving. This dimension emphasizes factors enhance a symbol's ability to effectively capture people's imagination.
- Resonance: Powerful symbols must be "relevant and resonant with the life of the audience" (167). This dimension includes traditions and history as well as contemporary audience interests and concerns.
- Institutional retention: Symbols are more likely to be powerful if authoritative institutions promote them.
- Resolution: Symbols are more powerful when they support a popular action or a commonly pursued goal. This dimension addresses how a symbol relates to action.

These are abstract descriptions that we exemplify during our discussion below. Particular attention is given to retrievability, resonance, and institutional retention.

Retrievability

Schudson highlights retrievability—the ability of a cultural symbol to reach people easily and conveniently—as vital to its long-term cultural success. In China, American music is readily available in ubiquitous CD shops. Most shops, smaller than a typical North American living room, offer a variety of selections from China, Japan, the United States, and other countries. Music CDs in China cost approximately ten yuan (about US$1.25) per disc, much lower than in the United States. Stores can make a profit charging such a low price because the CDs are pirated copies. This cost factor makes American music economically accessible to many consumers.

As what consumers will buy depends in great part on what is available, it is useful to list the types of music that are being sold in stores. In one informal survey performed by an AIE student at a CD shop in Hefei in 2004, easy listening, country, and oldies music comprised nearly twenty-five percent of the American music CDs. Out of the 101 American music CDs at that store, only five matched the American Top 40 list for that week. Though Chinese shoppers would not be able to buy an album by Limp Bizkit, they could purchase the

music of Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers. No Jessica Simpson recording was available, but Whitney Houston appeared on the shelves. The artist with the most CDs in stock was Celine Dion with six copies. Dion's prominence is not surprising, given her popularity among the students surveyed about their music tastes.

In addition to the availability of CDs of American easy listening music, and perhaps more importantly for this study, this type of music is also prevalent in public spheres. Liu Kang observes that, though some of the messages in music are new, they still "emanate from the old collective forms and structures" (5). Western songs are played in restaurants, department stores, and on public transportation vehicles. American music has penetrated even the most rural areas, where taxi drivers switched the Chinese music tape in their cassette player to Richard Marx when Rupke hailed the cab. One school within hearing distance of Rupke's apartment had a clock that played a tune every fifteen minutes in the manner of a grandfather clock. The song, of course, was "My Heart Will Go On."

Rhetorical Force

Among symbols that are easily retrievable, some are more memorable than others. Emerging from a century that has included famine, war, and the Cultural Revolution, many Chinese people long for the wealth and relative stability they see depicted in movies and in other American popular culture items. Consequently, American products carry a high status with a Chinese audience.

Since many Chinese, especially in rural areas, have not traveled outside national borders, their perception of Americans is heavily influenced by popular culture. Foreigners, especially those who look notably different from Chinese, are used extensively in advertising. A blond man dressed in traditional Chinese clothes holding a bowl of noodles smiles down from a billboard on Wangfujing, Beijing's most famous shopping street. Pleasant Midwesterners of moderate, though not extraordinary, attractiveness by American standards, appear in infomercials for Chinese products.[7] From this, we may surmise that North American musicians who look "foreign" will achieve more rhetorical force with a Chinese audience. Celine Dion's height, John Denver's blond hair, and Karen Carpenter's curls set them apart as foreigners, exotic and fascinating.

In addition to the high status of the creators of the songs, music as a medium of communication claims deep roots in the Chinese society. Folk music has existed for more than three thousand years and remains an integral part of family and community life (Huot 157). Karaoke and informal sing-alongs are common forms of modern entertainment in both urban and rural areas, near Beijing's Temple of Heaven and in mountain villages. Music was used as a propaganda tool by the Communist Party during the middle part of the twentieth century, but the focus of Chinese music has more recently shifted back to traditional folk songs, modern Chinese pop tunes, and, of course, American melodic offerings. The folk songs, which derive from ancient stories and poems, and for which there is no real American counterpart, are popular with persons of all ages, economic backgrounds, and geographic locations. For both historical and contemporary reasons, American folk and country music are rhetorically powerful to Chinese.

Resonance

Some symbols resonate with traditional and present-day concerns. While the United States as a creator of cultural symbols has prestige among the Chinese public, some American artists enjoy especially high status because of their harmonious, antipolitical, proworld stances. John Denver claimed that his music is for everyone, regardless of age, race, or politics. According to Johndenver.com, Denver was the first artist from the West to do a multicity tour of mainland China in October 1992. The site further notes that Denver was surprised to discover how well known his songs were among the Chinese. "Country Roads," he was told by his Chinese hosts, "is the most famous song written in the West." Widespread piracy explains why Denver was surprised by his popularity; his Chinese royalties were small. Denver also toured another communist giant, the U.S.S.R., with his country mountain music. The Carpenters, who released most of their albums in the United States in the 1970s, produced music that was "the squeaky-clean antidote to the early-70s brew of anti-war protests and acid rock" (Purtell). A Chinese American friend pointed out that country music is perceived as the music of the working class. The Chinese Communist government, beginning especially in the 1980s, permitted country music to be played since the political and social values of the creators blended well with communist politics.

Several connections can also be drawn between the values espoused in country and light music and those of traditional Chinese wisdom. Country music, such as that of John Denver, often revolves around the topic of the landscape and longing for one's home. His "Country Roads" (1971) captures this ethos, as this excerpt shows:

I hear her voice, in the morning hour she calls me.
Radio reminds me of my home far away.
And driving down the road I get the feeling
That I should have been home yesterday.

This music relates closely to the experience of the more than seventy percent of Chinese living in rural regions. The Asian emphasis on respect for elders teaches children to be dependent on adults and thus the concept of "home" is especially meaningful, even for adult children (Hofstede 32).

The theme of lost love, also a common premise of American country and easy listening music, is prevalent in Chinese literature and song as well. One famous Chinese love story tells of a concubine who committed suicide when the emperor was cornered in battle. Therefore, the tragic love story depicted in the film *Titanic* and its famous theme song resonated with the Chinese. Celine Dion's (1997) Academy Award-winning song is well known in Asia:

Near, far, wherever you are
I believe that the heart does go on.
. . .
And you're here in my heart
And my heart will go on and on.

Both the theme and the structure of the song make it accessible to most Chinese. The passive stance of the lover is an honorable one in Chinese culture, signifying faithfulness even after death. This song's simple, repetitive lyrics are easy to understand, even to Chinese people with only basic English skills.

William S. Fox and James D. Williams assert that lyrics alone cannot explain the resonance of music, but rhythm and melody must also be considered as conveyers of meaning (357). This is especially true in this case since not all Chinese people comprehend the English language of the songs. Most people, can, however, sense the themes of the music from its nonverbal characteristics. The top answers to the

survey question "Why do you like [your favorite American] song?" included responses of: "beautiful rhymes, reminders of happy memories, and melodies." These qualities have more to do with the sounds of the music than the verbal meaning. The sounds of easy listening music, often melodic and soothing, closely resemble traditional Chinese folk songs and current Chinese pop music. When foreign teachers at my school inquired about the choice of music that was played over the loudspeakers for several hours each day—which included Chinese students' favorite American selections—school administrators said they sought to calm students down after a rigorous day of study. This adoption of music by public organizations fits with the fourth aspect of Schudson's model, institutional retention.

Institutional Retention

A key characteristic of powerful cultural symbols is pervasiveness and support from public institutions. In a country where popular culture has a political component, Chinese government censorship or encouragement is a major force promoting certain kinds of popular music. Still a source of ideological regulation, the CCP helps define politically agreeable music. Laws governing cultural performances forbid messages that are subversive to the state, derogatory toward minorities, involve cruelty, or advocate pornography or violence (Harding 3). Since free speech is not a traditional or explicit value of Chinese culture, popular culture tends to be consistent with traditional political values, which in turn affects which music is imported from the United States. Marie Claire Huot (155) describes the connotations of rock music as being "politically subversive" whereas country-western (as well as easy listening and oldies) are "politically submissive." Common themes in rock music like rebelliousness, harshness, and sexual license were antithetical to the political and social harmony promoted by the Communist Party. In the early- to mid-1980s when the CCP opened up to western music, country and easy listening genres were more politically and socially appropriate than rock or blues.

Although censorship is much less important today, what was censored *then* is still important *now* because it defines what came first. What comes first is of immense importance. These songs became the repertoire of "oldies" that everyone knows. The genre of oldies in the

Chinese sense was constructed by a quirk of timing. It consists of popular, politically acceptable songs from the period when American music was re-admitted to China (Farrer 2005).

One popular pastime that has traveled from Japan to China is karaoke. Throughout China any night of the week will find karaoke bars packed with enthusiastic singers. Karaoke play lists usually contain soft favorites from the 1970s and 1980s, but rarely the most current hits.[8] Many oldies remain popular because they remain on karaoke play lists. In a country where many people have incomes too low for mass consumption, they are more likely to learn John Denver's songs in karaoke bars than through buying CDs. The fact that the songs are easy to sing helps them stay popular for karaoke. This retains oldies in the popular repertoire on a national scale.

Another source of community music is outdoor loudspeakers left from Cultural Revolution days when they were used for political speeches and patriotic songs. Now they broadcast school announcements and play music for student enjoyment. The musical selections of the universities include both Chinese and American numbers, but the American songs are drawn from a small, familiar list of light favorites.

Resolution

The final aspect of cultural potency involves its ability to convince the receivers to act in a certain way. The clearest example of resolution in American music involves the theme of romantic love, especially for young people. Matchmaking and arranged marriages have been the norm in China for centuries, were widespread thirty years ago, and still occur in rural areas. In recent times, however, romantic love is becoming more of a social option and the desired lifestyle for China's youth.

In contrast to the eroticism of other genres of American music, traditional Chinese values of chastity and fidelity are often underscored or at least not explicitly contradicted in easy listening music. Celine Dion's promise that "Near, far, wherever you are . . . my heart will go on" encourages a subtle response to the feelings of love, a response more in line with conventional beliefs on the subject. Patience and slowness in romantic love is still valued in Chinese relationships with three to five-year engagements considered normal. This aspect of the

Chinese social world contributes one of several key factors in developing a holistic context for the reception for American music.

Hard Rock in Beijing?

Despite China's values, traditions, and long-term orientation to change, musical change is indeed coming, if slowly. One beacon of this change, the Hard Rock Café, has opened restaurants in Beijing and Shanghai. The Rolling Stones performed in Beijing in 2003, and discos are moving inland. Huot (167) reports that rock music, with its harder sounds, has found an audience in China, especially in Beijing. It is clear that if Chinese preferences in American music are to change, Beijing and coastal cities will be the entry points for these movements. However, Beijing is also the home of the Party, and any additions to the national music repertoire will certainly be watched by the CCP. Plato recognized the connection of politics and music in *The Republic* when he cautioned that "any musical innovation is full of danger to the whole State, and ought to be prohibited ... when modes of music change, the fundamental laws of the State always change with them" (Fox and Williams 352). Any widespread change in music will accompany larger societal changes.

James Farrer (2000 227–28) cites the reemergence of discos as indicative of a newly emerging attitude toward eroticism. Low lights, outrageous fashions, and, of course, a throbbing techno beat set the stage for sexual exploration. These dance establishments sprang up in coastal cities along with China's economic development in the 1980s. The sexual imagery of disco is obviously different from the romantic implications of love songs, but these do not represent two different populations, but rather two different rhetorical and psychological moments enjoyed at different times often by the same people. A young person can enjoy soft country music during the day and techno dance clubs at night without contradiction. As discos and techno music have spread they have established a romantic/sexual split and a day-time listening/nightlife action split that one would also find in the United States. Where discos represent an amorous and playful culture, soft American music is acceptable fare for every day: calming, uncomplicated melodies and themes of love appropriate for all ages. Howard Becker's cultural drift (309) seems to be occurring in Chinese society,

bringing harder sounds and edgier themes in music. Yet we predict that soothing easy listening music, with its themes of lost love and home, will retain its popularity.

Conclusions

Godwin C. Chu describes Chinese culture as "an unascertained mixture of the old and new . . . an ongoing social process" (5). The past fifty years have been marked by intense change for China. Unification under the Communist Party has given direction and a sense of national identity. After policies that isolated China from the rest of the world for more than a decade, the nation has burst onto the international scene. Global economic development has facilitated cross-cultural exchange between China and other nations, including the United States, which was once thought of as an enemy. But globalization takes forms that are sometimes unexpected.

American popular music does not transmit American cultural values in any simple or direct way. Incoming popular cultural products interact with local culture and are influenced by it. There is no reason to believe that music is unique in this respect: American music, films, and television broadcasts are likely to share similar mechanisms. The models we discussed show how local audiences pick and choose those American cultural elements that resonate most closely with their life, their needs, and their personal goals. Some elements of American culture don't fit well and they are discarded. Powerful local institutions play a role by supporting some elements but not others. This sort of pushing and pulling reshapes American popular culture to fit the local context. There is American influence, of course, but it is mitigated, altered, and molded by the local culture.

Certain American music genres, particularly easy listening, country, and oldies, found a place in Chinese markets because of their high cultural capital, resonant themes, easy retrievability, and political suitability. This American popular music comes into Chinese territory on Chinese terms. However, the acceptance of American tunes in the first place represents a concession by the government in regards to the origin of the music. In an intensely nationalistic country, Chinese officials' sanctioning of American-made products shows a shift in national priorities. This change also represents a tension between tradi-

tional and modern ways of living. Globalization is an imminent reality in the Land of the Dragon. By importing American popular music, but only limited amounts of this music, China asserts its own view of what is acceptable in popular culture. Will China follow its western neighbors' leads in other genres of popular music? It is difficult to predict, but the radical shifts of the last century do not put it out of the realm of possibility. As Confucius said, "Study the past if you would define the future."

NOTES

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1. The first person singular pronoun "I" indicates personal stories based on Rupke's experience in China during 2001 – 2003, which we use when they advance our argument or to make a point.
2. We recognize that "oldies" music is not a genre in the sense of a set of conventions for performance and reception (Becker). In this article, it refers to softer, "nicer" songs that were first produced and performed before 1980. We discuss their appeal below, see "Institutional retention." "Cover" is the recording industry term used to designate a song—originally recorded by one artist—re-recorded by a new artist, usually with a new interpretation of the music and lyrics.
3. Although we write about American music in China, we recognize the growing importance of other countries' popular music. Our discussion of American music does not in any way imply that American songs are the sole source of global influence. Chinese preferences in American music—choices that may initially seem surprising—form the basis for this article.
4. Limited discussion of production and distribution issues is appropriate for this music. The soft, mellow genres that we discuss owe their popularity to their inherent resonance with Chinese culture (see the discussion of Schudson's model of the power of cultural symbols, below). These genres tend not to be as rapidly changing or as trendy as other rock genres. Hence the production dimension, so central to popular American music (as described by the production of culture literature, e.g. Peterson and Anand), is comparatively less important here. However, the Chinese government plays an important production role as a censor, see below.
5. There may be a generation gap between the teenage students in Dujiangyan and the teachers from Anhui who were in their mid-twenties. One student from Dujiangyan regularly brought headphones to his classes, though he was the exception in this. The older students never brought music players to classes.
6. One store in western China had a sign with a Chinese name and English translation written underneath: "Be passionately devoted." The store's product? Computers.
7. Although I have no formal acting training, I was asked to appear in an infomercial for air mattresses. I was told that the appearance of foreigners would increase the sales of the purple model, which was currently not selling well.
8. One American friend was coerced by her Chinese friends to sing "My Heart Will Go On" four times in a single evening in a karaoke bar.

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Globalizing Chinese martial arts cinema: the global-local alliance and the production of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*

Huaiting Wu and Joseph Man Chan

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MEDIA CULTURE &SOCIETY

Globalizing Chinese martial arts cinema: the global–local alliance and the production of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*

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Global cultural flow has been widely recognized to be asymmetrical in favour of the West. Many researchers in international communication have dedicated their attention to the study of the phenomena associated with this cultural domination (e.g. Boyd-Barrett, 1998; Lee, 1982; McChesney, 1998; Schiller, 1979; Waisbord, 2001). In contrast, little attention has been paid to the possibility of reversed cultural flow: the proliferation of non-Western culture in the Western countries. This gap is particularly striking in the wake of the increasing flow of cultural influence from the East to the West (Allison, 2000), such as the growing popularity of Hong Kong Kung Fu movies in the United States since the 1970s, the global success of Japanese games and television cartoons since the 1990s, and the popularization of Asian food and cultural practices in some Western communities. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the global cultural flow, we cannot afford to neglect the study of cultural flow in the *reversed* direction.

Using *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (called *Crouching Tiger* from here) as a case, this study attempts to fill the void in this area. Based on a martial arts novel, *Crouching Tiger* is a Mandarin-language film set in 19th-century China (see Appendix 1 for the story outline). Since the film is in Mandarin, with subtitles, and its story centers on the legendary *wuxia* (swordsmanship) and *jianghu* (swordsmen's world) – two concepts in Chinese culture that might be difficult to understand for many foreigners – virtually no one expected the film to be a global blockbuster. To many people's surprise, it turned out to be more than a blockbuster – it was a record setter in 2001.

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In the North American market, where audiences generally spurn subtitled movies, *Crouching Tiger* became the highest grossing foreign-language film ever in North America, and was the first foreign-language film to break the US $100 million mark in box office receipts.[1] It also broke box office records for foreign-language films in England, France, Germany, Australia and New Zealand. At the worldwide box office, it earned over US $200 million, including US $128 million in the North American market (*Variety*, 2 March 2004). In the Asian region, *Crouching Tiger* was quite well received too; it opened with a leading box office position in Taiwan, Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines (*Business Wire*, 12 February 2001).

Crouching Tiger was also a big winner in various film festivals in 2000 and 2001, including the 73rd Academy Awards. The ten Oscar nominations it garnered are the most ever received by a foreign-language film in Academy history, breaking the previous record of seven held by Italy's *Life Is Beautiful*. The unprecedented success of *Crouching Tiger* around the world has made it a good case for studying reversed cultural flow. Its genre of martial arts film, which is deeply rooted in China, its original script as a Chinese *wuxia* novel, its line-up of Chinese talents and its language (Mandarin) all demonstrate its origin in the East. Its popularity in international cinemas and film festivals shows its global success. However, in order to be popular in the West and around the world, the movie has to be transculturated/glocalized/globalized. It is a cultural price one has to pay for globalization. Thus, the goal of this study is to trace the production dynamics to identify the conditions that have rendered reversed cultural flow possible. Specifically, we are interested in learning the organizational context and the process by which a local culture is appropriated for the global audience. We understand that distribution and audience reception also play important roles in the whole equation of reversed cultural flow. However, considerations of length have led us to decide to focus on the production side in this article. The task we set out to accomplish is to understand the critical role played by the global–local alliance in transculturating local culture for the world screen.

Global–local dialectics

The globalization of local cultural products takes place in a social context and involves agents at various levels. Here we argue that the key link in bridging the gap between the global and the local is the strategic alliance formed among firms and individuals. The alliance involves local and transnational corporations engaging in financing, production, distribution and exhibition in the movie industry. The individuals are often professionals who are part of networks connected to corporations. Before we demonstrate the global–local alliance's role in the production of *Crouching Tiger*, we would like to propose

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a theoretical argument as to why such an alliance is at the heart of the transcultural production process.

Particularization vs universalization

In the increasingly interconnected world, cultural products from the affluent core countries, especially the USA, have the greatest influence in determining global cultural consumption. Transnational corporations, most of which are Western based, distribute their products to almost every corner of the planet. In the motion picture industry, the seven major Hollywood studios hold around 85 percent of the world market (Segrave, 1997). This Western domination is criticized as a form of cultural imperialism, whereby Western ideology is exported, destroying the diversity of local cultures and spreading a homogeneous global culture (e.g. McChesney, 1998; Schiller, 1979).

While conceding the predominance of Western media and cultural products in international communication, scholars dispute whether the global flow is necessarily a one-way flow (e.g. Barker, 1997; Tomlinson, 2000). They argue that it is possible for cultural influence to flow from the periphery to the center and among peripheral nations. Moreover, with the growing influence of reception theory that views audiences as active readers of texts, the theory of cultural imperialism is recognized as 'a leap of inference from the simple presence of cultural goods to the distribution of deeper cultural or ideological effects' (Tomlinson, 2000: 84). As the theory of cultural imperialism loses its appeal, more discourses in the area of international communication are cast under the perspective of globalization.

Globalization, in general, refers to the multiple processes that connect and integrate different aspects of social life in new space–time combinations, thus making the world in reality and in experience intensively interconnected (McGrew, 1992; Tomlinson, 2000). From this perspective, global interconnectivity is not necessarily equal to global uniformity. Globalization is no longer a one-way flow that spreads a homogeneous global culture based on Western ideology (Giddens, 1994). It is more a 'multi-directional and multi-dimensional set of processes' (Barker, 1997: 5) that allows the enrichment of global culture by diversity as well as a variety of local discourses, codes and practices (Featherstone, 1990; Hannerz, 1990). Based on the discussion of global economy, Robertson (2001: 464) argues that 'the production and promotion of goods and services on a global scale requires close, ongoing sensitivity to cultural difference' in local circumstances. It is proposed that the ongoing interpenetration of the universal and the particular is the most general characteristic of global change. As Appadurai (1990) points out, the central problem in globalization is the dialectical tension between cultural homogenization and heterogenization. Globalization is thus understood in conjunction with localization: the global and local are relative to one another

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and both belong to the same dialectical process. This line of argument leads to the coinage of concepts such as 'glocalization' (Robertson, 1995), 'hybridization' (Pieterse, 1995) and 'transculturation' (Chan, 2002), which are meant to indicate the global production of the local and the local production of the global. What all these concepts try to capture is the dialectics between particularization and universalization – the 'particularization of universalism' and the 'universalization of particularism' (Robertson, 1992: 102).

The above discussion has important implications for the globalization of a local culture. While non-Western cultural products may appeal to Westerners for being unique and exotic, they are often regarded as so different as to be alienating. In order to be accepted in Western countries, local firms must try to enable their Western audience to cross the 'cultural psychic distance'. This can be achieved by choosing themes, performers, dramatic elements and modes of presentation to which the Western audience can respond. Many audiences around the world, not to mention Western viewers, have long been socialized by Hollywood productions. It has been difficult for non-Western local film producers to neglect the audience's predispositions on what makes up a good film. The incorporation of globalized norms and concepts in the production of local cultural products will thus enhance their acceptability around the world.

Besides catering to the needs of the global audience, the producers, in globalizing a local cultural product, have to create a sense of cultural authenticity at the same time. After all, the local culture is the resource that they start out with. To achieve these aims, they have to actively engage in glocalization or transculturation – the transformation of the original culture for the global market. To balance the needs of both the global and the local, the producers need to be sensitive to the forces of both globalization and localization, and to have a good understanding of intercultural and intracultural dynamics.

The centrality of the global–local alliance

The major agent of transculturation is the media organization, the character of which has immense influence on both the production process and consumption (Chan, 2002). In theory, both transnational corporations (TNCs) and local firms can create products based on specific local culture and promote them in the global market. However, the limitations of economic, cultural and human resources on both sides have restricted their practices.

According to Ger (1999), TNCs are the most powerful promoters of cultural products in the global market. The accumulation of enormous capital, marketing experience and the control of the global market have given them a tremendous competitive edge. However, these companies are usually more interested and confident in globalizing their own cultures and products. Local companies based in peripheral or semi-peripheral countries are the natural

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candidates for globalizing local cultural products. However, not all local companies are well equipped for this task. Only those that understand the rules of global competition and possess other necessary cultural capital might have a chance of success. Incorporated into global capitalism, some local firms have not only gained experience of how to do business in the global market, but have also become part of a global network involving both local and international players. It is these firms that have the potential to challenge the TNCs and compete in the global market.

While local firms are at a disadvantage with respect to TNCs in terms of economic resources, they own what Bourdieu (1986) has called cultural capital, which can be turned to their advantage in the process of cultural globalization. In a system of exchange, capital can be categorized into economic capital, symbolic capital, social capital and cultural capital, with one type being translatable into another. Following Bourdieu, Ger (1999) argues that a local cultural resource can be converted into capital for its globalization. He believes that local firms owe their strength to their cultural resources rather than economic resources because they can use cultural capital to create unique values and a sense of cultural authenticity.

While local companies may possess some unique cultural capital, they have to overcome their disadvantaged position in global competition. The shortage of economic capital has been the most critical problem plaguing the development of local cultural products. Different countries, organizations, agents and individuals have unequal access to power, resources and control over events in globalization (Tomlinson, 2000). To compensate for their less competitive position in regard to TNCs, local firms have to develop a more innovative and critical approach (Ger, 1999). Besides the lack of funds, the lack of international distribution power is another handicap confronting local firms. Since many local firms do not have access to subsidies, or agencies in foreign markets, global marketing has been difficult. Even if they find a distribution channel, few can afford the promotion costs in Western countries. It is Hollywood majors that determine what kind of films can be screened around the world (Segrave, 1997). In addition, marketing costs escalate when five or six oligarchies control global distribution, using expensive marketing campaigns to beat their rivals and hold back new competitors (Gomery, 1998). Since no other film-making industry has sufficient capital to embark on such a global distribution network, it is virtually impossible for Asian cinema to compete with Hollywood movies and successfully promote their cultural products on their own in such an environment.

But the disadvantages in economic capital and marketing do not mean the exclusion of local cinema from the process of globalization. Faced with the threat of marginalization in the market and the lack of investment, local firms can be empowered by forming alliances with firms elsewhere – including TNCs – in the form of joint ventures (Dholakia, 1987). Such linkages can sometimes create globe-spanning networks that are able to mobilize resources

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and pursue opportunities more effectively than even giant firms unaffiliated with such networks. The global alliance of organizations is thus structurally an intrinsic part of globalization. The complex interpenetration and interdependence within global networks gives rise to a diversity of organizational forms at different levels, resulting in what Pieterse (1995: 52) calls 'structural hybridization', which provides the links in the global web of competition and cooperation. Through global affiliation and the pooling of resources, local companies can overcome their weaknesses in economic capital, marketing and distribution. We will see shortly how, in the case of *Crouching Tiger*, strategic alliance and global vision are crucial for globalizing a local film.

Methodological note

The primary methods we used in this study are document analysis and textual analysis. We rely on published interviews and documents for the analysis of the economic and cultural dynamics involved in globalizing *Crouching Tiger*. Taking advantage of the convenience of the internet and the power of electronic databases, we collected large amounts of news articles for our reference, including film reviews, financial performance reports, and interviews with the producers and other industry insiders. Ang Lee and other key producers gave many interviews during the process of producing and promoting the film. Two databases were used in the data collection process: LexisNexis® Academic Universe for English news published around the world and WiseNews for Chinese news published in Greater China. A total of about 1250 English and 13,000 Chinese news and magazine reports was collected for the period of April 1998–April 2002.

While the collection and analysis of the news reports is an arduous task, the real challenge lies in the cross-validation of the data. Since we mainly relied on published interviews and news, extra attention had to be paid to the validity of the information. We solved this problem by cross-checking various sources. If any difference existed, we chose the most authoritative ones and sometimes the most-cited ones. We also appealed to our own accumulated knowledge about the movie industry whenever we had to make judgments.

In addition to document analysis, we text-analyzed *Crouching Tiger* and its original novel to identify the plot, the major themes, the characters and the artistic style. We also compared the screenplay with the novel in order to find out how the film-makers rewrote the film. Such analysis also enabled us to relate the text to the observations made by the film's producers and us. To heighten our sensitivity to and understanding of what the producers had done to the Chinese martial arts genre, we reviewed documents about the development of Chinese martial arts cinema as well as several old martial arts films deemed to have an important influence on *Crouching Tiger* (*Come Drink with Me*, 1965; *Dragon Gate Inn*, 1967; *A Touch of Zen*, 1969).

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Local agents and global alliance

The success of *Crouching Tiger* did not happen in a day. It rode on the so-called 'Asian wave' or the globalization of Asian films and talents. While Hollywood still dominates the global film market, there is an increasing need for diverse, different and non-standard films from other parts of the world. In the past few years, Asian cinema has passionately emerged, with a bounty of riches and delights, introducing new sensations and fresh ways of telling stories to Hollywood and carving out an enlarging global market. Meanwhile, there is a growing Asian population in the United States and Europe, looking for films that address their lives and concerns. Industry observers believe that all these factors indicate that this is an opportune time for a new Asian cinema in the West.

Asian cinema has been making waves at film festivals for about half a century. Films from China, Iran, Japan and Korea, in particular, have been richly rewarded at premier film festivals throughout Europe and Asia in the last decade. In this new wave of Asian cinema, the most prominent is the 'Greater China cinema' of Hong Kong, Taiwan and Mainland China. Hollywood is especially receptive to two types of movies from this geo-cultural region. The first is the Hong Kong martial arts film, featuring stars such as Jackie Chan, Jet Li, Michelle Yeoh and so on. Although some of these films are quite popular, they suffer from criticisms of being low in aesthetic value and high in violence. The second type is serious films that are released in art houses. Some of the more important directors in this stream include Ang Lee, Kaige Chen, Yimou Zhang, Edward Yang, Hsiao-hsien Hou and others. Artistically acclaimed, these Chinese productions can only reach a limited audience. In addition to these two genres, Asian movie talents are also making their debut in Hollywood. John Woo, Ang Li, Jet Li, Jackie Chan, Yun-Fat Chow, Wo Ping Yuen have all come to make a name for themselves there in their own capacities.

In a nutshell, the emergence of Asian cinema in the West, the budding success of Chinese film-makers in Hollywood and the growing popularity of Hong Kong action movies together provide a favourable environment for the globalization of Chinese martial arts films. It was against this backdrop that *Crouching Tiger* was produced for the international film market. In this section, we will analyze how and why the global–local alliance was formed for the production of *Crouching Tiger*.

Local agents with a global vision

While poaching Asian talents and absorbing some elements from Asian cinema, Hollywood majors seldom produce films based on Eastern cultures, let alone actively facilitate the spread of these cultures in their domestic market. As evidenced in the case of *Crouching Tiger*, it is the local companies that

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take the initiative to globalize an Asian cultural product. The three producers who are credited with launching the project of *Crouching Tiger* include Bill Kong, L.K. Hsu and Ang Lee. The trio represents the alliance of two local companies, Edko Films Ltd (Hong Kong) and Zoom Hunt International Production Co. Ltd (Taiwan). An examination of the *resumés* of the trio will show that the *Crouching Tiger* project is not a random occurrence, but more a result of the global–local experience they have.

First is the director and producer Ang Lee. Born in Taiwan and educated in the United States, Ang Lee had made some highly acclaimed arty movies in Taiwan, including *Pushing Hands* (1991), *The Wedding Banquet* (1993) and *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994). In 1995, Lee went to Hollywood and directed the Oscar award-winner *Sense and Sensibility*. After that, he completed *The Ice Storm* and *Ride with the Devil*. The second is the co-producer Bill Kong, who is head of Edko Film Ltd, a long-standing independent film company in Hong Kong that also engages in the import and export of movies and running cinema chains. Moreover, Edko has an arrangement with Sony to distribute Columbia Tristar films in Hong Kong. Another co-producer is L.K. Hsu, currently President of Zoom Hunt International Productions Co. Ltd, which produces both films and television. During his tenure at Taiwan's Central Motion Picture Corporation (CMPC) as General Manager and Production Chief, he oversaw the production of some of the best-known Taiwan films, including Ang Lee's trilogy mentioned earlier.

The two local companies are experienced in making independent films and have established many linkages with international audiovisual companies. The three producers are all senior film-makers, with good knowledge of both the local and the global film markets. The alliance of the three can be dated back to 1991 when Lee made his feature *Pushing Hands* for CMPC, then headed by Hsu.[2] Bill Kong made a deal to distribute the film and Lee's later CMPC films in Hong Kong. And it was then that the trio first got together and started talking about the Chinese martial-arts fantasy that would eventually become *Crouching Tiger*.

The conception and development of this Chinese martial arts film took a long time. It was in 1998 that the trio felt the time was finally right. After the production of the critically lauded *Sense and Sensibility*, *The Ice Storm* and *Ride with the Devil*, Ang Lee was thought to be at the optimum point of his career to make the martial arts film. Trained in the United States, Lee, by then, was well versed in the Hollywood mode of production and widely recognized as a top arty director. In retrospect, there was perhaps no better candidate than Ang Lee for globalizing a Chinese martial arts story because of his rich experience of transcultural film-making and his deep understanding of both Eastern and Western cinema.

If we are to generalize from this case, the globalization of talents appears to be a pre-condition for the globalization of local cultural products. While TNCs exploit the human resources of developing countries by poaching their

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talents, they also train cosmopolitan professionals for these countries. Acquiring enormous experience in global competition, these professionals have become a key force for the development of the local economy and culture. Given the global–local knowledge and contacts that these local firms and professionals have, they are well positioned to serve as the strategic link between the global and the local.

In addition to the availability of transcultural movie-makers, the pooling of local cultural resources is another strategy that worked for *Crouching Tiger*. Indeed, the three producers decided that the film should be a Chinese martial arts film, the most distinct genre of Chinese cinema, and wanted the major production members to be top Chinese professionals in the industry. Ang Lee drew on the 1000-year-old *wuxia* culture and the 80-year-old *wuxia* film tradition for inspiration and technical support. While Dulu Wang's *wuxia* novel *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* served as a good story for the film's adaptation, the kung fu masters from Hong Kong provided the technical support for the shooting of action scenes. Ang Lee and his partners enlisted the assistance of a Hong Kong based team led by Wo Ping Yuen, a master known locally and internationally. The film also benefited from the power of Hong Kong action stars, who had made their names in both the local markets and Hollywood. Action movie actresses like Michelle Yeoh and Pei-pei Cheng were the treasure that no other cinemas could readily provide. Yun-Fat Chow was also a good choice, because of his fame and his rich experience in action movies, after the failure of the producers' attempt to include Jet Li, a real martial arts expert, in their cast. To match the international positioning of the film, music writer Dun Tan, cinematographer Peter Pau, cello soloist Yo-Yo Ma and the singer Coco Lee – all well known figures regionally or globally – were invited to join the line-up of talents, thereby increasing the potential for the film to conquer both Asian and Western audiences.

Besides gathering together top Chinese film talent, the producers also took advantage of the beauty of landscapes in Mainland China. Since the film story was set in the 19th-century China, Ang Lee reportedly insisted that all scenes be shot on location in China. After half a year of hard work in Mainland China, the producers won the support of Beijing film companies and other local companies, and chose over 100 locations for the film. In fact, the film was shot in almost every corner of China, ranging from the Gobi Desert in Xinjiang to the bamboo forest in Zhejiang. These diverse and breathtaking landscapes greatly contributed to the film's attractiveness (Sunshine, 2000: 46).

To sum up, in their attempt to produce a high-quality film for the international market, the producers of *Crouching Tiger* tried to fully exploit the cultural capital provided by the Chinese *wuxia* culture, Chinese talents and Chinese scenery. In many ways, the film was really bringing together almost every conceivable idea that one could have of China, resulting in what is to some a perfect marriage of Taiwanese creativity, Hong Kong star power and China's stunning scenery. However, having a competent local team is not

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sufficient for the globalization project. It requires the formation of the global–local alliance to which we will turn.

Financing and the global–local alliance formation[3]

Although Chinese movie talents were in good supply at the time when *Crouching Tiger* was being produced, there was a general lack of movie funding. With the competition of Hollywood movies, the shrinking of local markets and the rampant piracy problem, Hong Kong and Taiwan could no longer sustain production on a large scale, particularly in the wake of the Asian economic crisis. Meanwhile, the formidable costs of shooting, special effects, film stars, advertising and distribution have driven up the costs of film-making. The US $15 million estimated cost of *Crouching Tiger*, much lower than the average cost of a Hollywood movie, was record high for a Chinese martial arts film. While virtually no one had confidence in the global distribution of the film, the estimated combined income to be derived from the Greater China region would not be able to cover the investment. For all these reasons, the producers had trouble in fundraising from day one.

The trio did try to seek local financial support. The experience of *Crouching Tiger* showed that one should not rule out this possibility. L.K. Hsu obtained an investment contract from the President of a Taiwanese corporation who, however, withdrew money at the last minute in the wake of the Asian financial crisis. With nowhere to go, Ang Lee and Bill Kong wanted to pre-sell the rights of the film and get money for the production, a common way of raising money for independent film production in Hong Kong (Leung and Chan, 1997).

In the fundraising process, the New York based Good Machine International (GMI) played a vital role. GMI, a company engaging in film sales, marketing, and financing, maintains an ongoing relationship with USA Films as the latter's exclusive foreign sales agent while also working on films separately with studios such as Universal Pictures, New Line Cinema and so on (Sunshine, 2000). Having a long-time relationship with Hollywood majors, international cinemas and local Hong Kong–Taiwan–China cinemas, GMI worked on the sales of the film's global rights, connected Hong Kong–Taiwan producers with Hollywood major studios, a European bank and bond company in Los Angeles, and pre-sold rights in Asia, America and five European territories, thereby making the production and global distribution of the film possible.

The involvement of GMI and its critical contribution to the film's fundraising and global distribution are good evidence for the importance of establishing a global network in the globalization of local cultural products. The three producers had a long-time relationship with Good Machine and its co-presidents, James Schamus and Ted Hope.[4] It was through Ang Lee's prize-winning student film that the two co-presidents discovered Lee's talent. Since then, GMI has produced

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all seven of Lee's films, and GMI co-president James Schamus was involved in all of them as (co-)writer and (co-)producer (Sunshine, 2000: 140). Given the background of Ang Lee and GMI, it seems only natural that they finally formed an alliance to turn a Chinese story into a movie for the world audience. This speaks to how international interactions may breed global networks that eventually span across cultural boundaries in globalizing a local culture.

Fundraising in the United States brought the Hollywood business system into the film *Crouching Tiger*. Before this, the traditional pre-sale market of Chinese films was mainly in Southeast Asia. To reduce financial risk, Hollywood distributors often pick up finished Chinese products at international film festivals, instead of financing them directly. Schamus observed that *Crouching Tiger* marked the first time that a high level of financial sophistication was applied to a Chinese-language film. With Lee's New York lawyers, Schamus was reported to have worked for seven months from Good Machine's SoHo offices, stringing together a complex web of financing commitments that crossed Asia, Europe and North America.

The importance of forming a global–local alliance is further demonstrated by the uphill battle that GMI had to fight in order to find financial support in the USA and around the world. While the producers were looking for only US $15 million, a pittance by Hollywood studio standards, it was against all odds for Hollywood investors to finance a Chinese-language film (Lee insisted that Mandarin be the film language), not even with Ang Lee at the helm. Their reasoning was simple: they could buy a finished Jackie Chan movie for less – so why invest in something unproven? No one could blame Hollywood investors for their lack of confidence in a Chinese film, because even Lee's biggest Chinese-language film, *Eat Drink Man Woman*, had grossed only $7 million in the United States (*Los Angeles Times*, 2000). Actually, arty Chinese-language films had a poor box office track record, with top performing films making less than US $10 million each (*Los Angeles Times*, 2000).

In the end, Sony Picture Entertainment agreed to finance the film, because some of its subsidiaries were interested in the Chinese martial arts film. Persistent efforts on the part of the producers and GMI finally resulted in the formation of a global–local alliance: the film was to be produced by a company formed by L.K. Hsu, Bill Kong and Ang Lee, Columbia Pictures Film Production Asia and two film companies in Beijing; the releasing companies were Sony Pictures Classics, Columbia TriStar Film Distributors International and Good Machine International; the financing bank was in Paris and the insurance company was in Los Angeles (see *Asian Times*, 2001; *Boston Globe*, 2001; *Los Angeles Times*, 2000; *Post Magazine*, 2001). In this sense, the film became a product of a global–local alliance. It demonstrates how local companies, through the mobilization of top globalized local talents and international networks, can translate local cultural resources into economic capital. The remaining task is for the global–local alliance to produce a film that can attract audiences across cultures.

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Striking a balance

The formation of the global–local alliance fulfils two major functions in globalizing a local movie: it provides the necessary funds for launching the project and organizes talents that are well versed in transcultural film-making. These two functions are related to the extent that the production team will have to be held accountable to all the international financing agencies. They have to balance the needs for particularization and universalization. Specifically, they have to be faithful to the local culture and maintain a sense of cultural authenticity; at the same time, they have to keep the attention and appreciation of peoples across cultures by universalizing their stories. In this section, we will focus on how the global–local alliance tried to maintain such a balance while producing *Crouching Tiger.*

Reconfiguring Hong Kong martial arts cinema

The sense of cultural authenticity is created by constructing an ancient China and *wuxia* world in the film. *Wuxia* culture is primarily an outcome of popular imagination, whose abstract nature provides plenty of room for the producers to project their feelings, emotions and imaginations, and that is why Ang Lee chose the martial arts genre to be the story-telling tool. Drawing on the cinema tradition developed by Hong Kong film-makers, especially the old-style *wuxia* films of the 1960s and 1970s pioneered by King Hu, Ang Lee presented a new style of martial arts film, fusing together martial arts, romance, drama, Chinese opera and dance. He drew elements from Chinese culture – new and old, traditional and modern, classic and popular – to reproduce and refigure the martial arts cinema tradition.

Chinese martial arts films make up a genre rooted in Chinese *wuxia* culture that has a history of about 2000 years (Bordwell, 2000). A *xia* is a swordsman, who might come from any class, and *wuxia* involves knightly chivalry. To enjoy the *wuxia* tale one must grant that supreme skill in martial arts could give a fighter extraordinary powers. Like the Arthurian legends of Europe, *wuxia* culture promotes a concept of knightly virtue. Strong and skilful in martial arts, the roaming swordsmen were brave defenders of the right, especially in a dire situation. China has an unhappy history of corrupt and tyrannical regimes during which there was no rule of law and *wuxia* became the central heroes of popular imagination. They could deliver vengeance in a society where law held no sway. As told in movies, martial arts stories can take on a variety of styles. Through decades of exploration, Hong Kong has built up a specific production system for martial arts cinema: it has its own styles of plotting, shooting and action aesthetics; based in Chinese society and *wuxia* culture, it constructs a fantasy *wuxia* world and *wuxia* beliefs for both the film-makers and moviegoers; it has trained crops of professional *wuxia* film-makers, including directors,

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choreographers, actors and stunt men; moreover, the hundreds of movies produced in the past serve as the best reference for *Crouching Tiger*.

The producers and their team were well positioned to exploit the heritage of the martial arts cinema for the world screen. Ang Lee had gone on record as to how it was the martial arts films of his Taiwanese childhood that made him fall in love with cinema. In particular, the influence of King Hu, the first Chinese director to achieve critical recognition in the rest of the world, can be seen throughout Ang Lee's martial arts film (Bordwell, 2000). Examples include the incorporation of dance and the acrobatic moves of Chinese opera into a previously stiff style, the use of elaborate camera movements, and the offer of equal or superior standing in the world of action to women.

Crouching Tiger adopted many other typical plots of *wuxia* stories, such as wandering warriors, swords, revenge, sequences of fighting and *qing-gong* (that is, what the Western media call 'defiance of gravity'); its setting in China, and its use of Chinese traditions, customs, costume, music, architecture, and landscapes, and its film language of Mandarin Chinese are also from the *Wuxia* tradition. The film recapitulates elements from the tradition of martial arts films. For instance, the serene self-possession of Li Mu Bai is reminiscent of King Hu's fighters, and Li Mu Bai's decision to give up his Green Destiny sword reflects his weariness with *jiang-hu* and wasteful killing, and his deep yearning for peace – a feeling common among great warriors after years of wandering and fighting (Bordwell, 2000). But warriors can never really escape from *jiang-hu*. In fact, vengeance is one of the most important impetuses for the existence of *jiang-hu*, and is indispensable to the plots of Chinese martial arts films from the very beginning. As a martial arts film, *Crouching Tiger* tells the story of the long pursuits and investigations of various parties, finally leading to the end of a vengeance mission, with Jade Fox and Li Mu Bai killing each other. From a historical perspective, this plot was composed within the scope of traditional *wuxia* culture. All these elements joined forces to form a credible *wuxia* world.

Ang Lee and his team went beyond the heritage and reconfigured the traditional martial arts cinema of Hong Kong. He tried to do something different, with more elaborate camera movement, lighting, beauty and aesthetics. To Lee, fighting in the film was treated not just as 'kicking and punching' but also as a way 'for characters to express their unique situation and feelings' (Sunshine, 2000: 7). In order to stress inner strength and centeredness, more romantic choreography and dance came together in the film to create slow pace and graceful fight scenes that were rare in martial arts cinema. Ang Lee actually produced the film from the perspective of an arty director. This is particularly evident at the very beginning of the film. There is a full 16 minutes of exposition before the first action scene – essentially a sequence of conversations outlining the characters and the behavioral and ethical codes of their world. Sixteen minutes may not seem long to those used to art house films – the initial target audience of *Crouching Tiger* – but for those familiar with Chinese action cinema,

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particularly the Hong Kong variety that has dominated the field for 20 years, it is an eternity. Lee explained the reasons for this: he wanted to surprise the audience by setting up the drama and the characters in a very static, slow-paced beginning, before unleashing the first dance-like fight sequence between the two main female characters (*Washington Post*, 2000).

This slow pace and the graceful fighting scenes also served to enhance the global appeal of the film. Its art movie style separated the film from the negative impressions Western audiences had of Hong Kong Kung Fu movies that were viewed negatively by Western audiences, and the slow pace was not a problem in international markets. After all, the audience that knew Ang Lee's other works would not be bothered or surprised at all by the pacing. In fact, most audiences did not have good knowledge of the rules of the Chinese martial arts genre. Moreover, the long conversations that outline the characters and their ethical codes were helpful because they served as a brief introduction of *wuxia* norms to the foreign audience.

In summary, by fusing martial arts, drama, Chinese opera and dance together, Ang Lee reproduced and refigured Chinese martial arts cinema and presented a new style of *wuxia* movie to the global audience. The martial arts genre, the insistence on the Mandarin language, the shooting locations around China, the Chinese calligraphy and grand bridal procession, the touch of traditional philosophy and so on served to bring forth a strong sense of cultural authenticity. To the foreign audience, it does not matter whether such a *wuxia* world really exists. What is important is that it pertains to their imagination of ancient China in general and its martial arts world in particular. Given the popularity of *Crouching Tiger*, the film-makers appear to have made effective use of the cultural icons and stereotypes that foreign audiences might bring into their reading of the film. With the sense of cultural authenticity in place, the next task was to ensure that that film does not look so different as to alienate the Western audience.

For the global audience

The pre-sale of the international rights of *Crouching Tiger* means that the film was to be distributed globally from the very beginning. For economic reasons, if nothing else, there was a tendency for the producers of *Crouching Tiger* to give it a universal spin. In fact, the global–local alliance, consisting of parties familiar with transcultural movie making, was inclined towards this very task. The need to achieve a balance between domestic and foreign tastes is common to all occasions when cultures meet, clash and mingle. This is an especially acute issue when globalizing a culture that holds a subordinate position in the world market.

One of the most striking features of *Crouching Tiger* is its focus on the female protagonists. While female warriors are not uncommon in Chinese

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martial arts cinema, they seldom steal the limelight as they do in *Crouching Tiger*. Besides the Green Destiny sword, the film tells the story of two women, both capable fighters, whose fates intertwine. One of them, Jen (the thief of the sword), tries passionately to break free from the constraints society has imposed on her, even if it means giving up her aristocratic privileges for a life of crime and passion. Young and energetic, Jen is portrayed as the real dragon. The other, Yu Shu Lien, in her lifelong pursuit of justice and honor, discovers too late the consequences of unfulfilled love.

As individualism has long been part of the West's cultural fabric and has been globalized in the late 20th century, feminism has begun to take hold in some Asian countries. With *Crouching Tiger*, Ang Lee took advantage of a feminist touch to attract Western audiences, particularly women. It should not be seen as a mere coincidence that he chose a *wuxia* novel that focuses on tough female characters and wove the ideas of feminism into the Chinese martial arts film. He wanted to move away from what had become a 'macho genre' and transform it into a story-driven action fantasy led by women (*Newsday*, 2000). Tough and attractive, the women in *Crouching Tiger* can serve as the models for feminist theorists. These female protagonists resonate with the popular post-feminist theory, which emphasizes that woman can maintain their traditional feminine good looks alongside a new exercise of women's power. Unlike female characters who are only sex-objects or weak dependents of men, the three-generations of women in the film are skilled fighters, strong enough to protect themselves and to pursue what they want: Jade Fox, a villain who kills Li Mu Bai and his master; Yu Shu Lien, a woman who runs Yuan Security; and Jen, the daughter of a governor who finally breaks away from her family and wanders alone in *jiang-hu*.

The fight sequence between Jen and a group of male characters in the teahouse best manifests the power of female characters. Disappearing after the bridal procession, Jen travels to a nearby town with the Green Destiny sword, masquerading as a man. Intrigued by the Green Destiny, a group of local male martial arts characters, challenge Jen to fight. Not fearing this at all, Jen swiftly defeats all of these male characters one after another. She declares her defiance of the dominant male power, saying: 'Who am I? I am the invincible Sword Goddess. Armed with the incredible Green Destiny. Be you Li [Mui Bai] or Southern Crane [Li's master], lower your head and ask for mercy. I am the desert dragon …' Such scenes and words were expected to draw female audiences into the cinema.

But the producers refrained from going to the extremes of feminism, understanding that most audiences are in the middle and that extremism may alienate the mainstream. They chose a feminist touch – the combination of traditional femininity and physical power – that would provoke the least displeasure among the mainstream audience. They also shaped Li Mu Bai and Yu Shu Lien as role models within the story. In the original novel, the real protagonist is Jen, who is self-centered, wild, headstrong and thirsty for freedom, a character at odds with China's feudalistic past. Li Mu Bai and Yu Shu Lien,

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the acclaimed knights-errant, only have supporting roles and occupy little space in the novel. The film-makers rewrote the story and put more emphasis on these two characters. This shift of emphasis helps to strike a better balance between East and West, feminism and traditional gender roles.

By the same token, the producers also tried to strike a balance between the pursuit of personal freedom and social obligations. This contradiction is best spelt out in the dialogue between Jen and Yu Shu Lien when they first meet in Sir Te's Study.

Jen (longingly): It must be exciting to be a fighter, to be totally free!
Yu: Fighters have rules too: friendship, trust, integrity.... Without rules, we wouldn't survive for long.
Jen: I've read all about people like you. Roaming wild, beating up anyone who gets in your way!
Yu: Writers wouldn't sell many books if they told how it really is.
Jen: But you're just like the characters in the stories.
Yu: Sure. No place to bathe for days, sleeping in flea-infested beds.... They tell you all about that in those books?
Jen: You know what I mean. I'm getting married soon, but I haven't lived the life I want.
Yu: So I heard. Congratulations. It's the most important step in a woman's life, isn't it?
Jen: You're not married, are you?
Yu: What do you think?
Jen: No! You couldn't roam around freely if you were.
Yu: You're probably right.

Later, Jen really breaks from her family to be a fighter. But she is destined to be disappointed because there is no absolute freedom, not even in the fantasy of martial arts world. Her pursuit of freedom is portrayed as impetuous and dangerous, and she is punished by her disillusion with *jiang-hu* and even by her death at the end of the film.

The conflicts between social obligations and personal yearnings have been a key theme in many of Ang Lee's films. As observed by Schamus, the executive producer and screenwriter of *Crouching Tiger*, Lee is always concerned with the search for a balance between the yearning for individual freedom and constraining social norms (Sunshine, 2000: 83). For freedom and love, Jen can break from her family and social obligations, and fight under the rules of *jiang-hu*. In contrast, Li Mu Bai and Yu Shu Lien respect the ideals of honor and selfless duty, and live a life of duty. Focusing on such role conflicts, *Crouching Tiger* becomes much less 'foreign' for Western mainstream audiences. After all, the conflicts between social obligations and individual freedom are almost universal. By taking an *ambivalent* attitude towards these conflicts, the producers make it possible for audiences from diverging background to bring their own readings to the film.

That *Crouching Tiger* has a story that appeals to many people across cultures is no coincidence. Its transculturability is again a result of the global–local

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alliance which makes back-and-forth screenplay-writing feasible. The writing involved Taiwanese writers and James Schamus, Ang Lee's long-time business partner. The process of script-writing literally commuted between Hollywood and Taiwan, with Lee preparing an outline of the parts that interested him and Schamus drafting a screenplay, which was translated into Mandarin to be worked on by the Taiwanese writers. According to Schamus, the original English script had a very strong narrative focusing on breathless story-telling ('Production Notes', n.d.). But when the English script was translated into Chinese, it was clear that there were a lot of cultural meanings missed and it would be difficult to make the text into the movie. Much revision had to be done by the Taiwanese writers. When the script was translated back into English, Schamus was able to ingest an enormous amount of detail and also a feeling of the martial arts genre. He restructured the script, bringing it back into a more Western narrative form. This back-and-forth translation is actually a decoding and re-encoding process of the Chinese martial arts film. Between the Chinese and English versions was Ang Lee – 'the guy who was in the middle, who was between the two worlds' ('Production Notes', n.d.). He directed the cooperation of the three screenplay-writers and finally brought out a screenplay that tells a *wuxia* story in a Western narrative.

All these efforts ended in rendering the fantasy *wuxia* story comprehensible to Western audiences while maintaining a sense of cultural authenticity. The focus on the female characters and moral contradictions has largely transformed the genre of the film. There is a degree of realism in the film, with outstanding female characters and a tragic ending, both of which are unusual for a martial arts film. *Crouching Tiger* impresses the audience not only with its extraordinary fight sequences but also its dramatic power, contrasting with the romantic stories linking the four martial arts fighters. In effect, *Crouching Tiger* became a film that blends martial arts, drama, romance, tragedy and fantasy together to form a cross-genre. In many ways, the film lived up to the Hollywood pitches used for its global promotion, describing *Crouching Tiger* as '*Sense and Sensibility* with martial arts' and 'Bruce Lee meets Jane Austen' ('Conversation', n.d.). These phrases suggest the hybridized nature of the film, which, coupled with Ang Lee's fame as an arty director, enabled the film to be shown at both art houses and mainstream cinemas, thereby paving the way for the popularization of *Crouching Tiger* in the West.

Conclusion and discussion

What theoretical sense can we make out of the unprecedented global success of *Crouching Tiger*? We set out to explain how and why the local Chinese martial arts cinema is globalized for the world screen. We have found that the reversed cultural flow, as epitomized by *Crouching Tiger*, is indeed possible. In fact, such flow – as in the case of Chinese martial arts cinema – has been

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going on since the 1970s, when Bruce Lee made his debut. *Crouching Tiger* is more like a culmination of this growing trend. It is therefore an oversimplification if we equate globalization with cultural homogenization. Emerging is a global need for difference and local particularity, which forms the very basis for making the globalization of local culture possible.

There is no attempt here to gloss over the disparity between the resource-rich Western countries and the resource-poor developing countries in cultural globalization. The disadvantages of the latter persist and have real consequences. What *Crouching Tiger* demonstrates, however, is that given the right conditions, a local culture of the East can be made popular around the world. The local agents are found to be the primary movers of the project. What they have to do is to overcome the lack of resources and to face the global competition from TNCs, as well as the marketing obstacles set by foreign markets. To meet these challenges, local companies must negotiate for globalization. The alliance with other organizations, such as TNCs and local companies in other countries, can help to solve the problems by pooling resources, competencies and skills. In the production process, local producers must maintain a global–local perspective, exploiting the particularity of local culture on the one hand and universalizing it for the world on the other. Striking a balance between particularization and universalization is at the heart of the production process. Once again, *Crouching Tiger* signifies the necessity and importance of cultural borrowing and hybridization in globalizing a local culture.

The last, but not the least, important step for globalizing a local culture is distribution. While we would like to leave an explication of the importance of global distribution for another report, suffice it to mention here that the global–local alliance should include international distributors as an important party. In the case of *Crouching Tiger*, it was through the international distribution network that the film achieved global exposure. Besides the need for a global distribution channel, innovative marketing strategies are also needed for international distribution, because extra efforts have to be made to overcome the Western consumers' negative associations and unfamiliarity with Eastern cultural products.

Although the success of *Crouching Tiger* cannot spell the end of cultural imperialism, it represents an anomaly to be reckoned with. It clearly demonstrates the possibility and the way in which a local culture can be globalized on a significant scale. Theoretically, the success of *Crouching Tiger* lends support to the argument that globalization is not necessarily directed from the West and is a multi-directional and multi-dimensional process. As Giddens (1994: 96) says, globalization can 'no longer be spoken of only as a matter of one-way imperialism'. It is distinguished from imperialism in that it is a far less coherent or culturally directed process. More importantly, the effect of globalization is to weaken the cultural coherence of *all* nations, including the economically powerful ones (Tomlinson, 1991). Globalization, in the last instance, is to be understood in conjunction with localization.

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The next question that naturally follows is the typicality or atypicality of this case. What does *Crouching Tiger* represent – just a flash in the pan, or a long-term trend? There is no question that Asian companies, encouraged by the success of *Crouching Tiger*, are becoming more ambitious in the international market. At the same time, global distributors have become more aware of Chinese-language films. But we should bear in mind the limited extent of reversed cultural flow and the continuing imbalance between the East and West in terms of cultural production, distribution and consumption. Having sounded this caution, on the basis of our analytical framework, we would like to stress that the success of *Crouching Tiger* is no accident. It speaks of the feasibility for globalized Chinese talents, with the joint effort of transnational corporations, to transform local culture for the world screen. As far as the conditions for making *Crouching Tiger* successful remain, therefore, it should not be both the first and the last of such films. In fact, how a local culture can be globalized is a dynamic process. The success of one project will lower the threshold for others that follow. The surge of interest in Asian films brought about by *Crouching Tiger* has already helped them financially and through exposure. Hollywood studios like Miramax, MGM and Columbia Pictures have since been looking around earnestly for films with crossover potential. Such confidence in Chinese-language films would have been unimaginable before the success of *Crouching Tiger*.

However, there is the risk that the path of development may take other turns. Hollywood studios are not likely to back films that may flop later in the box office, or make expensive deals with producers that do not pay off. Hurt a few times, they may hunt elsewhere for foreign films, as happened after the initial success of the Italian film *Life is Beautiful* (1997). But one can perhaps argue that the world has changed in some important ways, including an enhanced state of cultural globalization, the growth of globalized Asian movie talents and the accumulation of knowledge about transcultural movie-making. Such changes are conducive to Asian cinema's global expansion.

Finally, we hope that this case study will open up further exploration of reversed cultural flow. Although *Crouching Tiger* is an important case, it does not exhaust the possible permutations of ways by which a local Eastern culture is globalized. The globalization of local cultures is a dynamic process that needs to be constantly monitored. The success and the failure of one case, and the measures taken by one major party, may have repercussions far and wide. For instance, there is a danger that TNCs may finally take over control of local cultural resources once they recognize their value. At the same time, some local agents may develop reservations about forming alliances with other companies, especially TNCs, for fear that it will weaken their control over the product and the market. What is the price to pay in the local firms' negotiation with globalization? It also raises the question as to whether success at the box office can be equated with cultural success from the local perspective. The answers to these questions will affect how global–local

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alliances will be formed and whether they will be formed at all. Hopefully, a diversity of cases will become available for investigation and comparison.

Appendix 1: The story of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (for further details, see Sunshine, 2000)

The story of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is set in 19th-century China. Li Mu Bai (Yun-Fat Chow), the greatest martial artist of his time, is giving up his sword, the legendary Green Destiny, to follow a new life path. He asks Yu Shu Lien (Michelle Yeoh) to deliver the sword to Sir Te (Lung Sihung) in Beijing, while he goes to Wudan Mountain to pay his respects to his late Master, who was poisoned by Jade Fox.

Shu Lien presents the sword to Sir Te and later meets Jen Yu (Zhang Ziyi), the daughter of Governor Yu (Li Fa Zeng). Jen is afraid of her upcoming arranged marriage and longs for the freedom of the *jiang-hu* (martial arts life) world. That night, a masked thief steals the Green Destiny. Bo (Gao Xian), Sir Te's chief security officer, tracks the thief back to Governor Yu's compound. While Police Inspector Tsai (Wang De Ming) and his daughter May (Li Li) claim the thief to be Jade Fox, who killed Tsai's wife, Shu Lien has other suspicions.

Shu Lien goes to visit Jen. She tries to quell Jen's fantasies of *jiang-hu* by telling her own story. Shu Lien's fiancé was a brother by oath to Li Mu Bai and was killed defending Li in battle. After that, Li and Shu Lien gradually fall in love, but they have to hide their feelings since they cannot dishonor her fiancé. As a woman, Shu Lien explains, she has to abide by tradition even thought she is in the *jiang-hu* world.

Later, Jade Fox (Cheng Pei Pei) arranges a meeting with Tsai and May to settle their feud. Jade Fox reveals her identity as Jen Yu's governess and fights against her adversaries. Li Mu Bai arrives. When he is about to defeat Jade Fox, the masked thief appears with the Green Destiny sword to rescue her. Before their escape, Jade Fox kills Tsai.

The following day, Jen and her mother Madam Yu (Hai Yan) are invited to Sir Te's place. Shu Lien tells them of Jade Fox's villainous acts and says that if the Green Destiny is returned the thief will not be persecuted. That night, the masked thief breaks into Te's study to return the Green Destiny. Li Mu Bai intercepts and defeats the thief. He wants to train the thief in Wu Dan Mountain. But the offer is rejected. Later the thief returns to Governor Yu's compound and reveals her identity as Jen Yu. She asks her governess Jade Fox to leave.

That night, a stranger sneaks into Jen's room; this turns out to be her lover, Lo (Chang Chen). The memory of their love story is recalled. In a desert, bandits led by Lo rob Jen and her mother's carriage. Racing after Lo, Jen collapses from thirst and hunger and is rescued by Lo. Later on, a passionate love affair develops between the two young people. But Jen has to return to her family. Lo promises to return to her and marry her as a respectable man. He tells her the legend of a boy who jumped from a mountain to save his parents. The boy's wish came true without him even getting hurt.

In Jen's bedroom, Lo tells her that his past as a bandit makes it impossible for him to become a respectable man. He begs her to elope with him to the desert. Jen refuses and asks him to leave. The next morning, at Jen's bridal procession, Lo appears to ask Jen to marry him. He is chased after by Governor Yu's security men and is rescued by Shu Lien. Li sends Lo to Wudan Mountain to wait for Jen. Jen disappears after the wedding and the Green Destiny is stolen again. Later, Jen appears at a nearby town with the Green Destiny, disguised as a man. She is challenged by local martial arts characters and easily defeats them.

Jen shows up later at Shun Lien's place. When they are fighting, Li comes in and again offers to train Jen. Jen turns him down. As they fight, Li throws the Green

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Destiny into the rushing rapids and Jen dives after it. Jade Fox appears, rescues the nearly drowned Jen and leaves her alone in an abandoned kiln. When Li Mu Bai finds Jen, she is drugged by Jade Fox. Li expels the poison. Shu Lien and Bo also arrive and Li realizes that it is a trap. At that moment, Jade Fox suddenly appears and hurts Li with a poison arrow. While Li kills her, the damage has been done. Jen knows the antidote and races to Shu Lien's compound to obtain it.

As Li and Shu Lien wait for Jen, they are finally able to admit their true feelings to each other. Then Li dies in Shu Lien's arms. Later, Jen travels to Wudan Mountain and is reunited with Lo. Then she unexpectedly jumps from the cliff and disappears in the clouds.

Notes

1. *The Passion of the Christ* surpassed *Crouching Tiger* as the highest grossing foreign-language film in US box office history in 2004.

2. For the alliance of the three, see 'Interview with Bill Kong' (*Post Magazine*, 2001).

3. For detailed information about funds, see 'Company Town: The Biz: Funding for *Crouching Tiger* a Work of Art' (*Los Angeles Times*, 2000). See also 'Movies: Producing the Tiger Neglecting his Dissertation, James Schamus has Found Unlikely Success in Film' (*Boston Globe*, 2001); 'Interview with Bill Kong' (*Post Magazine*, 2001); and 'The Special Report of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*' (*Asian Times*, 2001).

4. Good Machine, an independent film production company, was formed in 1991 by James Schamus, a known screenwriter and businessman experienced in raising money, and Ted Hope, a man with production skills. See *Boston Globe* (2001).

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14 Consumption, Culture and Change

Catherine Reynolds

- This chapter explores how consumption may speak to or convey various aspects of our character, taste, gender and social status. What does our consumption say about us? What do we think about the consumption of others?
- Variations on these questions have formed key points of contention that have animated sociology, anthropology and cultural studies.
- This chapter considers these differing perspectives, drawing on the relatively new subdiscipline of consumption studies as well as situating ideas about consumption in a historical perspective.

Introduction

In Western democracies consumption forms part of a range of activities that make up the framework and routines of our everyday lives. We shop for clothing, food, and other household or personal items, for ourselves and others. We socialise over breakfast, lunch, coffee, dinner, and drinks. We go to concerts and plays, watch movies, listen to music, and attend sporting and other cultural events. We work in organisations that consume, and which produce objects and activities that are consumed in turn. We use various modes of transport, travel, and partake in a rich and diverse range of 'hobbies'. Consumption is a ubiquitous aspect of our everyday practices — it can be fun, but it can also be stressful, and a mundane, irksome chore.

As part of the activities that constitute our daily routines, consumption as a generic practice is easy to take for granted, to carry out without really consciously considering what it means or entails. Our consumption nevertheless impacts on the world in a range of ways. The goods we use come from somewhere; their production has a substantive effect on the world, as does their use and disposal. The impact of each of these stages is also generally very difficult to determine. Intricate networks and processes are involved in producing the goods we consume: in affluent Western societies mass consumption is difficult to avoid — very little is now handmade, grown or produced locally. Many of the products we consume are produced by global

corporations, which are themselves situated in a web of relationships involving financial institutions, governments, trade networks, and distribution and supply chains. Businesses need to make a profit and reduce costs as much as possible in order to survive. Product development, advertising and branding is central to this process, as is political lobbying (according to the Centre for Responsible Politics (2011), in 2009, US$3.5 billion was spent on lobbying in the United States).

Our consumption is subject to a range of targeted strategies on the part of businesses, as well as various policies and programmes on the part of government, all aimed at regulating, fostering and managing individual, household and business consumption. Meanwhile governments themselves are also huge consumers, and produce goods and services that are consumed in turn. However, when we as individuals consume we also do so in a manner which involves habits and patterns of behaviour that are embedded in extraordinarily complex cultural and social norms. We partake in consumption that reflects our habits and tastes — what we consume is an expression of our likes, dislikes, and a broad range of interests and motivations. Our consumption occurs within the context of our network of relationships, which are themselves situated in relation to larger societal ideas and debates about which practices are, and are not, acceptable. Consumption in this sense goes beyond any singular act of purchase. In consuming we express a social outlook that in turn constitutes material culture: collectively, our individual consumption choices shape the fabric of the world in which we live.

Consumption has played a key role in many disciplinary concerns from cultural studies and sociology to economics, and arguments about consumption run through many influential theoretical accounts. For Marx, the Frankfurt School, and other post-Marxist theorists consumption is the most obvious evidence of inequality under capitalism — the consuming 'haves' as opposed to the 'have-nots'. As an embodiment of popular culture and culture more generally, consumption is also the focus of disciplines such as anthropology. In cultural studies, consumption has been caught up in debates about identity; questions have been asked about the extent to which consumption can be considered as a bona fide expression of self/society, and perhaps even evidence of subcultural 'resistance' to dominant societal norms or capitalism *per se*. These accounts, in turn, are often weighed against arguments about the extent to which consumption in affluent societies is shaped, co-opted and determined by factors such as advertising. In this, differing disciplinary concerns and perspectives have ensured consumption has been the topic of a range of quite heated debates.

When considering these debates, it is important to keep in mind how our understanding of consumption has changed markedly over time. It is also important to note that it is only recently that

"consumption studies" has become a recognised field of study in its own right. While consumption formed a central conceptual category for many older accounts and disciplinary fields, it was also generally taken as given. As recent research has emphasised however, even defining consumption is not as straightforward as it might seem at first blush.

Defining consumption

When we think of consumption, the exchange of goods and services for money usually springs to mind. But what of the consumption of a housewife's labour by her family? What of how we consume and use goods and services time and time again? Every time we play a song we have purchased we consume it. Then there are the clothes we wear, the season pass to the pool or gym, the calls we make on our mobiles and so on. Consumption is clearly not just restricted to shopping and the moment of purchase. To further complicate matters, anthropology as a discipline now often considers consumption in terms of 'material culture'. Here the built environment, the items we see around us, the services we use and so on, are all a result of human production, and are by extension consumed. However, if we talk of consumption in this way, consumption and the act of consuming can become so broad as to refer to almost anything.

Another way of thinking about consumption is to weigh it against what it is not — a purer, less fiscally compromised form of social relationship somehow abstracted or removed from our existence under capitalism. This stance became fairly popular over the latter part of the twentieth century, and remains so with various theorists and commentators today. But differentiating between sociality and consumption is not always so easy; as is evident in the case of housewives as primary caregivers, a lot of consumption is carried out with solicitude for others in mind. Though not always: in *Freedom* (1988: 92) Zygmünt Bauman points out the prevalence of sex tourism and sweatshops.

Consumption, luxury and lust

Despite the difficulty in pinning down precisely what consumption might be, theorists and social commentators have had quite a lot to say about it, and over the centuries consumption has been subject to a range of vehement moral discourses. In the Bible, Satan tempted Eve to commit the original sin — the consumption of an apple from the Tree of Knowledge (Sekora 1977: 24). Consumption here was responsible for Man's expulsion from Eden; for centuries



Figure 14.1 Detail from 'Adam and Eve' by Lucas Cranach, the Younger (1515–86)

Biblical doctrine represented consumption as impious and ungodly. St Paul denounced the love of money as the root of all evil (St. Paul, I Tim. 9:10); in the Middle Ages luxury was considered one of the seven deadly sins. In the influential medieval poem *Psychomachia: The Battle for the Soul of Man* (c. AD 405) there is an allegorical battle between the Christian Virtues and Vices — here luxury is personified as a woman, who at first beguiles and seduces the Virtues, but is then defeated by another female Virtue, 'Sobriety'. This verse is casually sketched with brutal, gruesome relish: the poem's warnings about Luxury (as 'Luxuria') and other Vices subsequently inspired carvings, statues, and frescoes on churches throughout superstitious and largely pre-literate Europe. One of the most horribly graphic of the statues (see Figure 14.2) depicts Luxuria in anguish, a demon spitting toads in her direction, one already poised repugnantly at her vulva, while snakes bite or suckle her breasts.

Ideas about luxury and consumption over this period have a clearly gendered complexion, featuring claims about flaws associated with women's intrinsic nature and moral character. This bias against women's consumption was a regular element of accounts from the late Middle Ages, with many novelists and social commentators transposing consumption with femininity, depicting it as a sign of weakness, pettiness, temptation, seduction, immorality, and corruption. In the eighteenth century, texts such as Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (2003) connected consumption with a decline of masculine

martial spirit
related in turn to a more general national decline. In another correlation between negative feminine qualities and consumption, Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary* (2007) positions the heroine's vices (closely associated with consumption and a lack of sexual restraint, in this case adultery) as leading to a sad and troubled death.



Figure 14.2 'Luxuria' at Saint-Pierre in Moissac, France

Such perspectives were not anomalies. Disparagement of women's consumption was a regular feature of popular magazines such as *Punch* throughout the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. Complaining of a similar tone adopted by the American press, in 1732 a female correspondent to the *Pennsylvania Gazette* wrote, 'I have several times in your paper seen severe reflections upon us women, for idleness and extravagance, but I do not remember to have once seen any such animadversions upon the men' (cited in Breen 1993: 256). This selective criticism remained throughout the 1800s — dandies and flâneurs were renowned for and even identified by their consumption practices, yet at the same time maintained a distinctive misogyny which disparaged women's consumption. Even in the modern vernacular this gender bias remains — the 1999 film *American Beauty* portrays masculine consumption of items such as red sports cars as positive and liberating; feminine consumption of household furniture as oppressed and oppressive.

Consumption and the cosmological order

One final striking feature of this older period is that for many years consumption was regulated by law according to class, with 'sumptuary' laws existing across Europe from the Middle Ages, in some countries even up until the 1850s. Goods policed included the colour and material of clothing that could be worn by specific classes, the types of food that could be eaten, even the number of horses allowed to draw carriages. Sumptuary law was a tangible, legal marker of societal status: it was closely tied to the notion of a social hierarchy, a class system set in place by God. Here religious and political doctrine subscribed to and promoted the notion of a 'divine order' — God's 'great chain of being', with sumptuary law being represented as part of the natural cosmological order, the legal embodiment of God's grand design (Huizinga 1990).

From the 1650s, trade began to expand dramatically in countries such as England and the Dutch Federated States, and new types of goods became increasingly available which often fell into a 'grey' area as far as sumptuary law was concerned. As this trade developed, so too did alarm about shifting class boundaries and transgressions against the 'proper' order. As a new mercantile class grew and obtained increasing financial and political power from the late 1600s, the degree and tone of the hostility towards consumption among commentators intensified (Berry 1994). Much of the consumption then criticised we would now consider rather banal. For instance, tea was then considered a luxury item, so valued it was kept under lock and key. In elite households the used leaves migrated down the social ladder to end up in the scullery, used many times over. Similarly, *café-au-lait* originated from servants selling used grinds to street vendors who then mixed the grinds with watered-down milk and sold the resultant drink on the street. Critics thought working class consumption of such items 'a shameful waste of money' (Shammas 1993: 178). Yet while working class consumption caused an outcry, the type of 'luxury' being denounced often also began to vary according to the political orientation, preconceptions and motivations of specific critics. The criticisms nevertheless had a very real impact: in 1724 over 90,000 people were arrested in London for sumptuary law violations. Half a century later, the writer Smollett still supported hanging as an appropriate punishment for such transgressions (Sekora 1977: 110).

The vehemence directed toward consumption over history makes curious reading. Governments now encourage us to spend, to think of spending as good for the economy, as contributing to our national health and well-being. In America, consumption has even been positioned as a patriotic duty, with President George W. Bush stating on 11 October 2001 that, 'we cannot let the terrorists achieve the objective of frightening our nation to the point where ... people don't shop' (cited in *The Independent* 2001). By way of contrast, 250 years ago the term consumption was associated with the fatal wasting disease we now call tuberculosis (Porter 1993). Clearly ideas about consumption and consumption practices have changed over time. Smoking, for instance, once signified glamour and style. Now the latest controversial anti-tobacco advertisements in France play suggestively with the image of young smokers pandering to tobacco company executives, with statements such as 'Fumer, c'est être l'esclave du tabac' (smoking, is to be the slave of tobacco). Over hundreds of years, changes in the manner in which we purchase, use and dispose of goods have come about as a result of, and in conjunction with, changing social, economic, technological, and legal norms and practices. Yet, while in affluent societies we largely take consumption as given, as with the response of the tobacco industry to challenges to its products, ideas about what consists of acceptable levels of consumption and acceptable consumption practices have not evolved via any smooth teleology. Political economists such as Adam Smith and David Hume began defending and promoting consumption from the mid-1700s (Appleby 1993; Hirschman 1977), but the emerging theoretical and practical acceptance over the last few hundred years developed side by side with arguments that tied consumption to society's moral and spiritual decline.

'Our melancholic consumerist malaise'

Contemporary critics would no doubt reject many of the motivations and prejudices of their predecessors; they share a similar rancorous tenor, but the former differ in seeing consumption largely as a product of motivations such as emulation and greed exacerbated by the character of life under modern consumer capitalism. Consumption is portrayed as empty, lacking any worthwhile characteristics, part and parcel of a deeply flawed understanding about what is or should be valued in terms of how we engage with material culture and other people. Many of these arguments involve a set of fairly reductive assumptions about consumption and consumer consciousness — a common theme is that we devalue others via our consumption and diminish our own humanity in the process. Much of the consumption that occurs is positioned as worthless, and critics tend to dismiss out of hand the 'variety of human satisfactions sought through the market' (Appleby 1993: 162). Consumption offers only transitory, superficial fleeting satisfactions, but obtaining these fleeting satisfactions becomes a sick compulsion, with people becoming addicted to partaking in an empty process that leaves them perpetually dissatisfied, unable to understand let alone recognise how their 'real needs' have become misshapen and deformed.

Many of these views form only a part of wider, intricate and sophisticated critiques of modern capitalism: at the risk of doing a disservice to the conceptual richness of these accounts, in relation to consumption a simple overview supplies the general theme. For Marx, '[t]he extension of products and needs

becomes the ingenious and calculating slave of inhuman, artificial and imaginary cravings' (cited in Heller 1974: 50). For Simmel, products 'call forth an artificial demand' (Miller 1994: 68). Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* maintains that 'products indoctrinate and manipulate' (1972: 24); and Adorno and Horkheimer's famous critique of the 'culture industries' positions popular mass market consumption as part of a growing 'falsity' of beliefs about *need* across the general population — it is part and parcel of a new 'administered culture' involving 'indoctrination and social control' (Kellner 1989: 130–1). In the latter half of the twentieth century these, and similar arguments about false consciousness were fostered by a new focus on mass media and the role of advertising: in *Decoding Advertisements*, Judith Williamson (1978: 9) positions advertising as speaking to a 'real need ... falsely fulfilled'. Consumption that occurs as a result of advertising offers only 'perpetual unfulfillment', but simultaneously serves to 'obscure and avoid the real issues of society, those relating to work: to jobs and wages and who works for whom' (1978: 47).

More recently in *Globalization: The Human Consequences* (1998), Bauman maintains consumption is responsible for bringing about a decline of culture and the pollution of proper social relations. He cites other theorists who similarly regret our 'melancholic' consumerist 'malaise' (Carroll, cited in Bauman 1998: 82), and 'the development of an artificially created and subjective sense of insufficiency' (Seabrook, cited in Bauman 1998: 94). In *Affluenza* (2006) the Australian theorist Clive Hamilton adopts a similar tone. Here consumption diminishes our intrinsic capacity for human engagement and interaction. It is false, irrational desires generated by emulation and competition over status that drive today's consumer society. In *Excess: Anti-Consumerism in the West* Kim Humphrey outlines many similar recent accounts, noting that 'rarely has a month gone by over the last ten or fifteen years without a new book being published on the perils of working, borrowing and spending' (2010: 17).

What all these positions share is a deep concern about inequality and the quality of life in privileged Western countries under late modern capitalism, and they have grounds for that concern. You, Jones and Wardlaw (2010) have calculated that in 2010 around 22,000 children under five died every day due to malnutrition and other poverty-related diseases. The United Nations *Human Development Report* (1998: 2) — which focuses on changing consumption patterns — notes that:

> [g]lobally, the 20% of the world's people in the highest-income countries account for 86% of total private consumption expenditures — the poorest 20% a minuscule 1.3%. More specifically, the richest fifth:
>
> - [c]onsume 45% of all meat and fish, the poorest fifth 5%.
> - [c]onsume 58% of total energy, the poorest fifth less than 4% ...
> - [o]wn 87% of the world's vehicle fleet, the poorest fifth less than 1%.

These figures reflect a stark reality: consumption clearly *is* the most obvious evidence of an egregious basic inequality in access to material culture and resources.

By any measure consumption in affluent countries, including Australia and New Zealand, is grossly bloated in comparison. But is consumption itself wholly responsible for inequality? In *Grundrisse* (1974: 94) Marx wrote of capitalism being a system predicated on production and consumption, but he also noted the crucial role of distribution and exchange. However we define it, consumption does not in itself determine how we organise society's mechanisms of distribution and exchange, although along with production it forms an intrinsic component of that system. For while poverty and starvation are a result of *not enough* consumption, globally this is not a matter of there not being enough food. Most of the world's edible grain is used to feed animals, with cattle alone eating enough to feed 8.7 billion people (Spencer 1996: 341).

The manner in which goods are produced, distributed and consumed certainly occurs amidst and contributes to abject poverty, malnutrition, and appalling income inequality. Human rights abuses also take place insofar as many goods are produced using sweatshop labour, where people (including children) work long hours for often a fraction of what the product they are making actually sells for. Cruelty to animals and escalating levels of environmental devastation are other factors, as recent documentaries such as *Food Inc* (agribusiness), *End of the Line* (over-fishing) and *Gaslands* (gas mining) all too graphically illustrate. Most global emissions come from a relatively small number of countries, namely the US, China and the European Union. However, per capita, Australians still have one of the largest ecological footprints in the world, producing more greenhouse gases in 2009 than any other developed country (Cubby 2010; World Wildlife Fund 2010: 39). This amount has only increased in recent years, yet even in 2003 Australians generated eight times more greenhouse pollution than the Chinese, person for person, and 170 times more, per capita, than people in Bangladesh (Climate Change and Development Roundtable 2007). New Zealand's contribution to global emissions is only 0.3 percent, but per capita this is still five times higher than China's (Whitehead 2007).

These statistics are alarming, and although scientific consensus recognises climate change and the environmental impact of consumption as issues of global concern, studies suggest people can also 'feel overwhelmed by appeals to save the planet' (Trentmann 2007: 3). Gay Hawkins notes that environmental

discourses can perpetuate the very relation to nature they seek to challenge: alienated distance and disinterest. When the exploitative force of economic power and human destruction is so overcoded why bother contesting it? You may as well just keep shopping' (2006: 9). By way of contrast, one recent Australian report, *Sustainable Consumption: Young Australians as Agents of Change* (Bentley et al. 2004: 2), is positive about the desire on the part of young people 'to minimise their impact on the Earth'. However, the authors note that this 'concern does not necessarily translate into personal action', with young Australians often feeling as if their personal action cannot achieve any real impact (2004: 3, 31–50). At the same time many 'did not appear to understand how their own behaviour contributed to environmental problems' (2004: 33).

Consumption as an integral aspect of human sociability

One notable aspect of the critical accounts of consumption throughout history is that they have had very little impact at a general societal level, and have had 'little political resonance' (Kellner 1989: 162). Consumption remains subject to the opprobrium of many commentators, yet from the 1970s this began to change as theorists in disciplines such as anthropology, sociology and cultural studies began to examine consumption in more detail. One influential account by Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods* (1996), positioned goods as having a language with symbolic significance, where the meaning of various consumption items can be 'read' and 'interpreted', with those meanings directly connected to conscious, sometimes semi-conscious values of the person using the good. Tastes derive 'from the social structure', and the meanings associated with various consumption practices are 'arranged in vistas and hierarchies that can give play to the full range of discrimination of which the human mind is capable' (Douglas and Isherwood 1996: xxvii, 44). Consumption here is regarded as an integral part of human social relations, where tastes and preferences cannot be reduced to motivations such as emulation and status competition, but deserve more considered analysis.

Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction* (1984) — another celebrated account of consumption practices — also analyses the meanings associated with various goods. Unlike Douglas and Isherwood however, Bourdieu focused on the effect of class, and carried out a huge number of surveys and interviews which charted a significant statistical relationship between individuals' tastes, preferences and their social location. Drawing on the results, Bourdieu argued that ways of classifying and ascribing value are produced in the context of class, with people internalising and reproducing patterns of behaviour, capacities, and awareness of cultural codes across generations. Upbringing and education generate particular ways of viewing the world, and shape the tastes and skills individuals bring to

bear in all their consumption practices. As with Douglas and Isherwood, Bourdieu here gestures strongly toward goods as having a rich *social* meaning, however he emphasises how that meaning is constructed, with moral valuations of taste being arbitrary, including hierarchies which emphasise the worth of 'high culture' and denigrate popular culture. At the same time, however, Bourdieu implies his subjects 'misrecognise' the effect of societal power relations: in other words, the values they themselves place on the practices they undertake do not tell the whole story.

Many responses to the Frankfurt School in the 1970s questioned the extent to which people could be considered so wholly determined. Similar concerns have also been raised in relation to Bourdieu (Jenkins 2000: 152). Two other noted contributions around this time — Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979) and Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1988) — attempted to deal with the issue of determinism by proposing that subcultural groups demonstrated agency by using heterodox consumption practices to subvert and replace the dominant societal meanings attached to goods with their own. This new emphasis on subcultural resistance to consumer capitalism and consumer culture *through consumption* was a novel departure, and various other theorists began to consider consumption as a far more complex and integral aspect of human sociability.



Figure 14.3 The punk subculture: resistance to capitalism through consumption?

As cultural studies increasingly began to emphasise the worth of studying popular culture through the 1970s and 1980s, particular consumption practices came to be seen as indicative of various aspects of identity and identifications,

and this in turn connected with a new theoretical interest in the body, desire, curiosity, novelty, creativity and play. Cultural studies itself has a wide-ranging interdisciplinary orientation that values the complexity and ambiguity of the 'everyday'; considering consumption practices now appears central to this focus. However, analysing consumption in terms of resistance has resulted in criticism even within cultural studies itself. Stanley Cohen for instance, has noted that identifying resistance has tended to require arbitrary decisions and value judgements about precisely what constitutes resistance. Such judgements can become 'massive exercises of decoding, reading, deciphering and interrogating' (1980: ix) about what may be taking place 'at a level beneath the consciousness of the individual members' of these groups (1980: xiv), with their actual motivations, views and intentions being left out of the equation. Other theorists have noted that focusing on pleasure, 'resistance' and reappropriation also runs the risk of disregarding the impact of wider political systems and practices of power which can shape and influence meaning.

Given the longstanding critical accounts of consumption, the new positive approaches also often generated rather polarised and fruitless debates about the extent to which people express their *own desires* and their *own identity* through consumption, as opposed to the extent to which those desires are imposed via advertising and the character of consumer capitalism more generally. What tended to get lost in this rather narrow focus is that goods come from somewhere, their production has an impact on the world, as does their use and disposal.

Consumption in everyday life

Consumption studies is a relatively new sub-discipline, however in recent years there has been a tremendous amount of new research, particularly in the UK. Many of these new accounts stress that consumption is a fluid, contextual *social* phenomenon, and that '[c]onventional attacks on consumerism backfire if they assume consumers are manipulated and have "false needs" or if they imagine a return to some mythical "natural" way of life' (Trentmann 2007: 3). Many note that critics of consumption often disregard the impact of what they themselves consume, and position only the needs of *others* as excessive, false and manipulated. Miller, for instance, argues that the 'bogey of a deluded, superficial person who has become the mere mannequin to commodity culture is always someone other than ourselves' (2001: 229). Others observe how 'vocabularies of blame' are used to shift 'responsibility onto other actors' (Malpass et al. 2007: 243).

In terms of the environmental impact of our consumption vis-à-vis achieving change, recent research suggests that focusing on individual choice is actually of 'limited value' (Trentmann 2007). One of the key issues, as Elizabeth Shove has identified, is that consumption is largely structural in that it reflects habits and patterns of behaviour embedded in various social norms which have developed over decades, and are subject to the 'creep of convention' (2003: 2). On a larger societal level habits do undergo continual change. Our individual everyday habits and routines are not always easy to alter however, especially given the extent to which they are grounded and based in longer-term processes, which include technological change. As Malpass et al. (2007: 243) note:

> consumers are often effectively 'locked-in' to certain patterns of consumption by the material infrastructures of modern, urban living ... the commitments that people have to certain consumption behaviours might be deeply held emotional, affective ones that cannot be sloughed-off just like that.

Shove herself situates patterns of consuming as part of 'a collective enterprise held together by social expectations, cultural conventions, and material constraints' (2003: 7). She notes much consumption is inconspicuous insofar as it is concerned with everyday comfort, cleanliness and convenience, pointing out that '[a]round half the energy used in the world is used in buildings and much of that is devoted to keeping people comfortable' (2003: 3). Unfortunately this inconspicuous consumption is 'a realm ignored by studies of consumer culture that are enthralled by the significance of immediate visual clues to social meaning' (Shove and Warde 2002: 247).

What are we to make of this approach? Our common-sense understanding of consumption is influenced not only by our everyday practices, but also by a diffuse yet powerful and rich range of discourses that have been shaped over centuries. While sustainability and ethical considerations have recently achieved greater import in public debate, this has yet to translate into mainstream consumption practices, or evoke effective policy responses. Regardless of these discourses, as Humphrey points out in *Excess: Anti-Consumerism in the West* (2010: 134):

> the things and experiences available for purchase within affluent nations, and globally, demonstrably *enable life*, giving it a practical, communicative and embodied material richness. In this sense, we are neither conditioned nor forced to consume, but do so in human response to the fact that the things and experiences our money can buy allow us to live in, enjoy and shape the world in certain ways.

Yet even considering consumption in this more empathetic way, it is still easy to disparage the consumption of others, especially when they do not share our taste or values, especially given there is such appalling inequality evident in access to goods and resources on a global level. Writing from America where 'it is easier

to take concepts like "overconsumption" and "affluenza" seriously', Wilk (2001: 248) argues that consumption *is* a moral issue; a 'moral debate about consumption', he states, 'is an essential and ancient part of human politics, an inevitable consequence of the unique way our species has developed its relationship with the material world'.

Meanwhile, despite the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) stating that the existence of global warming is 'unequivocal' (Pachauri 2009), a new conservative politics appears intent on creating doubts in the minds of the general public about climate science and scientific consensus. In *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming* (2010) Oreskes and Conway detail how in both cases the aim has been to prevent government regulation which might curtail the operation of the 'free' market. In the face of the huge amount of money given over to political lobbying in the United States by large corporations with an interest in casting doubt on climate science, it remains to be seen how public sentiment and public practices change in years to come.

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"New Man" and "New Lad" with Chinese Characteristics? ...
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"New Man" and "New Lad" with Chinese Characteristics? Cosmopolitanism, Cultural Hybridity and Men's Lifestyle Magazines in China

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Abstract: *In China, although "general interest" magazines can be said to have existed during the Maoist and early post-Maoist eras, Western-style magazines that promote a consumerist lifestyle came into being and gained widespread popularity only in the past two decades. Among them, an entire group of titles consists of localised Chinese editions of internationally popular lifestyle magazines. This paper explores the interaction of global trends and influences with local cultures and realities in men's lifestyle magazines published in China. In particular, it discusses the Chinese "variations" of the Western "new man" and "new lad" types of male image. Despite the superficial similarities with Western images, critical readings and quantitative studies of the verbal and visual content of these magazines reveal some distinctive "Chinese" features. As a form of popular culture, the men's lifestyle magazine lends expression to the fantasies, desires and needs of "new rich" men in China. With consumerism and aspirationalism at the centre of its ideological construction, it serves as an interesting site of negotiation between what Lisa Rofel calls the two aspects of "cosmopolitanism with Chinese characteristics" – namely, a self-conscious transcendence of locality and a domestication of cosmopolitanism by way of renegotiating China's place in the world.*

Keywords: *China, men's magazines, masculinity, gender, popular culture, cosmopolitanism, cultural hybridity, consumerism*

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In North America and some European countries, "general interest" magazines specifically targeting a male readership have existed since at least World War II.[1] Recent years have seen a burgeoning research interest in this genre of popular culture, especially in light of the study of masculinities (see Edwards, 1997; Jackson et al., 2001; Benwell, 2003; Crewe, 2003). Most of these studies have centred on the emergence of the "new man" and "new lad" types of masculinities in the West since the 1980s and how these images have been constructed through magazines (Benwell, 2002; Beynon, 2002; Edwards, 2003; Gill, 2003). In China, however, although "general interest" magazines can be said to have existed during the Maoist and early post-Maoist eras, Western-style magazines that promote a consumerist lifestyle came into being and gained widespread popularity only in the past two decades.[2] Among them an entire group of titles are localised Chinese editions, so to speak, of internationally popular lifestyle magazines. This study examines the market for men's lifestyle magazines in the People's Republic of China along with its cultural and social contexts. In particular, it explores the interaction of global trends and influences with local cultures and realities by focusing on the Chinese "variations" of the "new man" and "new lad" types of male image. It will argue that the men's lifestyle magazine in China serves as an interesting site of negotiation between what Lisa Rofel calls the two aspects of "cosmopolitanism with Chinese characteristics" – namely, "a self-conscious transcendence of locality, posited as a universal transcendence, accomplished through the formation of a consumer identity; and a domestication of cosmopolitanism by way of renegotiating China's place in the world" (Rofel, 2007, p. 111).

Cosmopolitanism has become a buzzword across a wide range of disciplines nowadays. Its usage in contemporary discussions, however, often demonstrates the coexistence of a variety of different and even conflicting meanings of the term (see Robbins, 1998; Vertovec and Cohen, 2002; Appiah, 2006; Holton, 2009; Theodossopoulos and Kirtsoglou, 2010). In this article we are mainly concerned with cultural competition and cultural hybridity associated with the imagination of globality and the flow of global capital in today's China. In this context, cosmopolitanism is primarily a desire by the new elite, "who are perceived to benefit from its commoditized artefacts, able to afford its acquired tastes, travel and consume other cultures" (Theodossopoulos and Kirtsoglou, 2010, p. 6), to overcome their peripheral position in the world. Luxury lifestyle magazines exemplify this neoliberal discourse of "consumerist cosmopolitanism".

Some scholars have pointed out that cosmopolitanism is ultimately a fantasy (Skrbis et al., 2004, p. 119). In this sense, the intertwining paradox identified by Lisa Rofel may in fact be an integral part of the discourse of cosmopolitanism, and not something unique to Chinese society.[3] As Bruce Robbins argues, "The interest of the term *cosmopolitanism* is located [...] (paradoxically) in its local applications, where the unrealizable ideal produces normative pressure against such alternatives as, say, the fashionable *hybridization*" (Robbins, 1998, p. 260; original emphasis). In what follows we will illustrate how the localisation of international men's lifestyle magazines and, as a result, the localised images of "new man" and "new lad", reflect a peculiar case of the dialect of cosmopolitanism/nationalism in Chinese popular culture. The study combines critical readings of texts and images with quantitative content analysis of sample magazines and interviews with editors.[4] All data is as of the end of 2011.

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The Men's Magazine Market in China

The key factor that gave rise to lifestyle magazines in China was the development of transnational corporations and transnational advertising agencies within the country. With China's rapid economic development, the demand for advertising space by global brands has increased, and magazines have become one of the major advertising media outlets in China. The first lifestyle magazines in China targeted both men and women. However, in order to meet the market demand of some specialised advertisers, such as the producers of toiletries, magazines exclusively designed for women came into being in the late 1980s. This was made possible by copyright cooperation with internationally popular titles. With further growth and development within the industry, men's magazines, which arrived in China at least ten years later, were initially based on the women's magazines (Song and Lee, 2010, p. 162).

Since the first men's lifestyle magazine appeared on the market, although some titles were very short-lived and have already ceased publication, there has been a proliferation of titles. Roughly, the development of the men's magazine market in mainland China in the last decade or so can be divided into three stages: (1) 1993–2002. *Shishang xiansheng*, the very first men's magazine in China, was initially published by the Trends Group as a supplement of *Shishang yiren*, a women's magazine launched in 1993. The magazine came in a unique format that allowed readers to read the women's magazine or flip it over and upside down to read the men's magazine. *Shishang xiansheng* became an independent title in 1997 and began copyright cooperation with *Esquire* in 1999. It remained the only men's lifestyle magazine in China until September 2000, when the second title, *Da dushi* (*Metropolis*), was launched by Shanghai Orient Press; (2) 2002–07. This period witnessed a particularly rapid development in the men's magazine market. Ten titles mushroomed within the short span of three years between 2004 and 2007; (3) 2008–10. A third wave of men's magazines emerged on the scene, with important titles such as *GQ* and *Leon* being launched more recently (Jin, 2010).

There are approximately 20 monthly men's titles circulating in the Chinese market now. The major titles *Shishang xiansheng* (*Esquire*), *Nanren zhuang* (*FHM*), *Shishang jiankang* (*Men's Health*) and *Zhizu* (*GQ*) account for an overwhelming share of the market (see Table 1).

It is apparent from Table 1 that there are two types of men's lifestyle magazine in China – namely, the mainland editions of internationally famous titles, such as *Esquire*, *FHM* and *Men's Health*, and purely local publications, such as *Mangazine*. While there was a boom in local men's magazines in around 2005, most of these have now been squeezed out of the market by the internationally "cooperative" magazines. In China, "foreign investors are forbidden from undertaking business such as advertising, book and magazine publishing, wholesale and imports. And they can only enter the above business by establishing Chinese-foreign cooperative enterprises or Chinese-foreign joint ventures" (Frith and Feng, 2009, p. 163). Consequently, foreign magazines that want to enter the Chinese market must first find a local partner and then bring out their new publication under the partner's licence. Investment from the Chinese partner should not be less than 51 per cent in these forms of "copyright cooperation" so that the Chinese side is guaranteed to have the leading role. Although the copyright cooperation relationship cannot

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Table 1. Major Men's Magazines in the Chinese Market in 2011

Title	Date Launched	International Partner	Local Publisher	Authorities in Charge
Shishang xiansheng (*Esquire*)	1997 (cooperation with *Esquire* started in 1999)	Hearst Magazines	Trends Media Group	National Tourism Administration
Shishang jiankang (*Men's Health*)	2003	Hearst Magazines	Trends Media Group	National Tourism Administration
Mingpai (*Mangazine*)	2003	N/A	*Southern Weekly*	N/A
Nanren zhuang (*FHM*)	2004	Bauer Media Group (UK)	Trends Media Group	Chinatex Corporation
Daren zhi (*Men's Uno*)	2004	Chic Group Int'l (Taiwan)	Publishing Centre of the Tibet Autonomous Region	Tibet Autonomous Region Press and Publication Bureau
Basha nanshi (*Harper's Bazaar Men's Style*)	2008	Hearst Magazines	Trends Media Group	Chinatex Corporation
Shizhuang (*Nanshi ban*) (*L'Officiel Hommes*)	2008	Les Editions Jalou (France)	Fashion Magazine Publishing House	China National Silk Imp. & Exp. Corp.
Ta shenghuo (*HisLife*)	2008	Rizzoli Publishing (Italy)	SEEC (Caixun) Media Group	Xinjiang Federation of Literary and Art Circles
Nanren fengshang (*Leon*)	2009	Shufu-to-Seikatsusha (Japan)	Beijing Rayli Magazine House	China Light Industry Association
Modeng shenshi (*Mr. Modern*)	2009	Hachette Filipacchi Medias (France)	China Sports Publications Corporation	General Administration of Sport of China
Zhizu (*GQ*)	2009	Condé Nast Publications (US)	*China News Weekly*	China News Agency
Ruishi (*ELLE MEN*)	2011	Hearst Magazines	Zhejiang Ruishi Publishing House	China Council for the Promotion of International Trade Zhejiang Sub-Council

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exceed five years, it is renewable. In 1988, *Elle*, a women's magazine from France, became the first foreign magazine to publish a Chinese edition in this manner. Since then, numerous foreign-invested publications, including *Vogue*, *National Geographic*, *Traveller*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Newsweek*, *Parenting*, *Marie Claire*, *Fortune* and so on have hit the streets of China.

As is evident from Table 1, joint-venture publications must be supervised by a central or local government department as the "authorities in charge" (*zhuguan bumen*), which is responsible for the ideological self-censorship of the publication. Due to the commercialisation (in recent years) of the mass media in China, most state media outlets no longer receive large government subsidies; they therefore have to produce market-oriented products so that money can be generated through advertising revenue. This situation has given rise to a "marriage" between state media outlets and profit-seeking Western publishing companies. The copyright cooperation is usually reflected in the titles of the magazines. For instance, *Shishang xiansheng* is the product of cooperation between *Esquire* (which can be translated as "*xiansheng*" in Chinese), an international magazine originally launched in the UK, and the existing *Shishang* (*Trends*) magazine in China. *Shishang*, launched in 1993, is a national title run by the China Tourism Association, which is under the National Tourism Administration of the People's Republic of China. This background explains the rich travel information and promotion of tours in *Shishang xiansheng*. Similarly, *Men's Uno* is published in China through *Zhongguo wenyijia* (*China Artists*), an established magazine under the officially sanctioned China Federation of Literary and Art Circles. It can be seen from Table 1 that even official mouthpieces of the Chinese government, such as China News Agency, are involved in this kind of copyright cooperation and also publish lifestyle magazines.

Foreign-invested magazines are advantaged in several regards in their competition with local titles. As Irene Yang observes in her study of international women's magazines in Taiwan, one factor that contributes to the success of these magazines is the "financial backing from international ad agencies as reflected in the prevalence of ads for brand-name cosmetics and fashion wear" (2004, p. 505). Compared with the majority of magazines in China, which have traditionally functioned as propaganda and educational tools for the party-state, the crop of high-end consumer magazines is relatively expensive (normally priced at around 20 *yuan* per issue) and is not affordable by people with average incomes in Chinese cities. Consequently, their circulation is limited. Most rely heavily on advertising revenue.[5] Among the ten magazines that generate the most advertising revenue in China, five are international men's lifestyle titles (see Table 2). This also attests to the currently increasing market share of men's magazines in China, which significantly changes a stereotype that is common in both Chinese and Western societies – i.e. "men read newspapers, women read magazines".

Localisation and Repositioning of Foreign Magazines

Although financially advantaged, the transnational magazines have to deal with the imperative of "localisation". Their editors face the need to find a balance between maintaining the style and peculiarities of the Western (or Japanese) "mother edition", as it is called by the Chinese editors, and catering to the tastes and

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Table 2. Men's Magazines among the Top Ten Magazine Titles by Advertising Revenue in China

Rank	Title of Magazine	Share of the Market
1	*Shishang xiansheng* (*Esquire*)	20.62%
2	*Zhizu* (*GQ*)	13.56%
6	*Nanren zhuang* (*FHM*)	6.07%
7	*Daren zhi* (*Men's Uno*)	5.99%
8	*Nanren fengshang* (*Leon*)	4.09%

Source: *Chinese Newspaper and Magazine Advertising Market Report, September 2010* (Li Yanle, 2010, p. 33).

conditions of the Chinese market. As Liu Jiang, President of Trends Group, explained, it would be hard for a magazine completely overflowing with Western culture to survive in the Chinese market. Under the contracts, *Shishang xiansheng* and *Nanren zhuang* are entitled to use up to 40 per cent of the content of the Western editions; nonetheless, their average use is less than half that figure (Liu Jiang, personal communication, 10 January 2008). In an interview with Wang Feng, the former editor-in-chief of *Shishang xiansheng*, he described the magazine's goal as achieving a "harmonious" balance between material and spiritual wealth, echoing the government's rhetoric of "to grab with both hands, with both hands tough".[6] According to Wang, a magazine cannot meet the needs of male readers in China with "materialist" content alone; it needs to have more "spiritual" and "cultural" content as well (cited in Ma, 2005, p. 17). These comments also reflect a longstanding and common myth in Party-talk as well as popular discourse in China, which equates "Western" culture with materialism and Chinese culture with spirituality.

Thumbing through a copy of *Shishang xiansheng*, one will find that, on the one hand, it looks very similar to its Western counterpart, flooded with images of branded watches, luxury limousines, top-class men's fashion, high-class villas, and so on. On the other hand, however, it distinguishes itself with apparent "Chinese elements", such as a column on *Yijing* (*Book of Changes*) and the eight hexagrams, a system of cosmology and philosophy that is intrinsic to ancient Chinese cultural beliefs; a column called *yangsheng* (regimen), which contains recipes for Chinese herbal soups; and articles on contemporary Chinese art, the art market, and the like.

The localisation of international men's lifestyle magazines in China demonstrates the dynamic interaction between global and local forces and invites fruitful analysis from the perspective of cultural hybridity in a globalising world. At the same time, these "localising" efforts also signify a cultural anxiety about the effects of globalisation on China and a desire to negotiate China's place in the world. Nederveen Pieterse identified three distinct perspectives on cultural difference – namely, "cultural differentialism or lasting difference, cultural convergence or growing sameness, cultural hybridization or growing mixing" (2009, p. 44). Today, however, more and more scholars take the perspective that globalisation leads to cultural hybridity (Brah and Coombes, 2000; Kraidy, 2005; Burke, 2009; Pieterse, 2009). This trend is probably most evident in the transnational circulation of visual images and entertainment. Loubna H. Skalli, for instance, in her study of Moroccan

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women's magazines contends that "global trends and influences do not replace local specificities or realities; they interact with them in a ceaseless, dialectic and asymmetrical fashion" (2006, p. 3). In light of this theory, it is not difficult to observe that most of the lifestyle magazines under discussion serve to promote a particularly hybrid version of masculinity and consumer culture, a mingling and intermixing of Western influence (the standardised hegemonic masculinity and the "new man" and "new lad" types of male image, which will be discussed in detail below), the transnational media and cultural flow within Asia (such as the apparent influences of Hong Kong, Taiwanese, Korean and Japanese pop cultures), and the increasingly visible local elements (discourses that are exclusive to the collective memory of the Chinese people, trendy words and topics on the Chinese internet, and so on).

With a distinctive cover picture and a special feature on Chinese artists born in the 1970s, known as the "post-70 generation", perhaps the most conspicuous example of the "Chinese characteristics" of these magazines is to be found in the November 2005 issue of *Shishang xiansheng*. Five celebrated artists – all born in the 1970s (the architect Ma Yansong, the film director Lu Chuan, the pop singer Xu Wei, the musician Zhang Yadong, and the actress Xu Jinglei) – appear in the cover picture wearing white shirts with red scarves tied around their necks (Figure 1). Their attire is supposed to be a "symbol of the times" for this generation and unmistakably alludes to the uniform of the *Shaoxiandui* (Young Pioneers), the mass youth organisation for children in China, which was operated by the Communist Party. A legacy of the former Soviet Union, the Young Pioneers are cultivated to be "the heirs of communism". The red scarf symbolises the blood shed by martyrs of the revolution. Although the Young Pioneers organisation is still very active today and children wearing red scarves are a ubiquitous sight in China, the white shirt and blue pants were primarily the uniform of the Young Pioneers during the 1980s, when the "post-70" generation came of age, and are rarely seen today. Hence, the image has become an icon of childhood memories for this generation. The "post-70s" are believed to be the last generation in China that was educated according to the Maoist ideology. They are now in their late 30s and early 40s and are gaining increasing political and economic power in a society that is undergoing turbulent and profound social transformation. Topics on nostalgic memories of childhood in the context of rapid social change by this generation have been becoming popular on the internet in recent years.[7] The cover picture of the artists wearing red scarves and the feature entitled 'The Post-70 Generation Shout Loudly' in this issue are both noticeably "Chinese". They further demonstrate a discernible appeal to a social group with increasing consumer power in China. The utilisation of collective memory as an important strategy of localisation will be discussed in more detail later in this article.

As Karan and Feng explain, the ownership pattern of joint ventures in China allows the lifestyle magazines to "negotiate the tensions and contradictions between the global players and local publishers" (2009, p. 348). The "localisation" process of foreign lifestyle magazines usually involves a repositioning of the target market, self-censorship of contents in the Chinese context, and the incorporation of localised editorial and marketing strategies. During interviews with editorial personnel and publishers in China, it was found that some magazines tend to target a group that is 5–10 years older than the readers of their "mother editions". This may be attributed

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Figure 1. Five "post-70s" artists in the nostalgic Young Pioneers uniform (*Shishang xiansheng*, November 2005, cover picture).

to the fact that, unlike in developed countries in the West and East Asia, in Chinese society, lifestyle magazines are still a high-end luxury commodity that is affordable only for the middle-aged "new middle class", who are also primary consumers of the products advertised in the magazines (see Song and Lee, 2010; Goodman, 2008). For instance, *FHM* and *Maxim* are both internationally known magazines that target the younger generation of men. However, since men younger than this age group are supposed to be relatively powerless in consumption terms, their Chinese editors have increased the average age of the targeted readers to 25–35 (Shouma, personal communication, 10 January 2008). This re-targeting of the readership has had a significant impact on the variation of the "new lad" masculinity within the Chinese context, which will be discussed in detail later.

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Another example of a repositioning of the target market is that, in Japan, most lifestyle magazines are specific interest magazines, focusing on fashion, cars, entertainment, and so on. However, in China, the same magazines have been repositioned as general interest magazines to fit market needs. The reason behind this is that the major revenue of these magazines comes from advertising revenue rather than circulation and they cannot afford to be reliant upon a homogeneous type of advertisement. To take *Darenzhi* (*Men's Uno*) as an example, the top three advertising categories for the magazine are fashion, automobiles and luxury products (including watches, liquor and jewellery). The same applies to *Men's Joker*, which was a fashion magazine in Japan, but was transformed into a "general interest" magazine when published in China (Lisa Liao, personal communication, 10 April 2011).

The editors also need to take the unique socio-cultural context of China into consideration when deciding how much they would like to appropriate from the Western/Japanese editions. (Self-)censorship is a fundamental issue when publishing in China. Apart from political taboos, other topical considerations include restrictions on the representation of excessive sex and homosexual desire. Advertisements for tobacco and condoms are also banned. In the case of *Men's Uno*, for instance, the cover page and around 20 per cent of the content of each issue have to be reviewed and approved by personnel from the "authorities in charge" prior to publication every month to ensure that the visual and textual content is in line with the directives of the General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP). The executive editor of *Men's Uno* also explained that a sample copy of each issue has to be sent to the "authorities in charge" after publication. The censorship is even stricter for newly launched titles (Yu Huiming, personal communication, 10 April 2011).

Along with the growing sophistication of the local market, there is an increasing tendency for Chinese men's magazines to focus on local cultural and social life.[8] As Dexter Roberts (2003) points out, "the educated Chinese have become a lot more savvy in the past decade and no longer see foreign publications as their only window on the world". Instead, "they are looking for articles that will be relevant to their lives in China" (2003, p. 20). A content analysis of *Shishang jiankang* (*Men's Health*), in comparison with Western editions of the magazine, reveals that a significant portion of the Chinese edition reflects distinctive features of Chinese culture and society, including such things as Chinese cuisine, martial arts, *kungfu* and Chinese ways of keeping fit. According to the editor, these "Chinese elements" have even been translated and used by *Men's Health* editions in other countries. An article on *taichi* boxing in the April 2008 issue, for instance, was published throughout the world – in 13 different editions of *Men's Health*. The editor also indicated that the fashion column in *Shishang jiankang*, which focuses on jeans and sportswear, needs to be produced locally because of the different body sizes of Chinese and Western men. Due to the different levels of tolerance and acceptance of certain topics, the same is true for columns on sex and relationships (Zhou Song, personal communication, 15 April 2011).

While sex and fashion are bodily practices that are closely associated with consumption, and thus a cosmopolitan identity, they can sometimes paradoxically reflect nationalistic sentiments. A salient example of this "domesticating" desire is

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the recent promotion of the notion of "Chinese-style sexy" (*Zhongguo shi xinggan*) by *Nanren zhuang*. Since 2008, "Chinese-style sexy" has been the slogan and theme of a host of events, including a nation-wide beauty pageant every year, organised by *Nanren zhuang*.[9] In a headline article entitled 'What is Chinese-Style Sexy?' on the official website of the 2010 beauty pageant, it is stated that the event is organised in the hope of expounding the connotations of "Chinese-style sexy" in a globalising China and thus "instigating an all-around inspection and exploration of the Chinese culture of sexiness amongst the mass population":

> In China, the notion of sexiness has always been short of a standard definition, with "sexy" being only an idea borrowed from the West [...] Through hosting this "Chinese-style sexy" event we aim to recognise a kind of sexual appeal and beauty that is uniquely Chinese [...] We are setting out on a national hunt, giving all you Chinese women the opportunity to express yourself and your understanding of sexiness. In addition, we ask you to tease out a native definition of sexiness which reflects China's own particular take on the word and spread the boundless potential of a Chinese-style sexy by using your own expression (*FHM*, 2010).

The article quotes Li Fang, the associate editor of qq.com, one of the most popular websites in China, to point out the differences between the Chinese style and Western style of sexiness. According to Li, instead of breasts and buttocks, which are the female body parts commonly associated with sexiness in Western and Japanese cultures, Chinese men are more interested in a woman's waist, feet and belly. Those parts of the body are "symbols of sexual appeal distinctive to a Chinese woman" (*FHM*, 2010). Discussions like this reveal not only sexist subjugation of women, which to a certain extent may be attributed to the popular denunciation of Maoist feminism in the reform era, but also an essentialist perception of "Chineseness" in the China/West dichotomy and an anxious pursuit of a Chinese identity.

Two Types of Male Image

The men's lifestyle magazine came to China as both a product and a transmitter of the global ideology of consumerism. At the centre of this form of popular culture is the "increasing construction of masculinity according to commodities" (Edwards, 1997, p. 76). It would thus be interesting to explore how this global version of consumerist masculinity, or the "transnational business masculinity", as R.W. Connell puts it (Connell and Wood, 2005, p. 347), negotiates and interacts with local and traditional discourses on masculinity in Chinese society (see also Song and Lee, 2010).

As noted above, the "new man" and "new lad" are two predominant types of male image in Western lifestyle magazines; both identities are media-created and media-driven and are defined by consumption. While both images "replicate the persistent cultural features of hegemonic masculinity" (Cortese and Ling, 2009, p. 4), the "new man" shows a noted influence from feminist trends. He is narcissistic and "ambivalent in his sexuality" (Beynon, 2002, p. 118; Edwards, 2003). At least at the surface level, he is anti-sexist and "turned his back on competitive sports [and] sexist jokes" (Morrell, 1998, p. 7). Unlike the "traditional man", the "new man" is

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defined by what he consumes rather than what he creates through labour (Cortese and Ling, 2009, p. 4).

The "new lad", on the other hand, refers to a male image that emerged in the 1990s. In "drinking with mates, taking risks, telling dirty jokes, and most of all, looking at skimpily dressed women", he represents a distinct "backlash against the feminism that gave birth" to the "new man" (McKay, Mikosza and Hutchins, 2005, p. 282). Sexy girls, risky sports, and sexism under an "overcoat" of jokes and irony are therefore hallmarks of the "new lad" magazine. Because they simply embody (the revival of) the hegemonic masculinity in a consumer society, Benwell (2002) contends that there is actually nothing "new" about these lads.

Although they originated in the UK, both the "new man" and "new lad" have emerged into distinct global trends that divide the majority of the world's men's magazines into two sub-groups, with *Arena*, *GQ*, and *Esquire* belonging to the former and *loaded* and *FHM* to the latter group. Generally, the "new man" magazines target more educated, mature and middle-class men, while the "new lad" magazines cater to the tastes and desires of younger and more hedonistic men. According to Rosalind Gill, the types of "new man" and "new lad" "represent perhaps the two dominant and most pervasive constructions of masculinity circulating in Britain over the past decade and are frequently represented as products of particular chronological moments, with 'new man' representing the zeitgeist of the 1980s and 'new lad' the 1990s" (2003, p. 37).

The influence of this dyad of masculinity on Chinese men's magazines is obvious. Chang Xiaowu observes the distinctive differences between the "gentleman" magazines and the "beer culture" magazines in the Chinese market (Chang, 2007, pp. 57-61). According to Chang, the gentleman magazines, which include *Shishang xiansheng* (*Esquire*), *Pinpai·Dadao*, *Mingshi*, *Mingpai* (*Mangazine*), *Da Dushi* (*Metropolis*) and *Xin shixian* (*The Outlook Magazine*), target successful men in their late 30s to mid-40s. Promoting an elite lifestyle, they construct a masculinity characterised by a mature personality, attractive appearance, successful career and wealth, which largely resemble the "new man" imagery.

By contrast, the "beer culture" magazines, which are epitomised by *Nanren zhuang* (*FHM*) and *Fengdu* (*Maxim*), resemble the "new lad" discourse by focusing on wine, sports, sex and women. They reveal a raft of blatant front-cover images of scantily clad young women and headlining articles concerning sex or women. The editor of *Nanren zhuang* revealed that they target a younger group of men who are after a more hedonistic lifestyle (Shouma, personal communication, 10 January 2008).

To illustrate the difference in style between the two types of men's magazine, a content analysis was conducted of the advertisements in sample copies of *Shishang xiansheng* (*Esquire*) and *Nanren zhuang* (*FHM*) (see Tables 3 and 4).[10]

It is clear from Table 3 that *Shishang xiansheng* (*Esquire*), as a shadow of the "new man" type, focuses more on men's dress and appearance and helps to construct the images of narcissistic executives and professionals as the ideal masculine type. By giving expression to the "individualistic, hedonistic and pleasure-seeking attitude" (Gill, 2003, p. 47), *Nanren zhuang* (*FHM*), by contrast, is in line with the "new lad" magazines and shows more interest in the pursuit of material pleasure, such as accessories, automotives, and technical products such as computers and mobile phones.

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Table 3. Product Categories of Advertisements in *Shishang xiansheng* (*Esquire*) and *Nanren zhuang* (*FHM*) (%)

Product categories	*Shishang xiansheng*	*Nanren zhuang*
Formal fashion	19.4	3.9
Informal fashion	25.1	12.9
Accessories	20.5	18.5
Beverages and wines	5.0	5.6
Automotive	6.7	18.0
Technical	10.7	18.0
Travel	1.6	0
Sports and leisure	1.0	1.1
Body enhancing products	6.2	14.6
Other	3.8	7.3
Total	100	100

Table 4. Gender Depicted in the Advertisements in *Shishang xiansheng* and *Nanren zhuang* (%)

Gender	*Shishang xiansheng*	*Nanren zhuang*
Female	4.3	10.7
Male	56.1	45.5
Both	8.8	7.3
Not applicable	30.8	36.5
Total	100	100

Table 4 shows that in *Nanren zhuang* (*FHM*), advertisements over the survey period depicting female models constituted 10.7 per cent of the total, which was more than double the percentage in *Shishang xiansheng* (*Esquire*). This sex appeal is in keeping with the overall style of the magazine, which is to use the objectified erotic female body as a selling point.

One point that merits special attention is that in both Chinese and Western cases, there is a significant gap between the male images represented in these magazines *as discourse* and the actual consumers of the magazines. Discrepancies may also exist between the target audience and the pool of people who buy and read the magazines. In other words, the magazines are not necessarily read by real members of the middle class, but by people who dream of and chase after the middle-class lifestyle. It is then not surprising that, in conducting a reading habit survey with magazine readers, we found that the most popular articles in these magazines were those on "how to live *like* an elite".[11] In addition, women and gay men also constitute a significant part of the readership. The comparison between textual analysis and reception studies, however, is a fascinating topic that deserves a full treatment elsewhere.

It also needs to be noted that although "new man" and "new lad" are the most widely discussed male images associated with Western men's lifestyle magazines, they are by no means the only types of image constructed in these magazines. In fact, they represent a proliferation of (sometimes overlapping) new archetypes of

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masculinities in recent decades – such as metrosexual, ubersexual, soft lad, and queer, to name but a few. A similar situation occurs in the Chinese publishing space. Harriet Evans, for instance, argues that male images in popular culture in China have become increasingly plural, and these new images represent "diverse possibilities for gendered practice that simultaneously reassert and contest dominant renderings – both local and global – of gender difference through images of the sexed body" (Evans, 2008, p. 373). In this study, however, we focus on the "new man"/"new lad" duo as examples of the global/local interactions related to new images of men.

Duplicates of Western Models?

Despite the similarities, it would be an oversimplification to reduce the "new man" and "new lad" in the Chinese market to duplicates of the Western models. Nuanced readings of the Chinese magazines as texts reveal some interesting "Chinese characteristics" of these male images, which serve as good case studies of cultural filtering and cultural hybridity.

We start with the "new man" type. The "new man" in the West, which is first seen as a response to feminist trends, has "internalized and endorsed the principles of feminism including a reassessment of the traditional division of labour and a new commitment to fatherhood" (Benwell, 2003, p. 13); he also possesses a willingness to display the emotional side of his nature (Beynon, 2002, p. 118). Nonetheless, this pro-feminist tendency is largely absent in the crop of titles that have been categorised by Chang as "gentleman magazines" in the Chinese market. On the contrary, these magazines, which explicitly target the "new rich" or elite men in China, are in keeping with a discernible return to a more traditional patriarchal ideology and a reaction to the Maoist discourse on women's liberation. In the words of Xiaoying Wang, "the Maoist insistence on gender equality ('women make up half the sky') has all but evaporated, giving way, with neither endorsement nor resistance from the state, to an alarmingly rapid emergence or revival of blatant gender inequality. Such inequality takes the form not only of the de facto revival of concubinage and various discriminatory practices but also, more subtly and pervasively, of the cultural reinscription of sexual difference that validates and naturalizes gender discrimination" (Wang, 2003, p. 147).

The 'A Woman We Love' article in the May 2011 issue of *Shishang xiansheng*, for instance, features a series of sexy pictures of a lesser-known actress with the name Dong Xuan. The pictures, which combine her exposed body with tempting poses in gender-based roles such as doing household chores, construct an image of a typical "small woman at home" (*ju jia xiao nüren*), as the popular expression goes. The girl is shown mopping the floor, washing clothes, and vacuuming the house – all the while displaying her attractive shape – and all with blatant sexual overtones. The female body is represented not only as an object of male desire and fantasy but also as a timid provider of housework services, included along with such images as a washing machine, vacuum cleaner, kitchen gloves and – amazingly – bank notes (see Figures 2–6). An ideological interpretation of the pictures reveals the power that (re-) positions women in a submissive and obedient role at home, the power that is represented by the banknote (Figure 5). In fact, objectified women are commonly found in Chinese men's magazines. As one advertising slogan goes, a successful man is a "BMW man": B = business, M = money, W = women (see Zhang, 2006,

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Figure 2. Dong Xuan mopping the floor in a sexy pose (*Shishang xiansheng*, May 2011, pp. 102–03).



Figure 3. Dong Xuan with kitchen gloves (*Shishang xiansheng*, May 2011, p. 107).

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Figure 4. Dong Xuan with a washing machine (*Shishang xiansheng*, May 2011, p. 105).

p. 54). Women are discursively linked with money and consumption. It is not difficult to imagine, however, that this type of sexism would be avoided in Western editions of *Esquire*, which, at least on the surface, strive to maintain a "politically correct" image in terms of gender ideology. As a reader's letter summarises, the (US) magazine is known for "brilliant advice about clothing and lifestyle, hilarious columns, insightful journalism, and adoring appreciation of women that doesn't subjugate or patronize" (*Esquire* (USA), January 2010, p. 14).

When comparing the British and Chinese editions of *Esquire*, it is easy to notice that there are significantly more advertisements for and features on luxury goods in the Chinese magazine. These include luxury watches, brand suits, expensive cars and hi-tech products. The luxury commodities, which reflect the culture of "showing off" in today's Chinese society, define the identity of the "new rich" and cater to their desire for "status claim".

Elitism is a discourse ubiquitously found in the Chinese "gentleman" magazines, but largely absent from their Western counterparts. This can be attributed to the fact that the consumers of the high-end magazines and the luxury products they advertise are exclusively from the "new rich" group in Chinese cities. According to Zhang Bocun (2006), most men's magazines in China target the comparatively small section

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Figure 5. Dong Xuan holding a banknote while doing laundry (*Shishang xiansheng*, May 2011, p. 106).

of society known as the "male elite" – i.e. rich men – and subsequently construct them as special, outstanding and desirable. Additionally, the masculinity of the new rich is linked with the discourse of cultural nationalism. More than one magazine defines itself as a "textbook" for the lifestyle of "elite men", who are supposed to determine the future of China. As the slogan of *Mangazine* goes, "the kind of men you have determines the kind of country you will get" (Zhang, 2006, p. 85). A large proportion of the content of this magazine, which mainly targets businessmen and executives, is devoted to the combination of traditional Chinese thought with modern management strategies. The following passage from the December 2004 issue of the magazine calls for a "return to tradition" for Chinese (elite) men:

> China can only be China, after all. The Chinese people will sooner or later return to their Chineseness. Foreign thoughts are useless if they are not rooted in our own soil [...] Among those who were born in the mainland during the 1950s to 1970s, few are interested in traditions. This, of course, would not impede their achievements in the areas of economics or science. But, with generation replacement, it will be a great risk for our nation when this ancient country is governed by people who don't really know where they are from and

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Figure 6. Dong Xuan vacuuming the floor, with strong sexual overtones (*Shishang xiansheng*, May 2011, p. 108).

> where they are going, let alone how to lead the country through its historical transformation! Hopefully more outstanding men that can be called "elite" will emerge so that our worries are unnecessary.
>
> For today, it is important that our next generation has a full understanding of both modern civilisation and traditional culture so that, as integrated modern Chinese, they can avoid the educational failure that their fathers suffered. This coincides with the aims of our "elite men" contest: China will be China only when its streets are full of genuine Chinese!

Discourses involving elitism and nationalism echo the popular social and intellectual trends in today's China, making the "gentleman magazines" in China seem not so "light" when compared with their Western counterparts (see Guo, 2004).

Of the "new lad" magazines, *FHM* will be used as the main example for comparison of its Chinese and Western editions. As was previously argued, *FHM* in the West is primarily read by working-class men and/or juvenile audiences, and is therefore frowned upon by high culture critics (Edwards, 2003, p. 144). However, *Nanren zhuang*, the mainland Chinese edition of *FHM*, is an upmarket magazine

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that defines itself as a status symbol for the rich "post-yuppies". This remarkable difference is attributable to the discourse in postsocialist China that sex is a status claim and is related to power (Song and Lee, 2010, pp. 175–76).

Nonetheless, the Chinese *FHM* is by no means a soft-porn magazine. In fact, like *Shishang xiansheng* (*Esquire*), *Nanren zhuang* (*FHM*) is a magazine that targets the new rich and constructs the identity of "successful men" through consumption and a (bourgeois) lifestyle, although probably with a different emphasis and style. While resembling the "new lad" in style, it also features content that confirms a deeply rooted social and cultural Chineseness. Because some features cater to a collective memory way beyond that of the "post-80" and "post-90" generations, it targets a readership at least 5-10 years older than its "new lad" counterpart in the West. For instance, in its December 2010 issue, there is a special feature entitled "White Paper on Chinese Men in the Past 30 Years". The article nostalgically lists events and developments during the past 30 years (1980–2010) that, according to the editor, have significant meaning for Chinese men. The images and events of the early 1980s include, among others, the Taiwanese pop singer Teresa Teng (Deng Lijun), the implementation of the one-child policy, the first romantic movie in the reform era (*A Love Story at Lushan Mountain*), Tomokazu Miura and the popular Japanese TV dramas, the first transgendered person in China, the rock star Cui Jian, and the "hooligan" writer Wang Shuo. Through this list, something is conjured up from the collective memory of men who came of age in the 1980s and 1990s in China and who are rising on the social and economic ladder today – the above-mentioned "elite men". Magazine features such as this play an important role in the formation and construction of the identity of "elite men"; for, as Skalli points out, "a sense of unity is supposed to be sustained by an evenly shared common stock of knowledge and a distinctive cultural experience to which collective memory give a lasting character" (Skalli, 2006, p. 25).

To pinpoint the differences between *Nanren zhuang* and the Western "new lad" magazines, a comparative content analysis was conducted between *Nanren zhuang* and the Australian edition of *FHM*. The following table is inspired by Tim Edwards's (1997) content analysis of major British men's magazines (pp. 77–79). However, while his pioneering study is highly illuminating, there are some inadequacies and drawbacks in the design of his table: the categories of editorial features are defined too broadly ("issues", "fiction", "interviews", etc.) to examine the subtle emphasis of each magazine in content; and all of the data are based on one issue (May 1995), which is not sufficient to reflect the general characteristics of a magazine. To address these points, we have collected data from all 12 issues of 2010 for each magazine and constructed a much more detailed table, in which the editorial features of each magazine are divided into 21 categories in terms of theme and content area. Using Edwards's strategy, the pages devoted to the categories were totalled and converted into percentages of the whole magazine.[12] The results are shown in the following table.

"Pictures of sexy girls" in the table refers to large-sized pictures of scantily-clad sexy women, which are the hallmark of both magazines. The "sex/women" category includes articles and Q&A sections that educate about sex and women. The "celebrities" are interviews and features on celebrities in society. A prominent characteristic of *Nanren zhuang* in comparison with the Australian *FHM* is that a significant number of these feature entrepreneurs, who are, for the most part, represented as successful role models for men. The "facts/tips" include general

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Table 5. A Comparative Content Analysis of *FHM* (Australia) and *Nanren zhuang*

Content	*FHM* (Australia)	*Nanren zhuang*
(Pictures of) sexy girls	22.9	18.7
Fashion/style	10.1	26.0
Sex/women	6.7	3.4
Sport/fitness	11.7	5.5
Grooming	3.2	2.1
Automobiles	5.3	4.1
Hi-tech/internet	5.4	3.1
Celebrities	0.9	6.5
Travel	1.8	1.9
Facts/tips	3.3	12.0
Film/TV	5.3	3.1
Music	5.4	1.1
Games	1.9	1.7
Food	4.0	1.3
Health	4.0	2.0
Books	0	0.7
Alcohol	1.9	1.4
Home	0	1.3
Military/wars	3.4	1.3
Survey	0.5	1.4
Other	2.3	1.4
Total	100	100

knowledge features, such as history, science, nature, and so on, and a variety of useful tips for men on daily life. *Nanren zhuang* surpasses its counterpart in this category because it features a large number of advisory articles that aim to guide the reader through everyday life and thus supposedly promote a "middle-class" or "bourgeois" lifestyle. The "books" category, which includes reviews of new books, and the "home" category, which contains information on home design and renovation, are absent from the Australian *FHM*.

The above table further confirms the observation that the targeted readers of *Nanren zhuang* are significantly older than those of *FHM*. *Nanren zhuang* distinguishes itself through rich content in two categories – specifically, "fashion/style" and "facts/tips". This manifests as an obsession with trendy appearance and lifestyle among the emerging new middle class and a unique emphasis on "uplifting" individuals' quality of life not only by the lifestyle magazines but also through government discourse in China.

The Australian *FHM* conversely excels in all of the categories that accommodate the interests of youth, such as "film/TV", "high-tech/internet" and "music". Particularly noteworthy is the remarkable difference in the sports category. Sports content in the Australian *FHM* is more than twice as extensive as that in the Chinese magazine. This, of course, can be attributed to the general enthusiasm for sports in Australian culture. However, it also indicates the age gap between readers of the two magazines; generally speaking, *Nanren zhuang* includes more content focused on the interests of middle-aged men. Features on risky sports are particularly rare. Also absent from *Nanren zhuang* is a column on "job and career" that appears in the

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Australian *FHM*, which (for the purposes of this study) is included in the "other" category. The column introduces tips for job hunting and career development for young men.

As Geng Song points out, "forms of masculinity are becoming increasingly hybrid in a globalizing China" (Song, 2010, p. 404). Transnational publication of men's lifestyle magazines has introduced China to the Western "new man" and "new lad" masculinities, which, as many critics contend, are different expressions of hegemonic masculinity. As a global influence, these images have had an immense impact on the changing discourse of masculinity in Chinese society today. At the same time, however, they face the imperative of localisation in the Chinese market and need to negotiate with local realities in China, such as the rise of nationalism, the formation of middle-class identity, and a return to a traditional view on gender relations. This process of hybridisation conversely enriches our understanding of hegemonic masculinity from a global perspective.

Conclusion

Both Chinese and Western lifestyle magazines centre on the ideology of consumerism and, thus, aspirationalism (upward social mobility through consumption). The Chinese men's lifestyle magazines under discussion illustrate what Tim Edwards calls the "legitimation of consumption itself as a socially acceptable leisure activity for men and as a symbolic part of a successful lifestyle" (Edwards, 1997, pp. 75–76). At the same time, however, they merit a fascinating case study of cosmopolitanism and cultural hybridity in a globalising China.

Consumption, which, according to Lisa Rofel, is "a post-socialist technology of the self" by which the Chinese people "enable themselves to transcend the specificities of place and identity and be part of the 'world'" (Rofel, 2007, p. 118), makes a better cosmopolitan person. This discourse of cosmopolitanism, however, also engenders a desire to re-negotiate China's place in the world. Interestingly, the two distinct features of Chinese men's magazines identified by this study – elitism and nationalism – echo the two aspects of this cosmopolitan discourse and manifest the global/local dialect in today's Chinese popular culture.

As a form of popular culture, the men's lifestyle magazine lends expression to the imaginations, desires and cultural constructions of "new rich" men in China. In particular, two types of male image are constructed, which display conspicuous influence from the "new man" and "new lad" models in Western culture. However, critical readings and quantitative studies of the verbal and visual content of these two types of magazines, embodied by *Shishang xiansheng* (*Esquire*) and *Nanren zhuang* (*FHM*), reveal that there are many localised characteristics in the construction of male images, despite the appearance of similarities with Western images. Analysis of these differences deepens our understanding, from a cultural perspective, of gender ideology in postsocialist China.

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Notes

1. In Britain, the men's magazine originated with the rise of *Playboy*, which was launched in 1953. In the USA, *Esquire* and *GQ* were launched in the 1930s. Men's interest magazines, including titles on motoring, hobbies and pornography, generally have a far longer history (Osgerby, 2001; Benwell, 2003).
2. The first Western-style women's lifestyle magazine, a Chinese edition of *Elle*, appeared in 1988. See Karan and Feng (2009, pp. 161–63) for a brief discussion of women's magazines in China before 1988. As for men's magazines, *Shishang xiansheng* (*Esquire*), the first men's lifestyle magazine in mainland China, was launched in 1999; see Lee, 2008; Hird, 2009; Song and Lee, 2010; and McDonald, 2011. For a general discussion of Western magazines in China, see Rohn, 2010, pp. 218–26.
3. For detailed discussions of the dialectical relationship between cosmopolitanism and nationalism, see Cheah and Robbins, 1998; especially Part One.
4. Interviews were conducted during fieldwork trips to Beijing in January 2008 and November 2010. In total, we conducted 14 interviews with magazine publishers, editors and readers, including Liu Jiang, president of Trends Group; Wang Feng, the former editor-in-chief of *Shishang xiansheng* (*Esquire*); and Shouma, editor of *Nanren zhuang* (*FHM*). In addition, two telephone interviews were conducted with Zhou Song, editor of *Shishang jiankang* (*Men's Health*) and Yu Huiming, executive editor of *Daren zhi* (*Men's Uno*) in April 2011.
5. According to Shuang Li (2010), "magazines in China can be classified as circulation-driven or advertisement-driven. Circulation-driven models aim for low-income readers, while those that rely on advertising target higher-income readers" (p. 4).
6. This is a pet phrase of the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping. He used this metaphor on a variety of occasions to talk about the need to strike a balance between economic reform and maintaining social control or between "spiritual civilisation" and "material civilisation". See http://wenda.tianya.cn/wenda/thread?tid = 19e48cf114172cfd, accessed 7 June 2012.
7. See, for instance, the i70s website: http://www.i70s.com/, accessed 14 April 2010.
8. The localisation of international men's magazines has proceeded at an accelerating rate in recent years, which presumably reflects both the increasingly keen competition in the market and the rise of China's "soft power" in the arena of culture. During the first six years of its publication (1999–2005), for instance, *Shishang xiansheng* (*Esquire*) looked very much like its British partner, with the faces of Western men dominating the front covers and most visual and textual content directly borrowed or translated from its "mother edition". However, after March 2005, when Wang Feng became the executive editor-in-chief and more and more competitors began to emerge in the market, they gradually changed the style of the magazine and increasingly focused on local elements. Today, more Chinese faces appear on the covers and localised content is growing rapidly. This increasing process of localisation has also occurred in *Shishang jiankang* (*Men's Health*). A study of its cover pictures reveals a discernible trend (since the beginning of its second year of publication) to replace European and American faces with Chinese stars, such as the "hot [. . .] young, but not particularly muscular" actor Liu Ye, national football players Zhen Zhi and Liu Yunfei, model Hu Bing, and entrepreneur Zhang Chaoyang (McDonald, 2011, pp. 169–70).
9. See http://www.trendsmag.com/trendsmag/FHM/project/20080620/, accessed 2 May 2011, and http://pic.women.sohu.com/group-207377.shtml#g = 207377&p = 1795405, accessed 2 May 2011 for details of art exhibitions, beauty pageants, and other activities organised by *Nanren zhuang* on the theme of "Chinese-style sexy".
10. The advertisements were selected from 12 issues of *Shishang xiansheng* and *Nanren zhuang* (sample copies from April 2004 to December 2007). All full-page, half-page and one-third page advertisements have been content-analysed, comprising 803 advertisements in total. Of the 803 advertisements, 625 were from *Shishang xiansheng* and 178 from *Nanren zhuang*.

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11. This is based on a questionnaire on the readership of Chinese men's magazines conducted through the website my3q.com. Over a six-month period (from 12 February 2010 to 11 August 2010), a total of 170 valid answers was collected.
12. The data is based on the 12 issues of *FHM* (Australia) (1, 468 pages in total) and *Nanren zhuang* (2,016 pages in total) in 2010, excluding advertisements, editor's notes and readers' letters.

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PART THREE

MARKETING: SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS OF POPULAR CULTURE

'Obey your thirst'. Sprite issues its well-known marketing slogan as a no-nonsense command. The television commercials that present this command ask their viewers to see beyond celebrity endorsements for Sprite and to 'obey' not the corporate hand behind the image, but their own instincts and judgment. Thirst. Easily and satisfactorily quenched by sugary-water Coca-Cola products. Obeisance is positioned within recognizable codes of hip-hop culture: dance, style, music, sports, and young African-American and Latino consumers happily endorsing Sprite as a 'real' and 'authentic' soft-drink for today's street stylist. This enduring ad and its plundering of popular culture to promote its products is neither alone in its targeting of niche lifestyles for marketing purposes, nor an isolated corporation dependent upon cultural capital to promote its products for a global mass market. What it brings to light, and the significance of which cannot be overstated, is the complicated energies that corporations employ to produce meaning through popular culture. Cultural theorists have long debated the tension between commodification and agency. However, their interventions have frequently taken place at the level of abstraction. Terms like 'culture industry' and 'mass culture' have tended to reference the products of such industries rather than the specific industries themselves. The essays in this section effect an essential reorientation toward analysis of specific corporate practices to produce critical perspectives on the complex and always negotiated character of popular culture as both about commodification *and* the indispensability of social actors.

The study of fashion in popular culture is often preoccupied with how clothing, hairstyles, make-up, and accessories, are brought into systems of meanings generated through use and reappropriation. Companies and globally recognized brands such as Nike, Puma, Adidas, Levi-Strauss, Abercrombie and Fitch, and the Gap, as well as the more 'up-scale' yet mass-designed styles introduced into the marketplace by designers like Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger, Hugo Boss, and their manufacturing practices within global capitalism cannot go unaddressed in the study of popular culture. Having appeared in *No Sweat: Fashion, Free Trade, and the Rights of Garment Workers* (1997), a much-needed collection on garment workers and the fashion industry, Paul Smith's **'Tommy Hilfiger in the Age of Mass Customization'** examines new marketing 'relationships' being established through the process of 'mass customization'. Tommy Hilfiger's clothing company is a fascinating case study as its marketing campaigns force us to consider how ideas of race (white 'preppy' and African-American hip hop), gender (the invention of 'Tommy Girl'), and nation (the American flag as brand identity) are intricately woven into both cultural and economic processes.

Setting out to study the difficult question of whether or not a genuine black culture exists within the USA, sociologist Ellis Cashmore's *The Black Culture Industry* (1997) considers concepts such as 'black authenticity' and 'black ownership' within practices of black popular culture and the formation of a black culture industry. The book carefully works its academic address through a skeptical engagement with popular music culture and the industry of popular music production via attention to the stardom of Michael Jackson, Prince's conflicted relationship to Warner Brothers, and in-depth consideration of record labels ranging from Berry Gordy's Motown to Death Row Records. Excerpted here is the final chapter, **'America's Paradox'**, a reflection on the conditionality of black artists and entrepreneurs' positions with mainstream culture: 'White culture has enforced a definition of its normality by admitting only black interlopers who lived up or down to its images: others, who possessed exotic or peculiar gifts but at a cost to their full humanity.'

Barbie is many things: an icon the world over, a plastic toy that commands its own aisle in US toy stores, an object that sparks intense debates over representation and gender. Academics, such as Erica Rand, Lynn Spigel, Frances Negrón-Muntaner, and Ann Ducille, have constructed critiques of Barbie from a number of critical positions that implicate the doll into debates centered on feminism, queer theory, ethnicity, nation, and race. Here, as Inderpal Grewal's **'Traveling Barbie: Indian Transnationality and New Consumer Subjects'** (1999) makes possible, Barbie is studied as a global commodity that perpetuates ideas of gender, class, and capitalism across national boundaries. Grewal, whose books include *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* (edited with Caren Kaplan, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994) and *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire, and the Cultures of Travel* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), discusses the marketing of Barbie in India and the formation of new consumer subjects: 'In a context of localization through transnational formations, it is important to note that Barbie in a sari being sold in India is not an Indian or South Asian Barbie. She is what Mattel calls the traditional Barbie, a white, American Barbie, but one who travels; she has, in one version, blond hair, the standard face, the ideal female Euro-American body, a shiny sari, and a red *bindi* on her forehead.'

Disney, like Mattel's Barbie, produces globally recognized products, and its well-known cast of characters are perhaps the most visible brands around the globe. At the

same time, the Disney Corporation is also a place of employment for thousands. 'The Disney name is an attraction for potential employees, who may have dreamed all their lives about working at the studio or one of the theme parks. Still, the allure of the Magic Kingdom can be deceptive.' In **'Corporate Disney in Action'**, excerpted from her book *Understanding Disney: The Manufacture of Fantasy* (2001), Janet Wasko dissolves the 'magic' of Disney in her study of the Disney corporation and its international business practices. Wasko's tour behind the mouse's façade reveals a lobbying campaign that helped to pass the Copyright Extension Act of 1998, as well as the use of subcontracted animation work, a highly regulated and controlled labor force, and a below average pay scale for its theme park employees. What Wasko's work indicates is that there is no easy way to settle the contradiction between idealizations of popular culture as pleasure, fantasy, and entertainment, and the decidedly profit-driven exploits through which it is frequently generated.

Henry Yu, author of *Thinking Oriental: Migration, Contact and Exoticism in Modern America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), explores the limitations as well as the promise of post-nationalist American studies for generating engaged cultural criticism that takes into account the transnational dimension of labor and markets. Specifically, Yu considers the international marketing of multiculturalism through the traditionally white world of professional golf in **'How Tiger Woods Lost His Stripes: Post-Nationalist American Studies as a History of Race, Migration, and the Commodification of Culture'** from John Carlos Rowe (ed.) (2000) *Postnationalist American Studies*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. A key proposition of the essay is that Woods' commercial debut presents a means of 'examining how race, ethnicity, and the mass market in the United States can no longer be understood (and perhaps were never properly understood) without the context of global capitalism that frames definitions of cultural and national difference', and this is precisely what Yu goes on to explore through close attention to how Woods' diverse ethnic and racial designations have figured in public representations of his celebrity both in the USA and abroad. The concept of culture figures largely in this analysis, functioning as both a theory and an historical and social concept that connects with the impact of the state, racial experience and population migration. On the basis of this configuration, Yu asserts that 'Tiger Woods' story exemplifies the crossroads between the commercialization of sport in the United States and the production of racial and cultural difference'; within this story multicultural narratives serve as shorthand histories for international migration and the 'perceived international appeal of Tiger's mixed ethnicity'.

Play List

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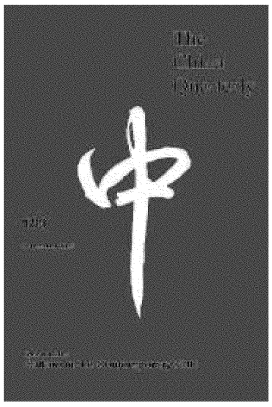
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Bourgeois Bohemians in China? Neo-Tribes and the Urban Imaginary*

Jing Wang

ABSTRACT This article treats an understudied subject in popular culture studies: the mutual feed between lifestyle cultures and marketing through an examination of the bobo fever in urban China. How did an imaginary class of "bourgeois bohemians" emerge in a country where the bourgeois base is statistically small and where the bohemian equation is non-existent? To shed light on this pop-culture-turned-marketing-fad syndrome, the article introduces the concept of the "neo-tribes" and maps the pathways that link style cultures to consumer segmentation. A couple of critical questions arise from this exercise. First, is the separability of taste from class symptomatic of a "Chinese leap of faith"? And secondly, is the hottest market segment today – the "neo-neo-tribes" – preparing us to address the convergence of a global youth culture?

If American economist Thorstein Veblen lived in urban China today he would be very impressed. Nowhere else would he find such a large population so eager to practise his theory of "pecuniary emulation."[1] Why did Louis Vuitton, Prada, BMW and Fendi all regard China as the centre of turbo-growth? It is because their near-term investment will be paid off "in secondary cities like Dalian, Shenyang, and Chengdu, where second-tier status as a city translates into *first-tier* desires by the residents."[2] You are what you consume. That is, consumption is built on a tiered logic: for those situated lower on the hierarchy, there is no faster way of acquiring social prestige than emulating the lifestyle of those higher up. In August 2002 when I finished my internship at Ogilvy,[3] "third-tier" cities (southern county towns) had already entered the marketing lingo, conjuring up the scenario that average residents in affluent county townships will soon be catching up with second-tier desires.[4] A game of musical chairs was set in motion, with lower tiers busy making an urban imaginary that is always already a tier higher. All this, I would propose, is the social logic of consumption Veblen elucidates so well in *The Theory of the Leisure Class*.

* This article is an excerpt from my book project *Brand New China: Advertising, Media, and Commercial Culture*. The original book chapter was first presented at the "Urban Imaginaries" international conference at Lingnan University, Hong Kong, in May 2004.

1. Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study in the Evolution of Institutions* (New York: Dover Press, 1994).

2. First-tier cities are Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. Stan Stalnaker's *Hub Culture: The Next Wave of Urban Consumers* (Singapore: John Wiley & Sons (Asia) Pte.Ltd., 2002), p. 175 is extremely useful for my attempt to theorize the tiered logic of consumption.

3. I worked at Ogilvy in Beijing for two summers in 2002 and 2004 in the Department of Strategic Planning.

4. Second-tier cities are Nanjing, Chengdu, Wuhan, Hangzhou, Shenyang, Tianjin and large provincial centres. Third-tier cities are sizeable southern county towns (*zhongxin cheng*) like Changzhou.

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This article deals with an understudied topic in the field of popular cultural studies: the mutual imbrication between lifestyle cultures and marketing. Marketing is often the missing link in studies of the relationship between popular culture and consumer culture. By concentrating on the Chinese bobo discourse, I wish to accomplish two goals. The first is to examine the logic of market segmentation that fuels the engine of emulative spending. More specifically, an analysis of the proliferating tribal discourses in China will map the pathways that link lifestyle cultures to consumer segmentation. The second is to treat the bobo discourse both as a pop cultural and a marketing phenomenon. I look at the contemporary mutation of the anthropological concept "tribe" into a new marketing term *zu* or *zuqun* ("neo-tribe"), and the challenge this new term poses to the old notion of "subculture." I hope to demonstrate that without delimiting and naming the target segment for a product, the engine of emulation could not get started. For emulation is made possible through the consumer's identification with a given socio-cultural segment, or "tribe." To flesh out this "tribal" logic of consumerism, this article looks at the higher end of the consumption ladder in urban China. This is an imaginary space criss-crossed by various funny acronyms evolving around the concept of the "neo-tribes." The article examines the Chinese "bobos" and *xin xin renlei* (the "neo-neo-tribe") and examines the real and imaginary benchmarks for membership for each tribe.

If consumption is conceived as an upward spiral movement that progresses tier by tier, as pointed out above, what do the upper echelons do? Sit on top of the ladder waiting for those below them to close up the ranks? That is hardly the case. An upscale marketer's job is largely defined by tactics of hairsplitting those further up the social hierarchy into tiny market segments. Those niche segments serve to set themselves apart not only from mass consumers but also from each other. At first glance, the myriad "tribal" discourses now mushrooming in urban China seem nothing more than novel marketing strategies targeted at the newly affluent. However, whether marketers can create wants, as the 1960s mass culture critique would have us believe, is no simple question with a quick answer. Contemporary cultural producers themselves do not have such faith in their power of controlling the mind of consumers as their counterparts in the early 1900s did.[5] As a society grows more affluent, successful marketing depends increasingly upon unearthing consumers' own preference and desire and then selling it back to them. The tribal logic, for instance, would have no purchase if it had not tapped into the existing anxieties of the socially privileged. What are their anxieties? To be caught up by the emulative mass consumers. That is to suggest that those further up on the social ladder – neo-tribes like the bobos – play the game of differentiation as fervently as those down under. In

5. A typical viewpoint of the marketers can be seen in Richard Ohmann's "Knowing/creating wants," in Richard Ohmann (ed.), *Making and Selling Culture* (Hanover & London: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), pp. 224–238.

consumerism, differentiation and emulation are two sides of the same coin. China is no exception.

The Bobo Fever

> These are highly educated folk who have one foot in the bohemian world of creativity and another foot in the bourgeois realm of ambition and worldly success. The members of the new information age elite are bourgeois bohemians. Or, to take the first two letters of each word, they are Bobos.[6]

David Brooks's *Bobos in Paradise* is a comic sociology about the rise of America's new elite in an age of knowledge economy and its impact on American upscale culture. Who would have guessed a facetious celebration of the wedding between 1960s counterculture and the 1980s over-achievement craze would trigger a bobo fetishism in China? In September 2002, the Chinese translation of the book arrived in major cities and became an instant best seller. *Xiaozi*, "petty bourgeoisie," a term trendy only a year before, became passé overnight. "Everybody else is already a bobo, what are we waiting for?!" As 2002 drew to an end, the bobo became a Chinese poster child without a hint of irony.

A Chinese word *bobo* was coined to sound almost exactly like the English word. But many others resort to an indigenized version of the original – "*bubo*" – a combination of the first syllable of the two Chinese words, *buerqiaoya* (bourgeois) and *boximiya* (bohemia). The term advanced to the No. 3 slot on the list of top ten internet words in China in 2002, trailing "keep pace with the times" and "the Three Representatives."[7]

A small café near South-east University in Nanjing named itself Bobo Café, a perfect example of a second-tier city teeming with first-tier desires. There was at least one website *Xici hutong* (www.xici.net) that once posted a bobo page and provided advice on how bobos are supposed to act, on where to find them and how to become one. After answering some multiple choice questions (such as "are you satisfied with your life?" and "what do you think of Italian fashion?"), web surfers could assess their potential for being a bobo.[8] In the capital, businessman Zhang Luzi opened the DIY@bobo Bar to provide a home for this new social group. There was also a short-lived Bobos Club in Beijing that sponsored lectures on *fengshui* and other topics related to "spirituality." The list goes on and on. A bobo marketing craze appeared in first, second and third tier cities and an entertaining debate unfolded in the press and on the internet.

6. David Brooks, *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There* (New York & London: Simon & Schuster, 2000), pp. 10–11.

7. Paul Mooney, "Bobos in Shangri-La," *Newsweek* (Atlantic Edition), 3 March 2003, http://www.pjmooney.com/bobosnwk.shtml, accessed in April 2004.

8. "Zhongguo 'bubozu': dangdai bei faxian de dushi buluo" ("Chinese bobos: an urban tribe waiting to be discovered"), www.sina.com.cn, 12 December 2002, accessed in 2004.

First, a sampler of advertising copies that cashed in on the bobo fever:

Alcatel OT715

Have you ever heard of "bobos"? … a social group in search of freedom, challenges and spiritual fulfilment. They are keen on creating the genuine meaning of life for themselves. A bobo demands the best from life. They are seeking products of exquisite taste and quality, but more importantly, of products that display character and an essence of free spirit. Bobos have been looking everywhere for an ideal cell phone. Not until now did they spot the new Alcatel OT715 … It combines the 1970s retro style of elegance and the cool attitude of the 21st century …"[9]

Legend Solei Notebook E100

A well-cultivated person will not stoop to compete for the No. 1 place with average Joes and Janes. A bobo is well-cultivated. His notebook displays a style of simplicity. Bobos love country folk, a weathered fisherman, a craftsman in the remote countryside, or a short and plump artist who dances simple folk dances and sings simple folk songs. For bobos, those simple-minded country people look serene and peaceful. Although they are poor, they live a rich life … Corresponding to the fundamental spirit of the bobos is the simple but smart looking E100. It is clothed in simple dark blue, but its keyboard and LCD screen shines in fashionable silver. A contradictory colour scheme like this matched with a daring design delivers to the bobos a jazzy sense of romance.[10]

Bobo International, Changsha, Hunan Province

In Bobo International, you get a perfect view of the mountains and hear the sound of the Xiang River gently stroking the banks. If you want to snack, turn on the electric burners. In a few minutes, you will be enjoying a drink with your beloved under the moonlight – over a few simple appetizers"[11]

From category to category, from copy to copy, the word "bobo" and its affinities delivered a single message: premium value. If you spot some tongue-in-cheek humour in the advertising copies above, be assured irony has no place in marketing plans in China. Chinese boboism retained none of Brooks's satirical edge. What reads like a parody to non-target segments (cultural theorists like myself) actually touched a chord in China's fad enthusiasts who are searching for a lifestyle breakthrough. Many such bobo campaigns (like the one cited below) went way over the top. You would have to wonder where the Bohemian part of the equation went.

9. " 'Bubozu' de xin chonger: Aerkate OT715" ("The new pet toy for bobos: Alcatel OT715"), http://topdigital.vip.sina.com/…/products/200208, 2002, accessed in 2004.

10. "Yidong bobo zu, Lianxiang zhaoyang E100 xuanchu xin jingying linian" ("Mobilizing the bobo tribe: Legend's zhaoyang notebook E100 promoted the concept of the new elite), www.sina.com.cn, 19 November 2003, accessed in 2004.

11. "Bobo guoji: chengshi jingying de lixiang jiayuan" ("Bobo international: the ideal abode for city elite"), http://jrnb.rednet.com.cn, 19 November 2003, accessed in 2004.

The Guangzhou Project: Searching Online for Bobo Prospects

The corporation in question, let us call it S Real Estate, is located in Guangzhou. It singled out bobos as its target clients. To pare down advertising expenditure, the company relied on the internet for promotions. They devised an elaborate communications plan. To identify the target segment and attract their attention, several online activities were launched simultaneously: a search for bobos in Guangzhou; a contest for the ten coolest bobos in Guangzhou; a web editorial called "Bobos and their poetic lives"; an online serialized story penned by a fictional bobo living in the S apartment complex – "Love soars on the wings of poetry: the confessions of a bobo"; a FLASH animation site advertising the "happy life style of bobos" and the brand essence of the S apartments (happy life = freedom + wealth + mindfulness).

The maximum impact of this communications plan can be gauged from the questionnaires for the online bobo search:

1. Are you looking for something cool about a refrigerator rather than its cooling function when you are shopping for one?
2. Are you one of those who often wear hiking boots and ski glasses or some unconventional gear to work?
3. Will you be willing to give up your job at the drop of a hat and go to a far-off place for a month?
4. Do you feel that being single for the rest of your life is no big deal?
5. You are an atheist. But one day do you fall in love and feel that it is God's will?
6. Isn't it unbearable if your living space does not give you a poetic sense of life?
7. Is it a torture to live in a place that looks just like any other place without a personality?

If you answer "yes" to *any* of the questions above, contact the S Corporation immediately. You are a prospective bobo qualified for some incentive awards comprised of a surprise gift and a complimentary day trip to the S apartment complex. And mind you, if you are interested in running for the "ten coolest bobos" championship in Guangzhou, all you have to do is to enter a prose-writing contest by submitting the most "poetic" and "personality building" experience you have ever had. A selection panel will pass the verdict. The ten winners will be given the title of *Bubo jueshi* – Sir Bobos![12]

The Debate: Bursting the Bubos

Not everyone, of course, was buying the trend and falling for overblown marketing ploys. After the initial fanfare waned a little, Beijing's most authoritative lifestyle magazine, *Life Weekly*, was quick to point out that there are very few bobos in China. Others, like Ye Ying,

12. Lin Jingxi, "Xiaohu xing bailing gongyu wangluo xingxiao tuiguang fang'an" ("The marketing case of a small-sized white collar apartment complex"), http:house.focus.cn/newshtml/51716.html, 23 September 2003, accessed in 2004.

13. Ye Ying,"Logo de liliang" ("The power of logo"), *Sanlian shenghuo zhoukan* (*Life Weekly*), No. 233 (23 March 2003), http://www.lifeweek.com.cn/2003–05–06/000015155.html, accessed in April 2004.

editor of "Lifestyle" at *The Economic Observer*, were reluctant to underestimate the appeal of bobo lifestyle to urban youth.[13] It is most likely, she predicted, that the fever will linger, and I add, especially at places where there is a critical mass of the nouveau riche. This observation may not be far-fetched especially in the changing social climate of the post-Jiang Zeming era. The original bobo spirit – an affluent class opposed to soulless materialism – did touch a raw nerve in China's rising social elite.

The social value of affluence in a socialist country is never stable. In 2003 and 2004, being labelled "rich" brought mixed blessings. Closer social scrutiny was but one small inconvenience the rich had to endure. It was the guilt trip that took away the pleasure of being an upstart. A new generation of Party leaders was touting the politically correct slogan "social justice" (*shehui gongzheng*), holding back, at least in theory, the ethos of mindless materialism. Media attention was lavished on the "*san nong* problems" (peasants [*nongmin*], villages [*nongcun*], and agriculture [*nongye*]). President Hu Jintao moved "poverty alleviation" and "social conscience" to the top of the national agenda. Premier Wen Jiabao made headlines in the early months of 2004 with a personal campaign helping rural migrants to collect overdue wages. The social impact of all this was a discursive backlash on the new rich and their unconscionable behaviour. Paul Mooney's report in *Newsweek* quotes a Beijing writer saying: "People look down on the nouveau riche, and that's why [the] Chinese are keen to add the bohemian title."[14] There are numerous instances emphasizing the social costs of materialism gone berserk. In 2003, a second-degree murder trial involving a rich woman running over a peasant in her BMW stirred up media furore. In 2004, the murder of four dorm mates at Yunnan University by poor peasant student Ma Jiajue triggered another round of social criticism. This time, the materialistic society at large was blamed for its indifference to a tortured student trapped in extreme poverty and driven to insanity. It is fair to say that although "wealth" will never become a stigma for the rich in the same way as "poverty" to the poor, the Chinese court of public opinion has sentenced the unconscionable rich "guilty," signalling a profound shift of the collective emotional identification away from the nouveau riche to the old and new poor. The bobo phenomenon thus provided China's new elite with the possibility that materialism can be reconciled with spirituality, elite status with egalitarian ideals.

The fever, interestingly, struck a chord with social critics as well. It rejuvenated a perennial question: just how large is China's "bourgeoisie"? China has never had bohemians, but should the bourgeois side of the equation for bobos be taken for granted? *Life Weekly* debunked both the old and new myth: "Perhaps China does not have real bobos because the Chinese 'middle class' has not been fully formed."[15]

14. Mooney, "Bobos in Shangri-La."

15. Miao Wei, Lu Xiaoxun *et al*., "Bobozu yu 'xin wenhua yundong' " ("The bobos and the 'new culture movement' "), *Sanlian shenghuo zhoukan*, No. 47 (25 November 2002), http://www.lifeweek.com.cn/2003–04–08/000013313.html, accessed in April 2004.

The editors went on in a satirical vein, saying that *bu* (bourgeois) is what the Chinese are really after, and *bo* (bohemian) is but sham and disposable. If we have to perform a social reading on the S Real Estate advertising discussed above, it certainly validates such an insight. Could it be that the bobo discourse travelled well in China because it pinpointed the double lack? Rule No. 1 in the Great Book of Consumption: naming a lack is the fastest way to guarantee its quick rise in demand.

In Search of the "Middle Class"

The bourgeoisie question predictably elevated bobo discourse to a level of discussion to which only serious sociological researchers could respond. But the transition of a lifestyle topic into a sociological one had not occurred. Nor was the challenge posed by *Life Weekly* answered by cultural critics. By spring 2004, not many follow-up discussions on the controversy had reached the public arena. One reason could be that the public's attention was diverted from the question of the "middle class" to the new benchmark for social stratification, *xiaokang* (the "comparatively well-to-do," a cut below the middle class). Clearly, although south China has a bigger stake in promoting the discourse of the "middle class," the north and the rest of the country are drawn to *xiaokang* as a policy concept that is deemed more relevant for its less affluent population.

The middle-class question, however, demands attention not least because it too often got lost in ideological clutter. The major characteristic of Chinese boboism resides precisely in its promoters' belief in the separability of class from taste. While David Brooks's American boboism is unmistakably a caste phenomenon and fundamentally a class formation, Chinese boboism as a thriving social imaginary did not correspond to the bobos as a real social class. However, the statistics of the Chinese middle class provided much fuel to those critics who debunk the bobo phenomenon. They uphold that the future of boboism hinges on whether there is a bourgeois base to begin with. Seen in that perspective, the bourgeois equation is essential for boboism to take root in China and is worthy of critical attention.

A research report published in 2004 provides statistics on the Chinese middle class.[16] Four criteria are outlined in modern sociology to assess whether one belongs to the middle class: by professional status; by income; by patterns of lifestyle consumption; and by subjective cognition. The data for the Chinese study were collected by a research team at the Chinese Academy of the Social Sciences engaged in a study called "Structural Changes of Contemporary Chinese Society." Between November and December 2001, the team collected data from people between 16 and 70 years old living in 12 provinces and special munici-

16. Li Chunlin, "Zhongchan jieceng Zhongguo shehui zhide guanzhu de renqun" ("The middle class: a Chinese social group worthy of our attention") in Ru Xin, Lu Xueyi and Li Peilin (eds.), *2004: Zhongguo shehui xingshi fenxi yu yuce* (*2004: Analysis and Forecast on China's Social Development*) (Beijing: Sheke wenxian chuban she, 2004), pp. 51–63.

palities, and 73 districts and counties. At the end of the research period, they derived 6,193 valid samples.

First, 15.90 per cent of those surveyed can be categorized as middle class by profession (*zhiye zhongchan*). Five professions – Party and political officials, business managerial class, private entrepreneurs, technical skilled labour, and office workers – are labelled "white collar" professions. Secondly, 24.6 per cent are middle class by income. There is no standard mean for all the regions surveyed. Income gaps are huge between different places. If the *national* income index was used as the standard for social classification there would be some very odd results: those living in the metropolis whose economic condition is inferior would be categorized as "higher income earners," and those who are relatively wealthy in underdeveloped regions might be grouped into "low income earners." It is therefore necessary that the "mean" is calculated on a regional rather than national basis. The survey areas were divided into six regions: developing cities, towns and districts; comparatively well-developed towns, cities and districts; underdeveloped cities, towns and districts; developing villages and rural areas; well-developed villages and rural areas; and underdeveloped rural areas. The research team derived the average figure of an individual's monthly income region by region. Those whose income rose above the mean in each region were counted as the "middle class," those below the mean were not.

Thirdly, 35 per cent of those surveyed are middle class by standards of consumption and lifestyle. Like the income index, a universal standard for the "middle-class lifestyle" is hard to define, let alone to achieve, in a country as culturally diverse as China. Li Chunling and her research team argue that with some exceptions seen among middle-aged and young people in metropolises, "so-called middle class culture has not appeared in China." Since a specific standard of "cultural" consumption was absent, the researchers developed an elaborate point system for measuring each household's capacity for consuming medium-range and luxury goods. "Middle-class lifestyle goods" were divided into four categories: necessity electric appliances (such as colour television, refrigerator, washing machine); medium-level consumer goods (such as telephone, mobile phone, CD player, microwave, air-conditioner); luxury goods (such as computer, camcorder, piano, motorcycle); and automobile. Each of the items listed in the first two categories is worth one point; in the third category four points; while households that own a car get 12 points. The "consumer middle class" (*xiaofei zhongchan*) resulted from the calibration and comparison of the total scores earned by each household. The 35 per cent figure, however, failed to acknowledge the wide gaps of consumption pattern between urban and rural China (50.2 per cent and 25.1 per cent respectively) and between generations (young people between 21 and 30 scored 41.8 per cent and the older generation 24.1 per cent).

The last category, "subjective cognition," yields the largest percentage. As many as 46.8 per cent of those surveyed considered themselves a member of the "middle class." Gender difference is minimal in this category. Schooling also matters little. Interestingly, 40.8 per cent of

those who had not gone beyond primary school education identified themselves with the middle class, compared to 72.9 per cent of college graduates. Approximately 31.1 per cent of those who never went to school considered themselves "middle class" as well.

These are decent statistic figures. However, if the four criteria are combined to arrive at a comprehensive index for the middle class, then the percentage of Chinese bourgeoisie drops to 4.1–6.0 per cent. Even in big cities, the percentage is as low as 8.7–12.0 per cent. That is, the percentage of Chinese who are white-collar workers, whose income falls into the medium range, whose consumption level reaches the median and who at the same time identify themselves as middle class is only a little above ground-level.

Class or Taste? A Leap of Faith

Instead of asking "where are the Chinese bobos?" one may now ponder "where are the Chinese bourgeoisie?" It seems that the country has a long way to go before a real caste with an economic power equal to that of the American yuppies-turned-hippies (American bobos) will emerge. Meanwhile, the bobo as an urban imaginary and marketing in the name of bobo seems to have paid off. That is a Chinese paradox. Nothing seemed to stop the Chinese from indulging themselves in a social imaginary that fans their dream of being part of the global, "cosmopolitan" culture.

Bobo fever was indicative of one symptom that I will call "a leap of faith in the separability of taste from 'class' " (as in *jieji)*. Chinese cultural brokers sold boboism in China as a lifestyle fad rather than a product of a class culture. Does it really matter if China does not have bobos as long as upscale consumers wear the bobo lifestyle on their sleeves? Marketers couldn't care less. But it is fascinating that China's society commentators were oblivious to the real meat in *Bobos in Paradise* – the historical rise of the bobo in America as a distinct class of its own. Granted that David Brooks argues that bobos' meritocratic culture thrives on blurring class distinctions and that he debunks Marx's theory of "class conflict," a close reading of his book provides a detailed sociological profile of a new, dominant American establishment class, which, in his words, defines the "parameters of respectable opinion and taste."[17]

There is much to speculate about the characteristic of Chinese bobo fever as a discourse that decouples the bobo "class" from the bobo "taste." That phenomenon was no fluke. The popularity of *Bobos in Paradise* and other similar books about lifestyle choices points to a cultural symptom prevalent in 2000s China. Urban China was overcrowded with social trends that usually emerge in *post*-affluent societies in the West. How can Chinese consumers appreciate "one-downmanship" when they have not had enough practice of "one-upmanship"? Questions like taste, the "freedom" of lifestyle choices and "one-downmanship"

17. Brooks, *Bobos in Paradise*, pp. 41–46.

came to plague a country where only some 4.1 to 6 per cent were deemed middle class in 2004. Before wealth accumulates and trickles down to the masses, anxieties of abundance have already hit taste fanatics and the would-be bobos. Gaps between the post-affluent urban imaginary and the social real continued to widen as the fights between society commentators and social critics stormed on. This is probably quite a fascinating spectacle for Western trend spotters. But for the majority of Chinese for whom social classes conflict rather than blur, the urban imaginary closing in upon them seems to be spinning out of control. But then one might say, when is China *not* in crisis? And bobo fever was surely a passing trend already overtaken by other flashier neo-tribes.

Bobos as a Market Segment

In many regards, urban China is an endless fashion race trying to beat escalating turnovers. The protagonists came and went. But the marketers stayed. From probing bobo fever as a popular cultural syndrome, this section examines it as a marketing phenomenon. In fact, some of the shrewdest observations about bobo fever were made by marketers. In April 2003, a group of 18 of them gathered at Beijing's Postmodern Tower for a brainstorming session sponsored by *Successful Marketing*, a trade magazine. The agenda was: what kind of "marketing opportunities" (*shangji*) will the bobo fever offer to Chinese marketers?

The Bobo Symposium

There can be no better venue in Beijing than the Postmodern Tower for a marketing symposium on the bobos. Inside the Tower, everything is pared down to Rule No. 4 of the Bobo Code of Financial Correctness: "you can never have too much texture."[18] Craggy brick walls without decorations, bare unfinished wooden floor pieced together with irregularly shaped planks – the Tower exudes the bobo's spirit of calculated casualness.

Several questions were put on the table. How many bobos are there really in China? Can a minority group like that support a product line? The crowd was divided. But regardless of the size issue, they were in strong agreement about the necessity of cashing in on the trend. You don't have to believe in the leap of faith to take advantage of it. The following is a sample of quotations from the symposium participants:

"Bobos have dreams. So they are easy targets. They can be easily moved by 'concepts' and 'storytelling'."
"Sell them the bobo spirit."
"Chinese society will witness an increasingly large affluent class. Although we will probably never be sure whether X or Y is a bobo, but we will surely see them display some bobo characteristics such as a preoccupation with creativity and spiritual values."

18. *Ibid.* p. 92.

"Our marketing opportunities will rest on whether we can provide products with added values that transcend materialism. For instance, sell ambience and service at entertainment venues such as bars and restaurants."
"You can detect a new social tendency now. Business behaviour must be wedded to cultural concepts. Only when competition takes place at a certain cultural height and at a spiritual level can you make your products stand out."
"Bobos value personal experiences. They like to be adventurers. But they are not iconoclasts. Nor are they opposed to being trendy. Their main value coincides with the core value of society. That's the fundamental reason why they are so successful … We should not associate boboism with a fad or with an act of rebellion. We should not look upon them as mere upstarts either. They don't ever rebel."[19]

DINKs and the Neo-Tribe Co.

The last quotation is especially revealing in its no-nonsense assessment of the bobo unconscious, in China at least. But understanding who the bobos are is one thing, motivating them to spend is another. They need a reason why they should buy. What are their desires like and how should they be captured? The answer to those million-dollar questions is simple, the marketers at the symposium argued. Give them "id" labels. Sell them distinct personalities. The symposium named such a desire "self-validation" and a burning need of China's young generation to broadcast to the world, "who I am!"[20]

This is an explanatory moment that brings to the foreground the phenomenon of proliferating "neo-tribes" in China. Barely had one tribe entered the spotlight than another emerged to upstage it, all occurring at stunningly short intervals. Other societies are plagued by neo-tribes as well (after all we live in consumer societies). But the frenzy in China, as noted above, tops them all, leading to headlines like: "The IFs[21] have come. Don't you ever mention bobos any more!" Meanwhile the International Freemen are fighting for the limelight with another tribe dubbed DINKs – Double Income, No Kids. The tiny stage is getting very crowded.

Hairsplitting stratification has indeed come in vogue since the early 2000s. Chinese marketers claim that they are merely following the social desire for stratification. And in the case of the bobo fever, they could hardly catch up. On the other hand, some symposium attendees were honest about the necessity of meticulous segmentation. Marketing follows the 2/8 principle: 80 per cent of a society's purchasing power is concentrated on the top 20 per cent consumer elites. Ironically, high income earners have grown increasingly indifferent to consumption. Old

19. "Bubo zu shangji da gonglüe zhi luntan yu dianping ("Commentaries on the symposium of 'A marketing offence targeting bobos' "), http://finance.sina.com.cn/roll/20030416, 16 April 2003, accessed in 2004.
20. Liu Wei, Wang Weiqun *et al.*, "Bubo zu shangji da gonglüe" ("A marketing offence targeting bobos"), *Chenggong yingxiao* (*Successful Marketing*). No. 4 (2003), http:/www.cmarketing.com.cn, accessed in 2004.
21. IFs are International Free(wo)men who are bi-lingual or multi-lingual, who have developed bi-cultural tastes and who travel constantly between different locales.

demographic indexes like "age" and "income" are not strong identity markers any more. Premium consumers need catchy cultural identities to distinguish themselves from the other *fellow* elites. Thus the marketing craze for fastidious positioning churns out one tribal epithet after another.

Michel Maffesoli and the Tribal Paradigm

The previous sections should have made it fairly obvious that the situation facing China is the extreme facility with which the "neo-tribes" cast off their old identity labels and put on new ones. The Chinese have gone to an extreme, but the fever for "neo-tribes" was a "foreign" phenomenon transported from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan. Perhaps what is happening in China is only a hyperbole of consumer society in general. What is the connection between consumerism and the tribal discourse?

French sociologist Michel Maffesoli made a breakthrough in theorizing contemporary consumer society. We live in "the time of the tribes," he says, which witnesses the explosion of lifestyle cultures. Tribes are organized around brand names and role-playing fantasies. Old categories such as the core identity, subjectivity, autonomy and even subculture have fallen short of accounting for new forms of "sociality." He distinguishes the "social," defined in terms of the "rational association of individuals having a precise identity" from "sociality," the highly unstable space where a multiplicity of contingent tribal circles intersect and make meaning situationally. "The dramatic authenticity of the social is answered by the tragic superficiality of sociality."[22]

Maffesoli is both fascinated and repulsed by the chameleon instinct of the performing self that drives today's consumer culture. Sometimes he complains about the "conformism" of youth culture and reveals a nostalgia for a stable subject position captured in the old concept of the "individual": "what we are witnessing is the loss of the idea of the individual in favor of a much *less distinct* mass."[23] But despite a small handful of occasional epistemological slippages, Maffesoli maintains consistently, true to the Weberian spirit, that "identity is never, from the sociological point of view, anything but a simply floating and relative condition."[24] He describes the cultural moment of neo-tribalism as a multitude of fluid networks "confirmed on a daily basis."[25]

There is a flip side to this phenomenon, as Maffesoli insinuates: the guarantee of group *solidarity* of the neo-tribes became as fragile as their occasional gatherings (and dispersals). He thus raises new questions about solidarity: what happens to human fellowship in the new age of media convergence? Specifically, how is "solidarity" registered, felt and articulated when conversations are accessed on different media *simultaneously*? When karma is only a click away, what does "bonding" mean?

22. Michel Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society* (London, Thousand Oaks & New Delhi: Sage, 1996), p. 76.
23. *Ibid.* p. 64, italics mine.
24. *Ibid.* p. 65.
25. *Ibid.* p. 97.

The Time of the Tribes is littered with metaphorical moments that tease out the technological link of the tribal paradigm which, as shown below, lies at the heart of the emerging tribe of the day, *xin xin renlei*.

However Maffesoli does not provide a real-life specimen of his object of analysis, merely a theoretical skeleton. That is one of the reasons why this article consists of the social mosaic of neo-tribes *in motion*. The instantaneous rise of the bobos and other neo-tribes in China is highly instructive for the evolving critical inquiries into the tribal question at large.

A discussion of Maffesoli would be incomplete without a mention of the impact of his theories on Dick Hebdige's "subculture" couched in the tradition of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Or, conversely, one could say that the tribal paradigm can only make sense if it is set off against the earlier paradigm of subculture. Does the theory of "subculture," which predicates the simple dichotomy between a monolithic mainstream culture and politically conscious resistant subcultures, stand valid in the new economy where the old boundaries between "culture" and "economy," "activism" and "consumerism" can no longer be as clearly drawn as in Hebdige's time?

Perhaps the most concentrated effort to re-conceptualize Hebdige's old paradigm was seen in the Vienna symposium called "Post-Subcultural Studies" held in May 2001. A new field was said to be born, with a large contingent of European researchers of youth culture who share with each other an overriding interest in examining dance and music style cultures. Most participants in the symposium agreed on the demise of "subcultural heroism" of the 1970s and 1980s.[26] However, the allure of alternative models such as Maffesoli's is seen to have a caveat – it theorizes "politics" away too readily. If the "optimum strategy" of the neo-tribes is "to tap into a number of lifestyles, adopting whichever one best fits the situation to hand," their irreverent energy appears to be utterly purposeless.[27] How to rescue or redefine "activism" from the increasingly instantaneous tribal formations constitutes one of the central missions underlying the new critical literature that touts the arrival of the *post-subcultural* era.

One can clearly see the watershed of such a paradigmatic shift in urban China as well. Anybody familiar with the clubbing and music scene in the Chinese metropolises would be struck by the frantic tribalization of new taste cultures. Cui Jian's days are gone. So is Chinese subculture with an *angst*. Jay Chou, Faye Wong and Pu Shu, each a spokesperson for at least one major commodity product, are now the hottest pop icons. Rebellious postures are chic. It has little to do with iconoclasm. China's young generations are courting the *safe cool*, a party-going esprit unattended by the kind of soul-searching sought by the proponents of the new European post-subcultural movement bent on repoliticizing youth cultures with a

26. Rupert Weinzierl and David Muggleton, "What is 'post-subcultural studies' anyway?" in David Muggleton and Rupert Weinzierl (eds.), *The Post-Subcultures Reader* (Oxford & New York: Berg, 2003), pp. 6–9.

27. David B. Clarke, Marcus A. Doel *et al.*, *The Consumption Reader* (London & New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 137.

carnivalesque twist. One should, of course, not preclude any examination of what is emerging in China by taking a European model as a starting point of analysis. The temptation to make such a comparison is, however, difficult to resist precisely because cool marketing and global branding has given new impetuses to the formation of the target segment called "global youth" – international urban youths aged from late teens to early 20s. It is a transnational marketer's ultimate dream: enabled by digital technology and international marketing, a global youth culture is converging from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Is it happening? It would seem that there is not such an easy equation between the West and the rest as maintained by earnest advocates of cultural globalization. "Cool" music and "alternative" youths in China hardly signal the same thing as their counterparts in Euro-America.[28] The concept of "convergence," however, has real value when applied to the East Asian equation. There is no denying that East Asian youth cultures are now converging on a new tribal sensation, *xin xin renlei*.

Xin Xin Renlei: The East Asian Connection

A litmus test of Maffesoli's theory can be conducted with success in East Asia where market segmentation in tribal terms has taken on a life of its own. Maffesoli's *tribus* has splintered into tiny subdivisions, each half-a-generation apart, in places like China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan. Not surprisingly, neo-tribes in China such as the bobos, DINKs and IFs are now considered rather conservative in their taste because as the established social elites, they are not as cool as their followers, the "neo-neo-tribe" – Asia's hottest market segment. Members of this emerging tribe are in their late teens and early 20s and cross gender divisions. They have a symbiotic existence with high-tech communication gadgets. Their threshold for irreverence is immeasurable. And with less money than the bobos, they are no easy prey for mainstream consumerism.

Maffesoli should be given credit for mentioning that "the feeling of tribal belonging can be reinforced by technological developments."[29] But when he penned his theory of neo-tribalism in 1988, he hardly foresaw that technology itself could create a tribe of its own complete with a system of distinction that sounds alien even to the neo-tribes. In China, the neo-neo-tribe is the first generation who grew up in the internet chat rooms. Their counterparts in Japan are participants in a vibrant cell phone youth culture which has just begun to sweep urban China.

It is not a coincidence that the Chinese term *xin xin renlei* is a transliteration of the Japanese term *shin shin jinrei* introduced to the mainland via Hong Kong and Taiwan. This word is used almost synonymously with "Generation X and Y" in Taiwan. In Japan, it refers to the post-second baby-boomers generation who are in their late teens and

28. Jing Wang, "Youth culture, music, and cell phone branding in China," *Global Media and Communication*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (2005), p. 185–201.
29. Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes*, p. 139.

early 20s. A discussion about the cross-border journey of a marketing concept is perhaps long overdue for we cannot talk about the urban imaginary in one East Asian country without crossing national boundaries. Indeed, the tribal logic in consumer culture is as much an inter-Asian phenomenon as it is Chinese. The challenge is to work out how to trace its traffic when sources are mostly hearsay and of electronic origins. It is not within the scope of this article to address the comparative question about the East Asian neo-neo-tribes at length. To raise this subject, however, serves an immediate purpose: it is a reminder of the important link of marketing to our study of East Asian youth culture and consumer culture.

Chinese Xin Xin Renlei

What is a Chinese neo-neo-tribe like? A quick profile should confirm its parasitic existence with its counterparts in other Asian societies.

> "*Xin xin renlei* don their hair in all kinds of colours. Their cool faces give an exaggerated cold blank stare. They are dressed in plastic and metal looking clothes … They just want to look different. They are trend pursuers. They are a superficial and restless tribe … There is another way of portraying them: if you look human, then you do not belong to the neo-neo-tribe yet."[30]
>
> "*Xin xin renlei* is inexplicable. So far we have not yet figured out their lingo, behavioural code and life philosophy. The so-called neo-neo-tribe should not be seen as a mere signpost for a certain historical period. More important, it points to an uncertain ideology. In China, this tribe's ties with traditionalism are disappearing. Their thoughts and views on life are rapidly aligned with the international norm. Born in the late 1970s, they are distanced from 'tradition.' Their knowledge about the past was channelled indirectly through movies, novels and TV drama. Their literary sensibility is nurtured in Japanese manga. This is a generation fed by 'fast food culture' while they are growing up. Compared to the previous generation, they are much more independent, wilful and self-centred. Their way of absorbing things is DIY (do it yourself). Indoctrination and preaching find no place in their lives."[31]
>
> "Having fun is the most important thing in life … Acting 'cool' is the art and wisdom of a rebellion against a mediocre life."[32]

Pinning them down to a consistent profile is difficult. Real-life *xin xin renlei* can be seen at China News online, exemplified by Xiaolong (Little Dragon) and Nina.[33] This is a generation known to care about nothing but "fashion," "hair styles," "computer gadgets" and "relationships."[34] But

30. Longyuan huquan, "Zouchu liuxing xianxiang de xin xin renlei" ("The neo-neo-tribe that transcends fads"), http://www.54youth.com.cn/gb/paper107/zt/xyzt/hz7.htm, accessed in April 2004.

31. Guoke, "Xin xin renlei ji duo xin" ("How trendy is the neo-neo-tribe"), http://campus.etang.com/html/life/heter/daily/life-heter-daily-0192.htm, accessed in April 2004.

32. "Xin xin renlei de 'ku' shenghuo" ("The 'cool' life of a neo-neo-tribe"), http://www.xiayidai.com.cn/qczx/ssx/xxrl, accessed in April 2004.

33. Yu Ruidong, "Liuxing jujiao: wo xing wo ku, xin xin renlei" ("Trend focus: I do what is cool, neo-neo-tribe"), China News Service, 2002, http://www.chinanews.com.cn/2002–04–25/90/6.html, accessed in April 2004.

34. *Ibid.*

"fashion" here takes on a different meaning from what it means to the neo-tribes. It points to an attitude rather than glittering material objects.

We can debate to no end as to whether *xin xin renlei*'s rebellious attitude is reminiscent of Hebdige's subculture paradigm or of Maffesoli's tribal logic. But I think the question of rebellion is a red herring. "Having fun" and "doing whatever I want to do" is the key to unlocking the enigma of the neo-neo-tribe. Another point of entry is technology. A "classic visual image of the neo-neo-tribe" is "a lone figure arching over a computer like a big shrimp."[35]

The Sammy Point of View, Hong Kong Style

This final section provides a case study of an advertising campaign for Philippine's leading brew San Miguel Light Beer sold in Hong Kong. It is a campaign about "attitude," and its target is Hong Kong's neo-neo-tribe.

How to position a light beer that is a line extension of an ageing flagship brand posed a challenge to the Ogilvy Hong Kong team. The breakthrough came when researchers started inserting San Mig Light right into the social space of young drinkers.[36] The research question was: what is going on in their fickle minds? Through a five-pronged approach, a mosaic of stories and dialogues among those youngsters and about them were sampled. Together, they reveal a pattern of consistent "attitude" as follows:

"Their conversation is disorganized, there is no subject or theme, [they] live in a blue sky conversational world … as the conversation goes… , they start to shift to other things";
"The most difficult problem is 'what to eat' … Simply thinking about what to eat will spend us a day";
"Who will be calling me? Who will have nothing to do now? After calling him, I'll call someone else who has nothing to do";
"I'm seduced by sensory stimulus."[37]

This is obviously a tribal group seeking instant gratification listlessly, but a deeply bonded crowd. Thinking that home is the "most boring place of all," they are driven out into the metropolis of urban Hong Kong. They are crazy for visual and sensory stimuli, "anything that hints of mischief-making, that is visually fun … But everything is instantly disposable."[38] They move quickly on to the next "hit."

This profile is similar to that of China's neo-neo-tribe, crazier and wilder than the Japanese *shin shin jinrei*, but they all share the same C-culture – cartoons, computers, comic books and nintendo games. They all speak and consume the same visual language. Based on those field observations, the brand personality for San Mig Light took shape quickly.

35. Longyuan huquan, "The neo-neo-tribe that transcends fads."
36. "The launch of San Mig Light," power-point presentation, Ogilvy-in-Beijing.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Mark Blair, Richard Armstrong *et al.*, *The 360 Degree Brand in Asia* (Singapore: John Wiley & Sons (Asia) Pte Ltd., 2003), pp. 75–76.

He is a little guy who follows his own instinct, who does not give a damn for public opinion, a trickster guided by impulses rather than by the mind. A new mascot was born: Sammy.

When I first encountered that naughty little devil in a series of print advertisements for San Mig Light, I saw him as an obnoxious male prankster and a highly gendered invention. However, that cartoon figure, juvenile and delinquent, appeals to the target consumers regardless of their gender. He is the "ultimate spontaneous animal" that lurks in the minds and hearts of the Hong Kong neo-neo-tribe, an unstoppable phenomenon. He is everywhere. Private Sammy moments are posted in public. The Sammy "virus" was unleashed openly on television, billboards and print advertisements.[39] He pops up in shops, public lavatories, bars and restaurants, on the streets, at MTR, as tattoos and stickers, any medium you name, braving the public: "I dare, do you?" He pees whenever he can't hold it; he moons at you and dares you to spank him; he farts purposefully in a crowded elevator; he targets the urinal from a far distance; he shows love to a young girl by pushing her off a cliff. Scatological humour is his trade mark. The tag lines feature Sammy-style outbursts: "Come on, man!" "Hey man, that's fun." "Maybe we don't need to take things that seriously." He is in our face, asking, "will you be Sammy enough when you are allowed to?"

If you feel timid answering those challenges, you are simply not a Hong Kong neo-neo-tribe, but you may still qualify for its Chinese or Japanese incarnations. We can find Sammy's golden mean – "[my] only rule is to bend the rules, disruptively but not destructively" – performed by his counterparts in China, Japan and perhaps in other parts of Asia. This is, in short, the rise of a hot East Asian youth cultural phenomenon.

This article began with the bobos, an imaginary class, and ends with the neo-neo-tribe, a real-life social segment. I have yet to spot a television commercial that captures the dual traits of the Chinese bobos, namely that they have to practise both "one-upmanship" and an imaginary "one-down-manship" at the same time. Such real-life specimens are rare, to say the least. In contrast, the visual representation of *xin xin renlei* flooded the media precisely because it is a tribe rooted in reality. The arrival and popularity of both discourses, however, is a sure sign of the tribalization of the Chinese market. The theorem of tribal discourse aside, however, two other important questions were raised in this article. While no quick answers can be found, the taste versus class question and the theoretical possibility of an emerging global youth culture point to the heart of my critical concern: the importance of taking "marketing" into serious account in any study of regional and transnational popular cultural trends. As shown above, marketers only need to take a tiny step to turn a popular discourse about a tribe into a new marketing phenomenon. And one can certainly argue the reverse. Indeed, it is difficult to tell which comes first – a real-life tribe or its incarnation as a market segment. Either way, when marketing meets culture, can a new pop culture movement be far away?

39. See Ogilvy Interactive Asia for the Sammy advertising campaign: http://our-work.com/version1_2/files/web_sites/sammy_site/sammy_explan.htm, accessed in June 2005.

Chapter 17

Janet Wasko

Corporate Disney in Action

[...] The enforcement of intellectual property rights has become a vital issue for media and entertainment companies, especially in light of the proliferation of branded products, as well as the increased global marketing of products. For instance, American film companies have elicited the assistance of an army of lawyers and the FBI to enforce their property rights in the USA, as well as the State Department and Interpol in foreign markets. Piracy remains a thorn in the side of the Hollywood majors, which claim that billions of dollars are lost each year from unauthorized use and sale of their products.[1]

Disney has long been known for its tough enforcement of intellectual property rights and has a rich history of litigation against and/or harassment of potential copyright violators. When Team Disney took command, the campaign accelerated to the point that the company declared a 'war on merchandise pirates' in 1988. 'This anti-piracy program continues as one of our top priorities,' said Paul Pressler, vice-president of Disney's merchandise licensing. 'Our characters are the foundation of our business and project the image of our company, so it's imperative that we control who uses them and how they are used.'[2] Between 1986 and 1991, the company filed 28 suits against more than 1,322 defendants. One of the largest actions was in 1991, when Disney filed against 123 California companies and 99 Oregon companies for unauthorized use of characters in various types of merchandise. [3]

While the company regularly pursues a large number of copyright cases, some incidents have received more attention than others. For instance, in 1989, Disney threatened to sue three Florida day-care centers for unauthorized use of their characters in murals. The day-care centers removed the figures and replaced them with

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From: Janet Wasko, *Understanding Disney: The Manufacture of Fantasy*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001.

characters from Universal and Hanna-Barbera cartoons, which were provided at no expense. The incident was widely reported and is often used as a classic example of Disney's obsession with controlling its characters.

Also in 1989, Disney sued the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences when performers dressed as *Snow White* characters were used in the Academy Awards presentation without Disney's permission. The case was withdrawn, but many in Hollywood were amazed at Disney's pettiness.

More recently, the Disney company was able to force a French AIDS association to withdraw a campaign featuring provocative versions of *Snow White* and *Cinderella* characters. While French law allows for parodies of copyrighted cartoon characters, the president of the advertising agency handling the campaign admitted that the campaign was withdrawn because of pressure from the Disney company.

While the corporation may be within its rights in protecting its properties, the company's public responses are often brash and arrogant. To cite an instance, British papers reported early in 1998 that the Disney company was closely watching the development of the Millennium Dome in Greenwich after visits to Orlando, Florida, by British Secretary of State for Trade and Industry Peter Mandelson. One journalist pointed out that the Disney company is 'famously protective of its copyright' and cited a Disney executive: 'He [Mandelson] may be a minister of the British Government, but we are the Walt Disney Corporation and we don't roll over for anyone.'[4]

Yet another case was the refusal of the company to provide free use of Disney characters for US postage stamps celebrating American animation. We have seen Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Tweetie Pie, and Sylvester (Warner Brothers' characters) adorning US mail. As one reporter says:

> But don't expect to see such other cartoon favorites as Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck or Goofy on stamps any time soon. At least not as long as the money-hungry executives at Walt Disney Studios demand that the Postal Service pay royalties for the right to depict their stable of characters on stamps.
>
> Ironically, it was Disney that first suggested a series of stamps depicting the studio's cartoon characters. After securing tentative agreement from Washington, Disney's minions asked how much the quasi-governmental agency would pay for the right to issue a Minnie Mouse or Pluto stamp.
>
> [Postmaster General Marvin] Runyon is reported to have said 'not one red cent,' and Disney replied 'no deal.' It was a good ruling on the Postal Service's part.
>
> Warner Brothers immediately stepped in and agreed to allow use of its trademark characters without requiring royalty payments. That's why we saw thousands of bunnies instead of mice on stamps this year.[5]

Copyright Extension Act, 1998

The company's concern with intellectual property rights became crystal clear when Congress faced the issue of extending copyright protection in 1998. Michael Eisner and the Disney company led a successful lobbying campaign to convince Congress to pass legislation extending copyrights, representing a classic example of how Hollywood clout can influence the legislative process.

The bill, initially introduced by singer/actor turned Congressman Sonny Bono, proposed changes in the copyright law to allow corporations to have exclusive rights over their copyrighted properties for 95 years rather than the 75 years allowed in the existing law. Also, copyrights held by individuals were to be extended to a total of 70 years after death, rather than 50 years.

While proponents argued that the extension was necessary to match the European Union's recent copyright extension, some legal experts pointed out that the bill represented a 'wealth transfer' benefiting large entertainment and publishing corporations. While supporters of the bill who held that it was noncontroversial were able to keep it out of public debate, opponents argued that the bill was not in the public's interest. 'Making money isn't what copyright law is about,' said Adam Eisgrau of the American Libraries Association. 'The purpose of the law is to provide a sufficient incentive to authors and inventors to create information, not because there is a constitutional entitlement to compensation but because the information created was regarded as a public good.'[6]

Corporate copyright holders, such as Disney, lobbied Congress directly, as well as calling on their pals at the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), which used 'its own heavyweight lobbyist: its president, Jack Valenti, who called on his own decades-long contacts with legislators to move the bill.'[7] But the legislation was apparently too important to rely only on face-to-face lobbying tactics. Disney provided campaign contributions to ten of the 13 initial sponsors of the House bill and eight of the 12 sponsors of the Senate bill.

The significance of the legislation was revealed in press coverage of the eventual success of the campaign, which pointed out that Disney's copyright on Mickey Mouse was scheduled to expire in 2003, on Pluto in 2005, on Goofy in 2007, and on Donald Duck in 2009.[8]

While Disney plays tough when it comes to protecting its own properties, the same treatment is not accorded for those bold enough to offer their ideas to the Mouse House. The Disney website explains that the company's policy prohibits the acceptance of creative ideas or materials, other than those requested. However, if someone does submit such material, the policy is clear:

> the Submissions shall be deemed, and shall remain, the property of DISNEY(sic). ... DISNEY shall exclusively own all now known or hereafter existing rights to the Submissions of every kind and nature throughout the universe and shall be entitled to unrestricted use of the Submissions for any purpose whatsoever, commercial or otherwise, without compensation to the provider of the Submissions.[9]

[...]

Controlling Labor: Working for the Mouse House

Another element in Disney's exercise of control is its relationship with its workers. According to the 1998 10-K report, the company employed approximately 117,000 people, including a wide assortment of workers in its diverse businesses. The Disney name is an attraction for potential employees, who may have dreamed all their lives about working at the studio or one of the theme parks. Still, the allure of the Magic Kingdom can be deceptive.

It appears that many Disney employees are quite pleased with their work environment, as reported in a 'company snapshot' from VaultReports.com, a website that includes information on corporations for prospective employees. Based on interviews and surveys, the report noted that employees feel that working for Disney is a boost to their career, and that the perks offered them are seldom matched by other companies (theme park admission, merchandise discounts, etc.).

Yet, the study also found that salaries are typically below industry standards and that the company's bureaucracy can be discouraging if employee expectations are too high. The report warns prospective workers, 'Despite the warm and fuzzy material it produces, at its core Disney is a rigid corporate bureaucracy.' As a seasoned Disney worker explained, new employees become 'disillusioned because they envision The Walt Disney Company as a Magic Kingdom kind of place which is a fairytale land devoid of bureaucracy, politics, and other unsavory things like financial analysis. No such place exists.'[10]

The company promotes itself as a 'community,' in which employees share in decision making, and promotions are made from within the company. The informal familiarity at Disney is well known, symbolized by everyone being addressed by their first name. However, within different sectors of the company, there are specific ways that employees are controlled. The next two sections discuss workers at the studio and at the theme parks.

Studio Workers/Animation

Historically, the employees who have attracted the most attention at Disney have been those involved with animation. As John Lent explains, American animation was founded on labor exploitation, not only at Disney, but at most of the Hollywood animation companies, where 'talented animators worked extremely long hours at grueling, tedious jobs for low wages and with virtually no credit.'[11]

[...] the labor strife in the early 1940s was not at all surprising considering the low pay and lack of recognition at the Disney studio. Salaries were reported to be the lowest in the film industry, with inkers and in-betweeners at Disney receiving between $17 and $26 a week in the 1930s into the 1940s. Long hours and quotas were common, and animators were sometimes forced to take work home. But the loss of control over their work also frustrated Disney employees. Whatever was produced by employees while at the studio belonged to the company, and [...] Walt Disney controlled virtually the entire animation process. Consequently, the Disney style of animation that developed left little room for experimentation and individual creative touches.

During the 1960s, Disney joined other companies in sending work overseas, where it could be done more cheaply. The 1990s renaissance in animation has been due in part to Team Disney's revival of the Classic Disney animated features, but also to new television and cable channels featuring cartoons and animated series. This has meant more work for animators in Hollywood, but also more animation work abroad, especially in the growing offshore animation centers in Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Canada, and Australia. Typically, pre-production activities are done in the USA, while cel drawing, coloring (by hand), inking, painting, and camera work are done abroad. Post-production is still typically done in the USA.[12]

Although it is claimed that there has been a shortage of animators in the USA during this animation boom, there is ample evidence that producers have looked to offshore animation workers to save money. As one producer explains, 'If we had to do animation here, it would cost a million dollars instead of $100,000 to $150,000 to produce a half hour, and nobody could afford to do it except for Disney.'[13]

Yet Disney also sends a good deal of its animation work overseas, either to its own companies or as the sole client of other companies. When Disney accelerated its animation production for both film and television in the mid-1980s, it turned to Japanese animation companies. In 1989, Walt Disney Animation Japan was created, where drawing, inking, coloring, and shooting were done. Disney also purchased the Hanna-Barbera Australia studio in 1989, where work on the company's series, specials, and made-for-video movies has been done. Additional work on Disney animated productions is subcontracted to companies in South Korea and China. Closer to home, Disney opened studios in Toronto and Vancouver in 1996, creating about 225 jobs for animators, directors, designers, storyboard and layout artists, as well as a digital ink and paint production team.

While wages at the Asian animation factories are reported to be relatively high for animators and managers, conditions for other workers who perform the 'drudge work' of inking, coloring, etc., are less than impressive. As Lent points out, 'Of course, that is what attracts the foreign companies in the first place: large numbers of individuals willing to work hard for low wages in a stable setting.'[14] How these pools of trained animators contribute to building domestic animation in these countries is still an open question.

Meanwhile, it is also unclear what this offshore activity means for US animators, especially when and if the animation boom slows. Previously, American animators have protested runaway production, specifically in 1979, when the Motion Picture Screen Cartoonists IATSE Local 839 walked out and demanded a restriction on the export of work from Los Angeles studios unless qualified union members were hired first. Nevertheless, the studios continue to use foreign labor, even when high unemployment rates are experienced by union workers. Consequently, it seems likely that the historical tension between animators and management may continue.

Theme Park Workers

The 'happiest places on earth' are renowned for their happy and helpful employees. But this doesn't happen automatically, and, by some accounts, working at the Magic Kingdom is not always magical.[15] After a two-year study of Walt Disney World, Kuenz concluded that 'Disney's control of its labor force is apparently near total; the workers themselves certainly perceive it as such.' Despite the company policy requiring employees to waive their right to write about their work experiences, Kuenz found employees who were more than anxious to talk about their jobs at the Magic Kingdom.

As noted above, the chance of working at one of the Disney parks is an alluring fantasy for some people. Thus, the Disney company seems to have no problem in finding plenty of interested workers for its parks and resorts. It's a question of whether these potential employees fit (or are willing to fit) the Disney mold.

One of the ways that Disney actively recruits young, eager workers is through the Walt Disney World College Program, which attracts over 3,000 students from the USA and other countries each year. The program includes seminars that

encompass work and classroom experiences. While a job at the park may not necessarily follow, students who complete the program are awarded mock degrees, a Mousters or a Ductorate.

Employee training is a common practice for many American corporations, but Disney's training of theme park employees is legendary. With the opening of Disneyland in the 1950s, the company created its own training program called 'The Disney University,' which now operates 'campuses' at each of the theme parks and at the Disney studio in Burbank. The training program includes teaching future employees ('cast members') the company history and philosophy in a two-day course called 'Traditions,' which has been cited by management experts as one of the 'best indoctrination programs' in the world.[16] It is here that new employees learn to accept the control of the company. Zibart explains it as 'a mix of company legend, behavioral guidelines, and psycho-social bonding. 'You come out totally believing in "The Disney Way",' said a five-year veteran. 'It's almost like Walt is alive and well ... . We call it getting doused with pixie dust. It lasts about a year – and of course some people have to go through it again."[17]

During the course, new employees learn about 'The Disney Culture' – defined in company literature as 'the values, myths, heroes and symbols that have a significant meaning to the employees ... Ours is a culture that is so strong it has withstood the test of time and is recognized all over the world.'

Most importantly, park workers learn about the Disney approach to serving the public and 'preserving the integrity of the show.' Employees are required to smile, to make eye contact, to display appropriate body language, and to seek out guests. Some analysts have referred to this as 'emotional labor,' defined as 'expressing socially desired emotions during service transactions.'[18] There is also a long list of taboos, including: never embarrass a guest, never be out of character, never improvise with scripts, never fraternize with other workers, never wear costumes anywhere but in the assigned area, etc. Those employees who learn well and exhibit exemplary service are called Guest Service Fanatics, as outlined in Box 17.1.

BOX 17.1 GUIDELINES FOR A GUEST SERVICE FANATIC

Service

- Always makes eye contact and smiles
- Exceeds guest expectations and seeks out guest contact
- Always gives outstanding quality service
- Greets and welcomes each and every guest
- Maintains a high personal standard of quality in their work

Teamwork

- Goes 'beyond the call of duty'
- Demonstrates strong team initiative
- Communicates aggressively with guests and fellow Cast Members
- Preserves the 'magical' guest experience

(Continued)

BOX 17.1 (Continued)

Attitude

- 100% Performance
- Extremely courteous and friendly
- Displays appropriate body language at all times
- Exemplifies the Disney Look
- Says 'Thank You' to each and every guest

Recovery

- Provides immediate service recovery
- Aggressively seeks opportunities to fully satisfy our guests
- Solves guest problems before they become dissatisfied
- Demonstrates patience and honesty in handling complaints
- Always preserves the integrity of our show

Emphasizes safety, courtesy, show quality, and efficiency!

Source: Material distributed by the Walt Disney Company

Training also includes specific guidelines on what to do in emergency situations, as the Disney company is notorious for keeping these situations under their control. For instance, safety guidelines instruct workers never to use 'panic words' – fire, car accident, ambulance, and evacuation – but to use 'Disney terminology' – Signal 25, Signal 4, Alpha Unit, and Exiting. Employees are carefully instructed on how to deal with these situations to avoid upsetting guests, as well as to control the potentially damaging publicity that may follow. [19]

After the Disney indoctrination, all 'cast members' are on probationary status for a specific period of time, while their 'leader' (or just 'lead') monitors their performance. Seasonal cast members are on continuous probationary status and are thus advised by the company to 'pay particular attention to our policies and procedures.'[20]

In addition to wearing specific 'costumes,' 'cast members' must also adhere to a strict grooming code. In other words, the uniform, 'squeaky-clean' look of employees at the parks is not automatic or natural, but the result of strict enforcement of 'The Disney Look.' Some of the specifications of the code, drawn from a company brochure entitled 'The Disney Look,' include the following:

> For hosts – neat, natural haircuts 'tapered so that it does not extend beyond or cover any part of your ears.' [Illustrations in the 'Disney Look' manual provide examples of acceptable and unacceptable haircuts.] No mustaches or beards are allowed, however, deodorant is required.
>
> For hostesses – no 'extremes' in hair styles; confinement of long hair by acceptable accessories, ... a plain barrette, comb or headband in gold, silver, or tortoise shell without ornamentation of any kind including bows. No more than two barrettes or combs; only natural makeup is permitted, and only clear or flesh toned fingernail polish. Polishes that are dark red, frosted, gold or silver toned are not considered part of the 'Disney Look.' Finger nails should not exceed one-fourth of an inch beyond the fingertip.

More recently, the restrictions have been expanded to include no shaved heads, no visible tattoos, no nose or other piercing, except the ear lobe, where two are allowed for women only. The Disney Look is serious business. According to the employee (or 'cast member') handbook, 'continued violation' of the appearance policy is grounds for dismissal.

There are lots of other reasons why theme park employees may be 'fired on the spot' – especially those workers who wear the famed Disney-character costumes around the park and hotels and for special appearances. Most importantly, they are never, ever, ever allowed to remove their character's head in front of park guests, even if they are ill or unconscious, which apparently is quite often. With no peripheral vision, navigating in the awkward and sometimes dangerous outfits can be tricky, although the workers inside them must always stay in character. The costumes are so hot and heavy that those inside them often become sick to their stomachs or pass out.[21] It seems obvious that preserving the 'magical' guest experience is more important than workers' welfare. [...]

In addition to staying in character, maintaining the show, and serving guests, park employees must also be aware that they are being watched or monitored. Employees report an obsession with getting people through the rides as quickly as possible, with time-motion experts monitoring the 'hourly operational ride capacity.' A former employee explains, 'At Big Thunder Mountain, I'm supposed to handle 2,000 visitors an hour. It's just like a factory with assembly-line production, only this is a fun factory.'[22]

Furthermore, the workers who Kuenz interviewed suggested that everyone is spying on everyone else at the theme parks. 'Foxes' are disguised employees (dressed as tourists with cameras) who spy on guests, attempting to prevent various kinds of mischief, including shoplifting and theft in the park. Meanwhile, 'shoppers' – also disguised as tourists – monitor and test employees to make sure they are adhering to the Disney rules of behavior. Kuenz concludes:

> The collective paranoia inculcated in Disney workers from the get go – manifested in the suspicion that there is always another rule one can be found breaking – and which results in their feeling that they are always expected to perform the frequently irritating role of 'Disney cast member,' is a function of both the tight control that the company exercises over its dominions and a segmented and hierarchical system of relations between management and labor and within labor itself.[23]

The rewards: salaries, promotions, perks

Although the workers at the parks are subject to a particular kind of control, other policies apply to all employees of the company. The VaultReport cited earlier notes that 'The Disney pay scale, unfortunately, doesn't match the high sheen of the Disney name.' Prospective employees are warned that the company's pay scale is 10–15 percent below the market, and raises are slow and erratic. Another employee explains that 'in a way, you're paid just with the Disney name.' The report concludes that 'This works to Disney's advantage, but can be a trap [for employees].'[24]

Moreover, Disney workers are certainly well aware of the 'exorbitant executive salaries' discussed in chapter 3. Recall that the Chief Mouse, Michael Eisner, receives a $750,000 salary with stock options that regularly place him in the top

Table 17.1 *Salary compensation comparisons*

	Annual	Weekly	Daily	Hourly	Per minute
Eisner	$204,236,801	$3,927,631	$785,526	$98,191	$1,637
Minimum wage earner	$9,880	$190	$38	$4.75	$0.08
Average Worker	$24,700	$475	$95	$11.88	$0.20
President of the USA	$200,000	$3,846	$769	$96	$1.60

Source: 'Paywatch Fact Sheet,' NABET-CWA website, http://pw2.netcom.com/-nabet16/page24.html (using 1997 AFL-CIO data)

brackets of executive compensation. Meanwhile, the lowliest of Worker Mice at the Disney theme parks typically work for minimum wage.[25] A comparison of these different salaries is presented in Table 17.1. As a union representative explains:

> The fact of the matter is that real-wages and benefits for most rank-and-file workers at Disney have gone down significantly since Eisner and his top crew came aboard. And, to be sure, this sacrifice on their part is a major reason why corporate profit and executive salaries have gone up at Disney. But what about the sacrifice on the part of Eisner and his senior executives. Where is it? I guess leadership by example doesn't count for much these days.[26]

The company also appears to be inflexible in negotiations with prospective employees. The VaultReport quotes an employee who explains that 'Disney is an 800-pound gorilla in the marketplace. They know it and aren't afraid to use it, which can be frustrating.'

Despite the rhetoric of equal opportunity and promotion from within, employees claim that 'to move into a higher position, they had to be favored by someone above them, which usually requires them to be obsequious, not make problems, not complain.'[27] For instance, promotions at the theme parks are often made to the position of 'lead' – a sub-management job that is not actually considered that of a supervisor or a manager. However, leads are still the 'first line of supervision,' although they have little power and, contrary to company rhetoric, do not often move subsequently into actual supervisory positions.[28] The hierarchical system at the parks divides the work force into specialized units with separate managers, who are 'all working earnestly at their one task, the left hand oblivious to the right.' As Kuenz notes, it's the model for work in the new world order: 'This is a world in which all social planning has been replaced – as every attraction at EPCOT's Future World predicts and hopes it will be – by corporate planning, every advance in social coordination conforming to and confirming the logic of the company's needs.'[29]

Contributing to this Brave New World scenario, many employees are exceptionally devoted to the Disney company, which is claimed to have an unusually low employee turnover rate (although there are contradictory claims of a relatively high worker turnover).[30] One explanation is that the company 'fosters both a sense of responsibility and a sense of fun.'[31] It's a company where the lowliest worker calls the CEO 'Michael,' where 'cast members' make people from all over the world happy, where employees receive free passes to the parks, where apparently there is an endless supply of pixie dust.

Mickey as teamster

Disney deals with a number of trade union organizations, as do other Hollywood corporations.[32] Generally, union representation for the film and entertainment industries has become increasingly more diversified, as the different types of businesses incorporated by Hollywood companies have involved further differentiation of labor, making it difficult for workers to form a united front against one corporation. For instance, workers employed by Disney include animators at the Disney Studio, hockey players on the Mighty Ducks hockey team, and Jungle Cruise operators at Disneyland.

The differentiation of labor is especially apparent at the theme parks, where workers are represented by a wide array of labor organizations, many unrelated to those active in the film industry. For instance, over a dozen labor organizations have contracts with Disney World, where unions have formed trade councils to negotiate contracts.[33] Over 30 unions have been represented by eight contracts, with 14 unions negotiating under two trade council agreements.[34] Meanwhile, at Disneyland, five unions usually negotiate a master agreement for about 3,000 employees. The trade unions include the United Food and Commercial Workers; Service Employees International Union; Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees; Bakery, Tobacco and Confectionery Workers; and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (who represent workers who wear the Disney character costumes at the park). Although the notion of Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck as Teamsters may be jolting to many Disney aficionados, at least they are represented by an employee association, which is sometimes not the case at other theme parks.

Generally, the trend towards diversification has contributed to a weakening of trade unions' power as well as to a lack of unity among workers. As *Los Angeles Times* labor reporter Harry Bernstein has observed, 'These days, corporate tycoons own conglomerates that include businesses other than studios and networks. They may enjoy movie-making, but money seems to be their primary goal. So if production is stopped by a film industry strike, their income may be slowed, but money can still roll in from other sources.'[35]

Thus, the Disney company attempts in various ways to maintain control over its workers throughout its diverse business endeavors. And, despite the techniques that some employees use to find their own pleasures and satisfaction in their work, the company usually gets what it wants. As a Disney insider quoted in the VaultReport advises those considering working for The Mouse, 'It's important not to lose sight of the fact that Disney is a huge company which is in business for the sake of our stockholders–owners who want to make money by growing the company's value.'[36]

Control Through Tough Tactics

The 800-pound gorilla analogy used above is fitting for Disney's tactics beyond the labor market, for the company has become notorious for its tough and sometimes unscrupulous style of dealing with other companies, as well as its employees.

Since Team Disney took over, the company's 'formula for success' has been 'talk tough, talk cheap, and keep total control.'[37] In addition to the cost-cutting measures discussed in chapter 3, the company has stepped on numerous toes in the industry to get what it wants. Examples abound, but one of the most often cited is the lucrative licensing arrangement for the Disney–MGM Studios, which Disney was able to negotiate for a pittance with MGM's lawyers and refused to reconsider. The park's construction also became controversial when Disney's supporters helped convince the Florida legislature not to support a similar plan by MCA/Universal. To add to the drama, the very idea of a studio theme park in Florida was claimed to have been lifted by Eisner, while he was at Paramount, during a meeting with the head of Universal.[38]

Disney's tactics have led to a plethora of lawsuits, not only over copyright issues, as discussed previously, but over a wide range of other business deals. One lawyer observed that tangling with the Disney company was 'like suing God in the Vatican.'[39] The company is known for not paying bills, withholding royalty payments, insisting on its own terms with theater owners, etc. Lewis notes that in 1987 Disney was involved in 17 major lawsuits involving 700 defendants in the USA and 78 others overseas.[40] As one industry observer noted, 'Disney's critics say doing business with the company means facing teams of lawyers who will stake out extreme positions on virtually every negotiating point and often return to try to reargue issues later if Disney isn't pleased. Mickey Mouse may be the soul of this company, but you'll find the heart somewhere over in the legal department.'[41] It is no wonder, then, that the Disney studio is known around Hollywood as Mousewitz, and Team Disney as the Rat Pack.

Notes

1. See Ronald V. Bettig, *Copyrighting Culture: The Political Economy of Intellectual Property* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996), for a thorough analysis of these issues.
2. Cited in 'Disney Sues 200 People for Copyright Infringement,' UPI Regional News release, 6 Oct. 1988.
3. 'Disney Files Suit against 123 California Cos., 99 Oregon Cos.,' *The Entertainment Litigation Reporter,* 22 July 1991.
4. Tom Baldwin, 'Mandelson Mustn't Take Mickey,' *Sunday Telegraph,* 18 Jan. 1998.
5. 'Cartoon Character Controversy,' *Asbury Park Press* (Neptune, N.J.), 21 Dec. 1997.
6. Jonathan D. Salant, 'Copyright Extended for Mickey Mouse,' AP story, 16 Oct. 1998.
7. Ibid.
8. Sabra Chartrand, 'Congress Has Extended its Protection for Goofy, Gershwin and Some Moguls of the Internet,' *New York Times,* 19 Oct. 1998.
9. http://www.disney.com/Legal/conditions_of_use.html.
10. 'Disney Employees Report on Work Culture at VaultReports.com,' *Business Wire,* 25 Aug. 1999.
11. John Lent, 'The Animation Industry and its Offshore Factories,' in *Global Productions: Labor in the Making of the 'Information Society,'* ed. Gerald Sussman and John Lent (Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press, 1998), pp. 239–54, at p. 241. See also N. M. Klein, *7 Minutes: The Life and Death of the American Animated Cartoon* (London: Verso, 1993).
12. Lent, 'Animation Industry,' p. 245.

13. Cited, ibid.
14. Ibid., p. 252.
15. The discussion in this section is drawn from material distributed during the summer internship program at Walt Disney World, plus Jane Kuenz, 'Working at the Rat,' in *Inside the Mouse: Work and Play at Disney World,* ed. Project on Disney (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 110–62. Other sources on working at the parks include David Koenig and Art Linkletter, *Mouse Tales: A Behind-the-Ears Look at Disneyland* (Irvine, Calif.: Bonaventure Press, 1995); David Koenig and Van Arsdale France, *More Mouse Tales: A Closer Peek Backstage at Disneyland* (Irvine, Calif.: Bonaventure Press, 1999); and Thomas Connelan, *Inside the Magic Kingdom: Seven Keys to Disney's Success* (Austin, TX.: Bard Press, 1997).
16. The company has developed seminars and courses based on the Traditions model for managers and educators. More discussion of these courses is included in chapter 6.
17. Eve Zibart, *The Unofficial® Disney Companion* (New York: Macmillan, 1997), p. 177.
18. Cited and discussed in Alan Bryman, 'The Disneyization of Society,' *Sociological Review,* 47, 1 (1999), p. 28.
19. Apparently, there are numerous stories of accidents and other incidents, whether true or not, that 'cast members' are forbidden to discuss, on pain of being 'fired on the spot.' Kuenz (pp. 115–16) discusses some examples; others are included on the Los Disneys website (www.losdisneys.com) discussed further in chapter 7.
20. *Cast Member's Handbook,* Walt Disney Company publication.
21. Kuenz talked to one worker who spends much of his time during the summer driving around the park, picking up passed-out characters. See Kuenz, 'Working at the Rat,' pp. 134–7; Zibart, *Unofficial® Disney Companion,* p. 182.
22. Wayne Ellwood, 'Service with a Smile,' *New Internationalist,* Dec. 1998, p. 17.
23. Kuenz, 'Working at the Rat,' p. 117.
24. http://www.VaultReports.com/links/Disney.
25. Ellwood, 'Service with a Smile,' p. 18, claims that two-thirds of the workers at the park make $6.57 an hour or less.
26. 'Top Dogs Should Toss their Workers a Bone,' *Los Angeles Times,* 10 Mar. 1996, p. D–2.
27. Kuenz, 'Working at the Rat,' p. 122.
28. Ibid., pp. 119–20.
29. Ibid., p. 117.
30. Jon Lewis, 'Disney after Disney: Family Business and the Business of Family,' in *Disney Discourse: Producing the Magic Kingdom,* ed. Eric Smoodin (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 94, reports that turnover at the lower management level is encouraged, to bring in fresh and enthusiastic new employees.
31. Zibart, *Unofficial® Disney Companion,* p. 177.
32. In addition, Hollywood film companies such as Disney have taken advantage of non-union production, although there are differing reports as to its prevalence. According to IATSE reports, 65 percent of films produced in Southern California in 1989 were made with non-union crews. More recently, IATSE claimed that only 31 percent (121 out of 400) of the pictures released in the USA in 1993 were made with union labor; in 1992, 109 out of 390 films (27.9 percent) released were produced by union workers. See Janet Wasko, 'Challenges to Hollywood's Labor Force in the 1990s,' in *Global Productions,* ed. Sussman and Lent, p. 178–9.
33. See 'Actors' Equity Concludes Initial Accord Covering Performers at Walt Disney World,' *Daily Labor Report,* no. 166 (1990), p. A–7.
34. Walt Disney World College Program material, 'Human Resources,' p. 5.
35. Harry Bernstein, 'Hollywood May Take the Drama Out of Settling Disputes,' *Los Angeles Times,* 11 Apr. 1989, p. 1.
36. http://www.VaultReports.com/links/Disney.

37. Lewis, 'Disney after Disney,' p. 94.

38. More examples are discussed by Lewis, 'Disney after Disney,' pp. 87–94, and Ronald Grover, *The Disney Touch* (Homewood, Ill.: Business One Irwin, 1991), pp. 237–54.

39. Quote from 'Suing Disney is Like Suing God in the Vatican,' *San Diego Union Tribune, 5* Mar. 1985, p. D–l.

40. Lewis, 'Disney after Disney,' pp. 89–90.

41. Paul Richter, 'Disney's Tough Tactics,' *Los Angeles Times,* 8 July 1990, p. D–l.

7

Children's Culture and Disney's Animated Films[1]

The Politics of Children's Culture

As a single father of three young boys, I found myself somewhat reluctantly being introduced to the world of Hollywood animation films, and in particular those produced by Disney. Before becoming an observer of this form of children's culture, I accepted the largely unquestioned assumption that animated films stimulate imagination and fantasy, create a feeling of innocence and healthy adventure and, in general, are "good" for kids. In other words, such films appeared to be wholesome vehicles of amusement, a highly regarded and sought after source of fun and joy for children. However, within a very short period of time, it became clear to me that these films do more than entertain.[2] They also tell stories that influence children's experiences, desires, and pleasures. Needless to say, animated films operate on many registers, but one of the most persuasive is the role they play as the new "teaching machines." I soon found that for my children, and I suspect for many others, these films possess at least as much cultural authority and legitimacy for teaching specific roles, values, and ideals as more traditional sites of learning such as the public schools, religious institutions, and the family. Disney films combine an ideology of enchantment and aura of innocence in narrating stories that help children understand who they are, what societies are about, and what it means to construct a world of play

and fantasy in an adult environment. The authority and power of such films, in part, stems from their unique form of representation and their ever-growing presence within and outside of the United States. But such authority is also produced and secured within the predominance of an expanding global media apparatus equipped with dazzling technology, sound effects, and imagery packaged as entertainment, spin-off commercial products, and "huggable" stories.

The significance of Disney's animated films as a site of learning is heightened by the widespread recognition that schools and other public sites are increasingly beset by a crisis of vision, purpose, and motivation. The mass media, especially the world of Hollywood films, constructs a dream-like world of security, coherence, and childhood innocence where kids find a place to situate themselves in their emotional lives. Unlike the often hard-nosed, joyless reality of schooling, children's films provide a high tech visual space where adventure and pleasure meet in a fantasy world of possibilities and a commercial sphere of consumerism and commodification. The educational relevance of animated films became especially clear to me as my kids experienced the vast entertainment and teaching machine embodied by Disney. Increasingly as I watched a number of Disney films, first in the movie theater and then on video, I became aware of how necessary it was to move beyond treating these films as transparent entertainment and to question the diverse messages that constitute Disney's conservative view of the world.

Trademarking Innocence

I recognize that any attempt to take up Disney films critically rubs against the grain of American popular opinion. But kids learn from them, and maybe it's time parents and educators paid closer attention to what these films are saying. I realize that this is heresy, especially at a time when kids are being subjected to an increasing glut of violence in Hollywood blockbusters, video games, and through other commercial forms of entertainment. And while these films do not promote the shameless violence that has become central to many other forms of popular and mass culture, they do carry cultural and social

messages that need to be carefully scrutinized. After all, "the happiest place on earth" has traditionally gained its popularity in part through a self-proclaimed image of trademark innocence that has largely protected it from the interrogating gaze of critics. Left criticism of Disney is often completely ignored by the popular press. Yet, the charge a few years ago by conservative Southern Baptists that Disney films promote a seditious, anti-Christian ideology received enormous publicity in the mainstream media. The catch is that such criticism appeared so extreme as to be comical and therefore safe for the media to cover. More liberal critiques often ignore entirely the racist, sexist, and antidemocratic ethos that permeates Disney films. For instance, *New York Times* critic, Michiko Kakutani, has argued that if anything is wrong with Disney's animated films it is that the characters of late are too preachy and promote "wholesome messages" that "only an ogre or bigot could hate."[3] One can't help but wonder what is "wholesome" about Disney's overt racism toward Arabs displayed in *Aladdin*, the retrograde gender roles at work in *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Pocahontas*, and *Mulan* or the undisguised celebration of antidemocratic governments and racism (remember the hyenas sounding like poor blacks and Hispanics) evident in *The Lion King* (I will discuss some of these films in detail later on in this chapter).

There is more at work here than a successful public relations campaign intent on promoting Disney's claim to fabled goodness and uncompromising morality. There is also the reality of a powerful economic and political empire that in 1999 made over $23.4 billion in revenues from all of its divisions.[4] Disney is more than a corporate giant, it is also a cultural institution and dominant story teller that fiercely struggles to protect its mythical status as a purveyor of American innocence and moral virtue.

Quick to mobilize its monolith of legal representatives, public relations spokespersons, and professional cultural critics to safeguard the borders of its "magic kingdom," Disney has aggressively prosecuted violations of its copyrights and has a legendary reputation for bullying authors who use the Disney archives and refuse to allow Disney to approve their prepublished work.[5] For example, in its zeal to protect its image and extend its profits, Disney has gone so far as to

threaten legal action against three South Florida day-care centers for using Disney cartoon characters on their exterior walls. In this instance, Disney's role as an aggressive defender of conservative family values was undermined through its aggressive endorsement of property rights. While Disney's reputation as an undisputed moral authority on United States' values has taken a beating in the last few years, the power of Disney's mythological status cannot be overestimated.

Once again, it is worth noting that Disney's image of itself as an icon of American culture is consistently reinforced through the penetration of the Disney empire into every aspect of social life. Operating as a $23 billion empire, Disney shapes children's experiences through a maze of representations and products found in box office movies, home videos, theme parks, hotels, sports teams, retail stores, classroom instructional films, CDs, radio programs, television shows, Internet servers, and family restaurants.[6] Through the widespread use of public visual space, Disney inserts itself into a network of power relations that promotes the construction of an all-encompassing world of enchantment allegedly free from the dynamics of ideology, politics, and power.[7] At the same time, Disney goes to great lengths to boost its civic image. Defining itself as a vehicle for education and civic responsibility, Disney has sponsored "Teacher of the Year Awards," provided "Doer and Dreamer" scholarships to students, and offered financial aid, internships, and other learning opportunities to disadvantaged urban youth through a number of educational and work programs, such as its ice skating program called "Goals." Intent on defining itself as a purveyor of ideas rather than commodities, Disney is aggressively developing its image as a public service industry.[8] For example, in what can be seen as an extraordinary venture, Disney has become a copartner in a business school venture in Celebration, Florida. No longer content to spread its values through the world of media entertainment and theme parks, Disney now wants to insert itself within the growing lucrative market of the public school system.

What is interesting here is that Disney no longer simply dispenses the fantasies through which childhood innocence and adventure are produced, experienced, and affirmed. Disney now provides model prototypes for families, schools, and communities. From the seedy urban haunts of New York City to the spatial monuments of

consumption-shaping Florida, Disney takes full advantage of refiguring the social and cultural landscape while spreading its corporate ideology through the inventive practices of its Disney imagineers. For instance, not only has Disney transformed large sections of West 42nd Street in New York City into an advertisement for a cleaned up Disney version of America, it has also created the town Celebration in Florida, which, according to Disney executives, is designed after the "main streets of small-town America and reminiscent of Norman Rockwell images."[9] What Disney leaves out of its upbeat promotional literature is the rather tenuous notion of democracy that informs its view of municipal government, since the model of Celebration is "premised upon citizens not having control over the people who plan for them and administer the policies of the city."[10] But Disney does more than provide prototypes for up-scale communities; it also makes a claim on the future through its nostalgic view of the past and its construction of public memory as a metonym for the magical kingdom. French theorist Jean Baudrillard provides an interesting theoretical twist on the scope and power of Disney's influence by arguing that Disneyland is more "real" than fantasy because it now provides the image on which America constructs itself. For Baudrillard, Disneyland functions as a "deterrent" designed to "rejuvenate in reverse the fiction of the real."

> Disneyland is there to conceal the fact that it is the "real" country, all of "real" America, which is Disneyland (just as prisons are there to conceal the fact that it is the social in its entirety, in its banal omnipresence, which is carceral). Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation.[11]

At the risk of taking Baudrillard too literally, examples of the Disnification of America abound. For instance, Houston airport models its monorail after the one at Disneyland. Small towns throughout America appropriate a piece of nostalgia by imitating the Victorian architecture of Disneyland's Main Street USA. Moreover, throughout America, shopping malls imitate Disney's approach to retailing so

"that shopping takes place in themed environments."[12] It seems that the real policy makers are not those that reside in Washington, D.C. but in California, calling themselves the Disney imagineers. The boundaries between entertainment, education, and commercialization collapse through the sheer omnipotence of Disney's reach into diverse spheres of everyday life. The scope of the Disney empire reveals both shrewd business practices as well as a sharp eye for providing dreams and products through forms of popular culture in which kids are willing to invest materially and emotionally.

Popular audiences tend to reject any link between ideology and the prolific entertainment world of Disney. And yet Disney's pretense to innocence appears to some critics as little more than a promotional mask that covers over its aggressive marketing techniques and influence in educating children to the virtues of becoming active consumers. Eric Smooden, editor of *Disney Discourse*, a book critical of Disney's role in American culture, argues that "Disney constructs childhood so as to make it entirely compatible with consumerism."[13] Even more disturbing is the widespread belief that Disney's trademarked innocence renders it unaccountable for the diverse ways in which it shapes the sense of reality it provides for children as they take up specific and often sanitized notions of identity, difference, and history in the seemingly apolitical, cultural universe of "the Magic Kingdom." For example, Jon Wiener argues that Disneyland's version of Main Street USA harkens back to an "image of small towns characterized by cheerful commerce, with barbershop quartets and ice cream sundaes and glorious parades." For Wiener this view not only fictionalizes and trivializes the history of real Main Streets at the turn of the 20th century, it also represents an appropriation of the past to legitimate a present that portrays a world "without tenements or poverty or urban class conflict. . . . it's a native white Protestant dream of a world without blacks or immigrants."[14]

Animated Pedagogy

I want to venture into the contradictory world of Disney through an analysis of some of its more recent animated films. These films, all

produced since 1989, are important because they have received enormous praise from the dominant press and have achieved blockbuster status. For many children they represent an entrance into the world of Disney. Moreover, the financial success and popularity of these films, rivaling many adult features, do not engender the critical analyses often rendered on adult films. In short, popular audiences are more willing to suspend critical judgment about such children's films.[15] Animated fantasy and entertainment appear to fall outside of the world of values, meaning, and knowledge often associated with more pronounced educational forms such as documentaries, art films, or even wide circulation adult films. Bell et al. capture this sentiment: "Disney audiences . . . legal institutions, film theorists, cultural critics, and popular audiences all guard the borders of Disney film as 'off limits' to the critical enterprise, constructing Disney as a metonym for 'America' – clean, decent, industrious – 'the happiest place on earth.'"[16]

Given the influence that the Disney ideology has on children, it is imperative for parents, teachers, and other adults to understand how such films attract the attention and influence the values of the children who view and buy them. As a producer of children's culture, Disney should not be given an easy pardon because it is defined as a universal citadel of fun and good cheer. On the contrary, as one of the primary institutions constructing childhood culture in the United States, it warrants healthy suspicion and critical debate. Such a debate should not be limited to the home, but should be a central feature of the school and other critical public sites of learning.

In what follows, I will argue that it is important to address Disney's animated films without simply condemning Disney as an ideological reactionary corporation deceptively promoting a conservative worldview under the guise of entertainment. It is also important not to celebrate Disney as the Hollywood version of Mr. Rogers doing nothing more than providing sources of joy and happiness to children all over the world.[17] Disney does both. The productive side of Disney lies in its ability to offer children visual stimulation and joyful pleasure. Dramatic thunderstorms, kaleidoscopic musical numbers, and the magical ability to transform real life issues into wondrous fanciful spectacles are a trademark of Disney's brilliance in making

animated films. Disney's films offer opportunities for children to experience pleasure and to locate themselves in a world that resonates with their desires and interests. Pleasure becomes one of the defining principle of what Disney produces, and children are the serious subjects and objects of Disney's project. Hence, rather than simply being dismissed, Disney's animated films have to be interrogated and mined as an important site for the production of children's culture. Similarly, such films are often filled with contradictory messages. At the same time, Disney's influence and power must be situated within the broader understanding of the company's role as a corporate giant intent on spreading the conservative and commercial values that erode civil society while proclaiming to restructure it.

The role that Disney plays in shaping individual identities and controlling the fields of social meaning through which children negotiate the world is far too complex to be simply set aside as a form of reactionary politics. If educators and other cultural workers are to include the culture of children as an important site of contestation and struggle then it becomes imperative to analyze how Disney's animated films powerfully influence the way America's cultural landscape is imagined. Disney's scripted view of childhood and society needs to be engaged and challenged as "a historically specific matter of social analysis and intervention." This is particularly important since Disney's animated films work to provoke and inform children's imaginations, desires, roles, and dreams while simultaneously sedimenting affect and meaning.[18]

The wide distribution and popular appeal of Disney's animated films provides diverse audiences the opportunity for critical viewing. Critically analyzing how Disney films work to construct meanings, induce pleasures, and reproduce ideologically loaded fantasies is not meant to promote a particular exercise in film criticism. Like that of any educational institution, Disney's view of the world needs to be taken up in terms of how it narrates children's culture and how it can be held accountable for what it does as a significant cultural public sphere – a space in which ideas, values, audiences, markets, and opinions serve to create different publics and social formations. Of course, Disney's self-proclaimed innocence, inflexibility in dealing with social criticism, and paranoid attitude towards justifying what it

does, is now legendary, and suggests all the more reason why Disney should be both challenged and engaged critically. Moreover, as a multibillion dollar company, Disney's corporate and cultural influence is too enormous and far-reaching to allow it to define itself exclusively within the imaginary discourse of innocence, civic pride, and entertainment.[19]

The question of whether Disney's animated films are good for kids has no easy answers and resists simple analysis within the traditional and allegedly nonideological registers of fun and entertainment. Disney's most recent films, which include *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), *The Lion King* (1994) *Pocahontas* (1995), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), *Hercules* (1997), and *Mulan* (1998) provide ample opportunity to address how Disney constructs a culture of joy and innocence for children out of the intersection of entertainment, advocacy, pleasure, and consumerism.[20] All of these films have been high profile releases catering to massive audiences. Moreover, their commercial success is not limited to box office profits. Successfully connecting the rituals of consumption and moviegoing, Disney's animated films provide a "marketplace of culture," a launching pad for an endless number of products and merchandise that include videocassettes, sound track albums, children's clothing, furniture, stuffed toys, and new rides at the theme parks.[21] For example, in the video market, *Little Mermaid* and *Beauty and the Beast* have combined sales of over 34 million videocassettes. *Aladdin* has earned over "$1 billion from box-offices income, video sales and such ancillary baubles as Princess Jasmine dresses and Genie cookie jars."[22] Moreover, produced as a video interactive game, *Aladdin* had sold over three million copies in 1993. Similar sales are expected for the video and interactive game version of the film, *The Lion King*, which grossed $253.5 million in profits as of August 24, 1994.[23] In fact, the first few weeks after *The Lion King* videocassette was released, it had sales of over 20 million, and Disney's stock soared by $2.25 a share based on first-week revenues of $350 million. It was ranked as one of the most profitable films every made. Jessica J. Reiff, an analyst at Oppenheimer & Company, said, "the movie will represent $1 billion in profits for Disney over two or three years."[24]

At the launch of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Disney Records shipped two million Sing Along home videos and seven types of *Hunchback* audio products, including the soundtrack CD and cassette and a toddler-targeted My First Read-Along. Tie-promotions for the film included Burger King, Payless Shoes, Nestlé, and Mattel.[25] While *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* did not fare well at the box office, generating a disappointing $99 million in North American revenue, it is expected, according to *Adweek* magazine, "to generate $500 million in profit (not just revenues), after the other revenues streams are taken into account."[26] Similarly, Disney characters such as Mickey Mouse, Snow White, Jasmine, Aladdin, and Pocahontas become prototypes for numerous toys, logos, games, and rides that fill department stores all over the world. Disney theme parks, which made over $4.0 billion in revenues in 1997, produced a sizable portion of their profits through the merchandising of toys based on characters from the animated films. *The Lion King* has been one of Disney's biggest commercial successes and provided a model for marketing its future animated films, including the more recent *Hercules* (with its blatant pitch commercialism built into the movie itself) and *Mulan*. *The Lion King* produced a staggering $1 billion in merchandizing profits in 1994 alone – the year of its release – not to mention the profits made from spinoff products from the movie. For example, when *The Lion King* was first released Disney shipped over three million copies of the soundtrack.[27] Disney's culture of commercialism is big business and the toys modeled after Disney's animated films provide goods for over 728 Disney Stores worldwide. As a commentator in *Newsweek* recently pointed out, "The merchandise – Mermaid dolls, Aladdin undies, and collectibles like a sculpture of Bambi's Field Mouse – account for a stunning 20 percent of Disney's operating income."[28]

One of Disney's biggest promotion campaigns was put into effect with the summer 1995 release of *Pocahontas*. A record line-up of tie-in merchandise included Pocahontas stuffed animals, sheets, pillowcases, toothbrushes, games, moccasins, and over "40 different picture and activity books."[29] A consortium of corporations spent an estimated $125 millon on cross-marketing *Pocahontas*. Two well-known examples included Burger King, which was converted into an advertisement for the film and gave away an estimated 50 million

Pocahontas figurines, and the Mattel Corporation which marketed over 50 different dolls and toys.

But Disney's attempt to turn children into consumers and construct commodification as a defining principle of children's culture should not suggest a parallel vulgarity in its willingness to experiment aesthetically with popular forms of representation. Disney has shown enormous inventiveness in its attempts to reconstruct the very grounds on which popular culture is defined and shaped. By defining popular culture as a hybridized sphere that combines genres, forms, and often collapses the boundary between high and low culture, Disney has pushed against the grain of aesthetic form and cultural legitimacy. For instance, when *Fantasia* appeared in the 1930s it drew the wrath of music critics, who, holding to an elite view of classical music, were outraged that the musical score of the film drew from the canon of high culture. By combining high and low culture in the form of the animated film, Disney opened up new cultural spaces and possibilities for artists and audiences alike. Moreover, as sites of entertainment, Disney's films "work" because they put both children and adults in touch with joy and adventure. They present themselves as places to experience pleasure, even when we have to buy it.

And yet, Disney's brilliant use of aesthetic forms, musical scores, and inviting characters can only be "read" in light of the broader conceptions of reality and predispositions shaped by specific Disney films within a wider system of dominant representations about gender roles, race, and agency that are endlessly repeated in the visual worlds of television, Hollywood film, and videocassettes.

A number of the films mentioned draw upon the talents of song writers Howard Ashman and/or Alan Menken, whose skillful arrangements provide the emotional glue of the animation experience. The rousing calypso number, "Under the Sea," in *The Little Mermaid*, and the "Be Our Guest," Busby Berkeley-inspired musical sequence in *Beauty and the Beast*, are indicative of the musical talent at work in Disney's animated films. Fantasy abounds as Disney's animated films produce a host of exotic and stereotypical villains, and heroes. The Beast's enchanted castle in *Beauty and the Beast* becomes magical as household objects are transformed into dancing teacups, a talking teapot, and dancing silverware. And yet, tied to the magical fantasy

and lighthearted musical scores, are representations and themes that emulate the repetitive stereotypes that are characteristic of Disney's view of the childhood culture. For example, while Ursula, the large oozing, black and purple squid in *The Little Mermaid* gushes with evil and irony, the mermaid, Ariel, appears as a cross between a typical rebellious teenager and a Southern California fashion model. Disney's representations of evil and good women appear to have been fashioned in the editorial office of *Vogue*. The wolf-like monster in *Beauty and the Beast* evokes a rare combination of macho terror and Disney-inspired gentleness, while Scar, the suave feline in *The Lion King*, masterfully embraces a scheming sense of evil and betrayal. Disney's evocation of war and battle are expansive and provocative in *Mulan*. The array of animated objects and animals in these films is of the highest artistic standards, but they do not exist in some ideologically free comfort zone. Their characters are tied to larger narratives about freedom, rites of passage, intolerance, choices, greed, and the brutalities of male chauvinism. These are just some of the many themes explored in Disney's animated films. But enchantment comes with a high price if one of its effects is to seduce its audience into suspending critical judgment of the dominant ideological messages produced by such films. Even though these messages can be read from a variety of viewpoints shaped within different contexts of reception, the dominant assumptions that structure these films carry enormous weight in restricting the number of cultural meanings that can be brought to bear on these films, especially when the intended audience is mostly children.

This should not suggests that the role of the critic in dealing with Disney's animated films is to simply assign them a particular ideological reading. On the contrary, the challenge of such films is to analyze the various themes and assumptions that inform them both within and outside of the dominant institutional and ideological formations that attempt to shape and constrain how they might be taken up. This allows educators and other to try to understand how such films can become sites of contestation, translation, and exchange in order to be read differently. But there is more at stake here than recognizing the plurality of readings such films might animate; there is also the pedagogical task of provoking audiences to reflect upon the

ways in which Disney's themes function as part of a broader public discourse, privileging some definitions or interpretations over others. The conservative values that Disney's films promote assume a force that others do not because of the company's power and ability to produce, distribute, and promote its goods so as to virtually place them in every conceivable public and commercial space. Adults and young people grow up with Disney products and images, which in many instances resonate very powerfully with already inscribed dominant perceptions and meanings. Yet, it must be stressed that Disney does not crudely impose its belief system on children and others. On the contrary, its pedagogical power and influence is rooted in a historical legacy and ongoing ability to produce and circulate an environment of images that become a commonsensical part of the public imagination and people's everyday lives. Through a process of accumulation and accretion, these images begin to slowly influence and shape how children come to know themselves and their relationship to the larger social order. Pedagogically, this suggests the need for educators, parents, and others to analyze critically how privileged dominant readings of Disney's animated films work to generate and affirm particular pleasures, desires, and subject positions that define for children specific notions of agency and its possibilities in society.

Contexts mold interpretations; but political, economic, and ideological contexts also produce the texts to be read. Focusing on films must be supplemented with analyzing the institutional practices and social structures that work to shape such texts. This type of analysis does not mean that cultural workers should subscribe to a form of determinism in which cultural texts can be assigned a singular meaning, as much as it should suggest pedagogical strategies for understanding how dominant regimes of power work to severely limit the range of views that children might bring to reading Disney's animated films. By making the relationship between power and knowledge visible, while simultaneously referencing what is often taken for granted, teachers and critics can incorporate Disney's animated films pedagogically for students and others to read such films within, against, and outside of the dominant codes that inform them. There is a double pedagogical movement here. First, there is the need to read Disney's films in relation to their articulation with other dominant

texts in order to assess their similarities in legitimating particular ideologies. Second, there is the need on the part of parents and others to use Disney's thematization of America and America's thematization of Disney as a referent to make visible and disrupt dominant codings, but to do so in a space that invites dialogue, debate, and alternative readings. For instance, one major pedagogical challenge would be to assess how dominant ideas that are repeated over time in these films and reinforced through other popular cultural texts can be taken up as a referent for engaging how children define themselves within such representations. The task here is to provide readings of such films that serve as a pedagogical referent for engaging them in the context in which they are shaped, understood, or might be seen.[30]

But providing a particular ideological reading of these films should not suggest this is the only possible reading. On the contrary, by providing a theoretical referent for engaging Disney films, it becomes possible to explore pedagogically how children, students, and adults both construct and defend the readings they actually bring to such films. Such a position provides an opportunity to expand the dialogue regarding what Disney's films mean while simultaneously challenging the taken-for-granted assumptions that often surround dominant readings of such films. Taking a position on Disney's films should not degenerate into a doctrinaire reading or legitimate a form of political or pedagogical indoctrination with children or anybody else. Rather, such an approach should address how any reading of these films is ideological and should be engaged in terms of the context that produces a particular reading, its content, and what it suggests about the values and social relations it endorses as part of a broader discourse. Moreover, engaging such films politically and ideologically provides the pedagogical basis for making such films problematic and thus open to dialogue rather than treating them uncritically as mere entertainment.

Reading Disney

The construction of gender identity for girls and women represents one of the most controversial issues in Disney's animated films.[31] In

both *The Little Mermaid* and *The Lion King* the female characters are constructed within narrowly defined gender roles. All of the female characters in these films are ultimately subordinate to males, and define their sense of power and desire almost exclusively in terms of dominant male narratives. For instance, modeled after a slightly anorexic Barbie doll, Ariel, the woman-mermaid in *The Little Mermaid*, at first glance appears to be engaged in a struggle against parental control, motivated by the desire to explore the human world and willing to take a risk in defining the subject and object of her desires. But in the end, the struggle to gain independence from her father, Triton, and the sense of desperate striving that motivates her, dissolves when Ariel makes a Mephistophelean pact with the sea witch, Ursula. In this trade, Ariel gives away her voice to gain a pair of legs so that she can pursue the handsome Prince Eric. While children might be delighted by Ariel's teenage rebelliousness, they are strongly positioned to believe, in the end, that desire, choice, and empowerment are closely linked to catching and loving a handsome prince. Bonnie Leadbeater and Gloria Lodato Wilson explore succinctly the pedagogical message at work in the film with their comment:

> The 20th-century innocent and appealing video presents a high-spirited role for adolescent girls, but an ultimately subservient role for adult women. Disney's "Little Mermaid" has been granted her wish to be part of the new world of men, but she is still flipping her fins and is not going too far. She stands to explore the world of men. She exhibits her new-found sexual desires. But the sexual ordering of women's roles is unchanged.[32]

Ariel in this film becomes a metaphor for the traditional housewife-in-the-making narrative. When the sea-witch Ursula tells Ariel that taking away her voice is not so bad because men don't like women who talk, the message is dramatized when the prince attempts to bestow the kiss of true love on Ariel even though she has never spoken to him. Within this rigidly defined narrative, womanhood offers Ariel the reward of marrying the right man and renouncing her former life under the sea as a telling cultural model for the

universe of female choices and decision-making in Disney's worldview. The forging of rigid gender roles in *The Little Mermaid* does not represent an isolated moment in Disney's filmic universe; on the contrary, the power that informs Disney's reproduction of negative stereotypes about women and girls gains force, in part, through the consistent way in which similar messages are circulated and reproduced, in varying degrees, in all of Disney's animated films. In fact, one of the distinguishing features of Disney's animated films over the years is how little the representations and images of females change. In both animal and human form, Disney portrays young girls as highly sexualized, with small waists and big breasts; all of these characters are coquettish–fluttering eyelashes-and exhibiting seductive behavior. Moreover, all of Disney's female protagonists, regardless of how strong they might appear, cannot live out their lives without being rescued by men.

For example, in *Aladdin* the issue of agency and power is centered primarily on the role of the young street tramp, Aladdin. Jasmine, the princess he falls in love with, is simply an object of his immediate desire as well as a social stepping stone. Jasmine's life is almost completely defined by men, and, in the end, her happiness is insured by Aladdin, who finally is given permission to marry her.

Catering to a more complicated notion of femininity, Disney's gender theme becomes a bit more complicated in *Beauty and the Beast*, *Pocahontas*, and *Mulan*. Belle, the lead character of *Beauty and the Beast*, is portrayed as an independent woman stuck in a provincial village in 18th century France. Seen as odd because she always has her nose in a book, she is pursued by Gaston, the ultimate vain, macho male typical of Hollywood films of the 1980s. To Belle's credit she rejects him, but in the end she gives her love to the Beast, who holds her captive, hoping she will fall in love with him and break the evil spell cast upon him as a young man. Belle not only falls in love with the Beast, she "civilizes" him by instructing him on how to eat properly, control his temper, and dance. Belle becomes a model of etiquette and style as she turns this narcissistic, muscle-bound tyrant into a "new" man, one who is sensitive, caring, and loving. Some critics have labeled Belle a Disney feminist because she rejects and vilifies Gaston, the ultimate macho man. Less obviously, *Beauty and*

the Beast also can be read as a rejection of hypermasculinity and a struggle between the macho sensibilities of Gaston and the reformed sexist, the Beast. In this reading, Belle is less the focus of the film than a prop or "mechanism for solving the Beast's dilemma."[33] Whatever subversive qualities Belle personifies in the film, they seem to dissolve when focused on humbling male vanity. In the end, Belle simply becomes another woman whose life is valued for solving a man's problems. But there is a more sinister message in *Beauty and the Beast* that needs to be told. Dr. Carolyn Newberger, a psychologist at the Harvard Medical School, argues that if you examine *Beauty and the Beast* through the lens of family violence, the abuses that are graphically represented in the film are horrific, especially as a teaching message for young girls. In making this claim, Newberger underscores the manner in which the Beast screams at Belle, imprisons her, throws her father out of the house, and takes her family away from her. The Beast's behavior is violent and, as she argues "horrifically abusive." Yet, the central message of the story is that Belle succumbs to him, interprets his rage and anger as simply expressions of a bad temper, and in turn discovers beneath his horrible abuse a personality that is tender and vulnerable; she then proceeds to fall in love with him. The pedagogical terrorism that takes place here is hard to miss. The message to young girls and boys is that they should overlook the abuse and violence, and that such displays of rage are really a cover for tenderness and that women who are abused should just stick with it because in the end, as Newberger points out, "there is a tender prince lurking within and it is [the young girl's job] to kiss the beast and bring it out."[34]

Disney's next femme fatale, Pocahontas, appears to both challenge and reproduce some of these stereotypes. Rather than being portrayed as a young adolescent, Pocahontas is made over historically to resemble a shapely, animated, contemporary, high-fashion supermodel. Represented as a woman who is bright, courageous, literate, and politically progressive, she is a far cry from the traditional negative stereotypes of Native Americans portrayed in Hollywood films. But like many of Disney's female protagonists, Pocahontas's character is drawn primarily in relation to the men that surround her. Initially, her identity is defined in resistance to her father's attempts to marry

her off to one of the bravest warriors in the tribe. But her coming-of-age identity crisis is largely defined by her love affair with John Smith, a colonialist who happens to be blond and looks like he belongs in a Southern California pin-up magazine of male surfers. Pocahontas's character is drawn primarily through her struggle to save her colonial lover, John Smith, from being executed by her father. Pocahontas exudes a kind of soppy romanticism that not only saves John Smith's life, but convinces the crew of the British ship to turn on its greedy captain and return to England. Of course, this is a Hollywood rewrite of history that bleaches colonialism of its genocidal legacy. No mention is made of the fact that John Smith's countrymen would ultimately ruin Pocahontas's land, bring disease, murder, and poverty to her people, and eventually destroy their religion, economic livelihood, and way of life. In the Disney version of history, colonialism never happened, and the meeting between the old and new worlds simply becomes fodder for reproducing a "love conquers all" narrative. One wonders how this film would have been taken up in the public mind if it had been a film about a Jewish woman who falls in love with a blond Aryan Nazi, while ignoring any references to the Holocaust.

The issue of female subordination returns with a vengeance in *The Lion King*. All of the rulers of the kingdom are male, reinforcing the assumption that independence and leadership are tied to patriarchal entitlement and high social standing. The dependency that the beloved lion king, Mufasa, engenders from the females of Pride Rock is unaltered after his death when the evil Scar assumes control of the kingdom. Lacking any sense of outrage, independence, or resistance, the female felines hang around to do his bidding.

The gender stereotyping is somewhat modified in *Mulan* (1998). The lead character of the same name is presented as a bold female warrior who challenges traditional gender stereotypes of young women, but for all of her independence, in the end, the film is, as Janet Maslin points out, "still enough of a fairy tale to need a Mr. Right."[35] Mulan may be an independent strong-willed young woman, but the ultimate payoff of her own bravery comes in the form of catching the handsome son of a general. And if the point is missed, when Mulan's grandmother first sees the young man as he

enters her granddaughter's house, she affirms what she (the audience?) sees as Mulan's real victory, which is catching a man, and yells out: "Sign me up for the next war!" But there is an equally disturbing side to Mulan's alleged makeover as a strong woman. Rather than defining herself against the patriarchal celebration of war, violence, and militarism, Mulan is transformed into a cross-dresser who proves that when it comes to war she can perform as well as any male. By embracing a disturbing masculine view of war, Mulan cancels out any pretense of rupturing traditional gender roles by becoming one of the boys. But unless the fantasy be taken too far, Disney reminds us at the conclusion of the film that she is still just a girl in search of a man, and as in so many other Disney animated films, Mulan becomes an exoticized version of the all-American girl who manages to catch the most handsome boy on the block, square jaw and all. *Mulan*, the film, also continues the long legacy of orientalism that is endemic to Hollywood representations of Asians. History is ignored, complexity rendered meaningless, and racial stereotyping becomes the motivating force in producing the "entertaining" spectacle of exoticizing the "other."

Given Disney's purported obsession with family values, especially as a consuming unit, it is curious that, with the exception of *Mulan*, there are no strong mothers or fathers in these films.[36] Not only are powerful mothers absent, but with the exception of the fathers of Pocahontas and Mulan, all of the father figures in these films are portrayed as either weak or stupid. Only the mermaid has a domineering father; Jasmine's father is outwitted by his aides; and Belle has an airhead for a father.

Jack Zipes, a leading theorist on fairy tales, claims that Disney's animated films celebrate a masculine type of power, but more importantly he believes that they reproduce "a type of gender stereotyping... that has an adverse effect on children in contrast to what parents think.... Parents think they're essentially harmless – and they're not harmless."[37] Disney films are seen by enormous numbers of children in both the United States and abroad. As far as the issue of gender is concerned, Disney's view of female agency and empowerment is not simply limited, it borders on being overtly reactionary.

Racial stereotyping is another major issue that surfaces in many of the recent Disney animated films. But the legacy of racism does not begin with the films produced since 1989; on the contrary, there is a long history of racism associated with Disney. This history can be traced back to denigrating images of people of color in films such as *Song of the South*, released in 1946, and *The Jungle Book*, which appeared in 1967.[38] Moreover, racist representations of native Americans as violent "redskins" were featured in Frontierland in the 1950s.[39] In addition, the main restaurant in Frontierland featured the real life figure of a former slave, Aunt Jemima, who would sign autographs for the tourists outside of her "Pancake House." Eventually the exhibits and the native Americans running them were eliminated by Disney executives because the "Indian" canoe guides wanted to unionize. They were displaced by robotic dancing bears. Complaints from civil rights groups got rid of the degrading Aunt Jemima spectacle.[40]

One of the most controversial examples of racist stereotyping facing the Disney publicity machine occurred with the release of *Aladdin* in 1989, although such stereotyping reappeared in full force in 1994 with the release of *The Lion King*. *Aladdin* represents a particularly important example because it was a high profile release, the winner of two academy awards, and one of the most successful Disney films ever produced. Playing to massive audiences of children, the film's opening song, "Arabian Nights," begins its depiction of Arab culture with a decidedly racist tone. The lyrics of the offending stanza states: "Oh I come from a land/From a faraway place/Where the caravan camels roam./Where they cut off your ear/If they don't like your face./It's barbaric, but hey, it's home." In this characterization, a politics of identity and place associated with Arab culture magnifies popular stereotypes already primed by the media through its portrayal of the Gulf War. Such racist representations are further reproduced in a host of supporting characters who are portrayed as grotesque, violent, and cruel. Yousef Salem, a former spokesperson for the South Bay Islamic Association, characterized the film in the following way:

> All of the bad guys have beards and large, bulbous noses, sinister eyes and heavy accents, and they're wielding swords constantly. Aladdin

> doesn't have a big nose; he has a small nose. He doesn't have a beard or a turban. He doesn't have an accent. What makes him nice is they've given him this American character.... I have a daughter who says she's ashamed to call herself an Arab, and it's because of things like this.[41]

Jack Shaheen, a professor of broadcast journalism at Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville, along with radio personality, Casey Kasem, mobilized a public relations campaign protesting the anti-Arab themes in *Aladdin*. At first, the Disney executives ignored the protest, but due to the rising tide of public outrage agreed to change one line of the stanza in the subsequent videocassette and worldwide film release; it is worth noting that Disney did not change the lyrics on its popular CD release of *Aladdin*.[42] It appears that Disney executives were not unaware of the racist implications of the lyrics when they were first proposed. Howard Ashman, who wrote the main title song, submitted an alternative set of lyrics when he delivered the original verse. The alternative set of lyrics, "Where it's flat and immense/And the heat is intense" eventually replaced the original verse, "Where they cut of your ear/If they don't like your face." Though the new lyrics appeared in the videocassette release of *Aladdin*, many Arab groups were disappointed because the verse "It's barbaric, but hey it's home" was not altered. More importantly, the mispronunciation of Arab names in the film, the racial coding of accents, and the use of nonsensical scrawl as a substitute for an actual written Arabic language were not removed.[43]

Racism in Disney's animated films does not simply appear in negative imagery, it is also reproduced through racially coded language and accents. For example, *Aladdin* portrays the "bad" Arabs with thick, foreign accents, while the Anglicized Jasmine and Aladdin speak in standard Americanized English. A hint of the racism that informs this depiction is provided by Peter Schneider, president of feature animation at Disney at the time, who points out that Aladdin was modeled after Tom Cruise. Racially coded representations and language are also evident in *The Lion King*. Scar, who is the icon of evil, is portrayed as darker than the good lions. Moreover, racially coded language is evident as all of the members of the royal family

speak with posh British accents while Shenzi and Banzai, the despicable hyena storm troopers, speak through the voices of Whoopi Goldberg and Cheech Marin in jive accents that take on the nuances of the discourse of a decidedly urban, black and Hispanic youth. Disney falls back upon the same racialized formula in *Mulan*. Not far removed from the Amos 'n' Andy crows in *Dumbo*, *Mulan* resurrects the racialized low-comedy figure in the form of Mushu, a tiny red dragon with a black voice (Eddie Murphy). Mushu takes on the role of a servile and boastful clown that seems less suited to a mythic fable about China than it does to the craven stereotype of the backward, Southern, chitlin-circuit character that appears to feed the popular racist imagination. The use of racially coded language is not new in Disney's films and can be found in an early version of *The Three Little Pigs*, as well as in *Song of the South*, and *The Jungle Book*.[44] What is astonishing in these films is that they produce a host of representations and codes in which children are taught that cultural differences that do not bear the imprint of white, middle-class ethnicity are deviant, inferior, unintelligent, and a threat to be overcome. The racism in these films is defined by both the presence of racist representations in which people of color are portrayed as gorillas, as jive-talking hyenas, or as shuffling buffoons; or, as in the latest Disney version of *Tarzan*, are actually removed from the very land they inhabit while a white man fills in the only force able to conquer the "dangers" of Africa.

At the same time, whiteness is universalized through the privileged representation of middle-class social relations, values, and linguistic practices. Moreover, the representational rendering of history, progress, and Western culture bears a colonial legacy that seems perfectly captured by Edward Said's notion of orientalism and its dependency on new images of centrality and sanctioned narratives.[45] Cultural differences in Disney's recent films are expressed through a "naturalized" racial hierarchy, one that is antithetical to a viable democratic society. There is nothing innocent in what kids learn about race as portrayed in the "magical world" of Disney. Even in a film such as *Pocahontas*, where cultural difference are portrayed more positively, there is the suggestion in the end that racial identities must remain separate. *Pocahontas* is one of the few love stories in Disney's animated

series in which the lovers do not live together happily ever after. It is also one of the few love stories that brings lovers from different races together.

In what follows, I want to comment on another central feature common to many of Disney's recently animated films, that is, the celebration of deeply, antidemocratic social relations. Nature and the animal kingdom provide the mechanism for presenting and legitimating caste, royalty, and structural inequality as part of the natural order. The seemingly benign presentation of celluloid dramas in which men rule, strict discipline is imposed through social hierarchies, and leadership is a function of one's social status, suggests a yearning for a return to a more rigidly stratified society, one modeled after the British monarchy of the 18th and 19th centuries. Within Disney's animated films, nature provides a metaphor where "harmony is bought at the price of domination. . . . no power or authority is implied except for the natural ordering mechanisms [of nature]."[46] For children, the messages offered in Disney's animated films suggest that social problems such as the history of racism, the genocide of Native Americans, the prevalence of sexism, and crisis of democracy are simply willed through the laws of nature.

-359-

Cultural Pedagogy and Children's Culture

Given the corporate reach, cultural influence, and political power that Disney exercises over multiple levels of children's culture, Disney's animated films should be neither ignored nor censored by those who dismiss the conservative ideologies they produce and circulate. I think there are a number of issues to be taken up regarding the forging of a pedagogy and politics responsive to Disney's shaping of children's culture. In what follows, I want to provide in schematic form some suggestions regarding how cultural workers, educators, and parents might critically engage Disney's influence in shaping the "symbolic environment into which our children are born and in which we all live out our lives."[47]

First, it is crucial that the realm of popular culture that Disney increasingly uses to teach values and sell goods be taken seriously as a

site of learning and contestation, especially for children. This means, at the very least, that those cultural texts that dominate children's culture, including Disney's animated films, should be incorporated into schools as serious objects of social knowledge and critical analysis. This would entail a reconsideration of what counts as really useful knowledge in public schools, while offering a new theoretical register for addressing how popular media aimed at shaping children's culture are implicated in a range of power/knowledge relationships. This is not simply a call for making media literacy an essential part of what kids learn in schools (as crucial as such a pedagogy is),[48] but a reconsideration of the meaning, range, and possibilities of what counts as school knowledge itself. In simple terms, this means making popular culture an essential object of social analysis in schools.

Second, parents, community groups, educators, and other concerned individuals must be attentive to the multiple and diverse messages in Disney films in order to both criticize them when necessary and, more importantly, to reclaim them for more productive ends. At the very least, we must be attentive to the processes whereby meanings are produced in these films and how they work to secure particular forms of authority and social relations. At stake pedagogically is the issue of paying "close attention to the ways in which [such films] invite (or indeed seek to prevent) particular meanings and pleasures."[49] In fact, Disney's films appear to assign, quite unapologetically, rigid roles to women and people of color. Similarly, such films generally produce a narrow view of family values coupled with a nostalgic and conservative view of history that should be challenged and transformed. Educators need to take seriously Disney's attempt to shape collective memory, particularly when such attempts are unabashedly defined by one of Disney's imagineers in the following terms: "What we create is a sort of 'Disney realism,' sort of Utopian in nature, where we carefully program out all the negative, unwanted elements and program in the positive elements."[50] Needless to say, Disney's rendering of entertainment and spectacle, whether expressed in Frontierland, Main Street USA, or in its endless video and film productions, does not merely represent an edited, sanitary, and nostalgic view of history, one that is free of poverty, class differences, and urban decay. Disney's writing of public

memory also aggressively constructs a monolithic notion of national identity that treats subordinate groups as either exotic or irrelevant to American history, while simultaneously marketing cultural differences within "histories that corporations can live with."[51] Disney's version of United States history is neither innocent, nor can it be dismissed as simply entertainment.

Disney's celluloid view of children's culture often works to strip the past, present, and future of diverse narratives and multiple possibilities. But it is precisely such a rendering that needs to be revealed as a historically specific and politically constructed cultural "landscape of power." Positing and revealing the ideological nature of Disney's world of children's films opens up further opportunities for educators and others to critically engage such texts in order to make them mean differently. Rustom Bharacuha puts it well in arguing that "the consumption of... images... can be subverted through a particular use in which we are compelled to think through images rather than respond to them with a hallucinatory delight." [52] One interpretation of the call to "think through images" is for educators and cultural workers to demonstrate pedagogically and politically that history and its rendering of national identity have to be contested and engaged, even when images parade as innocent film entertainment for children. The images that pervade Disney's production of children's culture along with their claim to public memory need to be challenged and rewritten, "moved about in different ways," and read differently as part of the script of democratic empowerment.[53] Issues regarding the construction of gender, race, class, caste, and other aspects of self and collective identity are defining principles of Disney's films for children. It is within the drama of animated storytelling that children are often positioned pedagogically to learn what subject positions are open to them as citizens and what positions aren't. Hence, the struggle over children's culture should be considered as part of a struggle over the related discourses of citizenship, national identity, and democracy itself.

Third, if Disney's films are to be viewed as more than narratives of fantasy and escape, becoming sites of reclamation and imagination, which affirm rather than deny the long-standing relationship between entertainment and pedagogy, it is important to consider how

we might insert the political and pedagogical back into the discourse of entertainment. In part, this points to analyzing how entertainment can be addressed as a subject of intellectual engagement rather than a series of sights and sounds that wash over us. This suggests a pedagogical approach to popular culture that engages how a politics of the popular works to mobilize desire, stimulate imagination, and produce forms of identification that can become objects of dialogue and critical investigation. At one level, this suggests addressing the utopian possibilities in which children often find representations of their hopes and dreams. The pedagogical value of such an approach is that it alerts educators to taking the needs, desires, languages, and experience of children seriously. But this is not meant to merely affirm the necessity for relevance in the curriculum as much as it means recognizing the pedagogical importance of what kids bring with them to the classroom or any other site of learning as crucial to decentering power in the classroom and expanding the possibility for teaching students multiple literacies as part of a broader strategy in expanding their capacities to read the world critically.

It appears crucial that parents, educators and others pay attention to how these Disney films and visual media are used and understood differently by diverse groups of kids. Not only does this provide the opportunity for parents and others to talk to children about popular culture, it also creates the basis for better understanding how young people identify with these films, what issues are raised within such cultural forms that need to be addressed, and how such discussions would open up a language of pleasure and criticism rather than simply foreclose one. This suggests that we develop new ways of critically understanding and reading electronically produced visual media. Teaching and learning the culture of the book is no longer the staple of what it means to be literate.

Children learn from exposure to popular cultural forms, providing a new cultural register to what it means to be literate. Educators and cultural workers must not only be attentive to the production of popular art forms in the schools. On one level this suggests a cultural pedagogy rooted in cultural practices that utilizes students' knowledge and experience through their use of popular cultural forms. As I have stressed previously, students should not merely be taught

-360-

to critically analyze the messages produced by the vast range of electronically mediated popular culture, they must also be able to master the skills and technology to produce it in its various forms. Put another way, students should gain experience in making films, videos, music, and other forms of cultural production, thus giving students more power over the conditions for the production of knowledge.

But a cultural pedagogy also involves the struggle for more resources for schools and other sites of learning. Providing the conditions for students and others to become the subject and not simply the object of pedagogical work by asserting their role as cultural producers is crucial if students are to become attentive to the workings of power, solidarity, and difference as part of a more comprehensive project for democratic empowerment.

Fourth, Disney's all-encompassing reach into the spheres of economics, consumption, and culture suggest that we analyze Disney within a broad and complex range of relations of power. Eric Smoodin argues that the American public needs to "gain a new sense of Disney's importance, because of the manner in which his work in film and television is connected to other projects in urban planning, ecological politics, product merchandising, United States domestic and global policy formation, technological innovation, and constructions of national character."[54] This suggests undertaking new analyses of Disney which connect rather than separate the various social and cultural formations in which the company actively engages. Clearly, such a dialectical practice not only provides a more theoretically accurate understanding of the reach and influence of Disney's power; it also contributes to forms of analysis that rupture the notion that Disney is primarily about the pedagogy of entertainment.

Questions of ownership, control, and the possibility of public participation in making decisions about how cultural resources are used, to what extent, and for what effect, should become a central issue in addressing the world of Disney and other corporate conglomerates that shape cultural policy. In part, teachers, students, and others should situate the control, production, and distribution of such films as part of a wider circuit of power. Such an approach provides concerned parents and public citizens with relevant information for

understanding and addressing how Disney, Inc. exercises its power and influence within the context of a larger cultural strategy and public policy initiative. In this context, Disney's influence in the shaping of children's culture cannot be reduced to critically interpreting the ideas and values promoted in films and other forms of representation. Any viable analysis of Disney must also confront the institutional and political power Disney exercises through its massive control over diverse sectors of what Mark Crispin Miller has called the "National Entertainment State."[55] This form of analysis would combine research about Disney's reach and influence in the world and offer knowledge and strategies that address how the issue of cultural power and the shaping of children's culture could be taken up as a matter of public policy on both a national and transnational level.

The availability, influence, and cultural power of Disney's children's films demand that they become part of a broader political discourse regarding who makes cultural policy. As such, issues regarding how and what children learn could be addressed through broader public debates about how cultural and economic resources can be distributed and controlled to insure that children are exposed to a variety of alternative narratives, stories, and representations about themselves and the larger society. When the issue of children's culture is taken up and shaped in the schools, it is assumed that this is a commonplace matter of public policy and intervention, but when it is shaped in the commercial public sphere the discourse of public intervention gets lost in abstract appeals to the imperatives of the market and free speech. Free speech is only as good as the democratic framework that makes possible the extension of its benefits to a wider range of individuals, groups, and public spheres. Treating Disney as part of a media sphere that needs to be democratized and held accountable for the ways in which it sells power and manufactures social identities needs to be taken up as part of the discourse of pedagogical analysis and public policy intervention. This type of analysis and intervention is perfectly suited for cultural theorists and community activists across a wide number of sites who are willing to employ an interdisciplinary approach to such an undertaking, address popular culture as an object of serious analysis, make the pedagogical a defining principle of such work, and insert the political into the center of such projects.[56]

This suggests that cultural workers need to readdress the varied interrelations that define both a politics of representation and a discourse of political economy as a new form of cultural work that rejects the material/cultural divide. The result would be a renewed understanding of how such modalities mutually inform each other within different contexts and across national boundaries. It is particularly important for cultural workers to understand how Disney films work within a broad network of production and distribution as teaching machines within and across different public cultures and social formations. Within this type of discourse, the messages, forms of emotional investment, and ideologies produced by Disney can be traced through the various circuits of power that both legitimate and insert "the culture of the Magic Kingdom" into multiple and overlapping public spheres. Moreover, such films need to be analyzed not only for what they say, but also for how they are used and taken up by adult audiences and groups of children within diverse national and international contexts. That is, cultural workers need to study these films intertextually and from a transnational perspective. Disney does not represent a cultural monolith ignorant of different contexts; on the contrary, its power, in part, rests with its ability to address different contexts and to be read differently by transnational formations and audiences. Disney engenders what Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan have called "scattered hegemonies."[57] It is precisely by addressing how these hegemonies operate in particular spaces of power, specific localities, and differentiated transnational locations that progressives will be able to understand more fully the specific agendas and politics at work as Disney is both constructed for and read by different audiences.

While it is indisputable that Disney provides both children and adults with the pleasure of being entertained, Disney's public responsibility does not end there. Rather than being viewed as a commercial public sphere innocently distributing pleasure to young people, the Disney empire must be seen as a pedagogical and policy-making enterprise actively engaged in the cultural landscaping of national identity and the "schooling" of the minds of young children. This is not to suggest that there is something sinister behind what Disney does, as much as it points to the need to address the role of fantasy,

desire, and innocence in securing particular ideological interests, legitimating specific social relations, and making a distinct claim on the meaning of public memory. Disney needs to be held accountable not just at the box office, but also in political and ethical terms. If such accountability is to be impressed upon the "Magic Kingdom" then parents, educators, and others will have to challenge and disrupt both the institutional power and the images, representations, and values offered by Disney's teaching machine. The stakes are too high to ignore such a challenge and struggle, even if it means reading Disney's animated films critically.

Notes

1. A version of this essay appeared in *Socialist Review* 24.3 (1995): 23–55.
2. This is not to suggest that I believed that the world of fantasy, amusement, and entertainment could be abstracted from ideology. On the contrary, I simply did not address such ideologies as serious objects of analysis. For a critical engagement of commercialization, popular culture, and children's culture, see Marsha Kinder, *Playing With Power in Movies, Television, and Video Games* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Doug Kellner, *Media Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1995); David Buckingham and Julian Sefton-Green, *Cultural Studies Goes to School* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1994).
3. Cited in Michiko Kakutani, "This Mouse Once Roared." *The New York Times Magazine* (January 4, 1998): 8. Compare Kakutani's analysis with Matt Roth, "A Short History of Disney-Fascism." *Jumpcut* 40 (1996): 15–20.
4. See Michael D. Eisner, "Letter to Shareholders," in *The Walt Disney Company 1999 Annual Report* (Burbank, CA: The Walt Disney Company, 1999), p. 2.
5. There is an ever-growing list of authors who have been pressured by Disney either through the refusal to allow copyrighted materials to be used or through Disney's reputation for influencing publishers not to publish certain work. Examples can be found in Jon Wiener, "In the Belly of the Mouse: The Dyspeptic Disney Archives." *Lingua France* (July/August, 1994): 69–72; Jon Wiener, "Murdered Ink." *The Nation* (May 31, 1993): 743–50. One typical example occurred in a book in which one of my own essays on Disney appears. While in the process of editing a book critical of Disney, Laura Sells, Lynda Haas, and Elizabeth

Bell requested permission from Disney executives to use the archives. In response, the editors received a letter from one of Disney's legal assistants asking to approve the book. The editors declined and Disney forbade the use of their name in the title of the book, and threatened to sue if the Disney name was used. Indiana University Press argued that it did not have the resources to fight Disney and the title of the book was changed from *Doing Disney* to *From Mouse to Mermaid*. In another instance, Routledge Publishing decided to omit an essay by David Kunzle on the imperialist messages in Disney's foreign comics in a book entitled *Disney Discourse*. Fearing that Disney would not provide permission for illustrations from the Disney archives, Routledge decided they could not publish the essay without illustrations. Discouraged, Kunzle told Jon Wiener that "I've given up. I'm not doing any more work on Disney. I don't think any university press would take the risk. The problem is not the likelihood of Disney winning in court, it's the threat of having to bear the cost of fighting them" (Kunzle cited in Wiener, "In the Belly of the Mouse," op. cit., p. 72).

6. As Eisner points out, in describing Disney's empire:

> We now have seven theme parks (with four more in the works), 27 hotels with 36,888 rooms, two cruise ships, 728 Disney Stores, one broadcast network, 10 TV stations, nine international Disney Channels, 42 radio stations, an Internet portal, five major Internet web sites, interests in nine U.S. cable networks, and in the past decade, we have enhanced our library with 17 animated films, 265 live-action films, 1252 animated television episodes and 6,505 live-action television episodes. (In Eisner, "Letter to Shareholders," op. cit., p. 2.)

7. The mutually determining relationship of culture and economic power as a dynamic hegemonic process is beautifully captured by Sharon Zukin's work on Disney. She writes:

> The domestication of fantasy in visual consumption is inseparable from centralized structures of economic power. Just as the earlier power of the state illuminated public space – the streets – by artificial lamplight, so the economic power of CBS, Sony, and the Disney Company illuminates private space at home by electronic images. With the means of production so concentrated and the means of consumption so diffused, communication of these images becomes a way of controlling both knowledge and imagination, a form of corporate social control over technology and symbolic expressions of power. (In Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 221.)

8. For a listing of various public service programs that Disney has initiated, see Jennifer J. Laabs, "Disney Helps Keep Kids in School." *Personnel Journal* (November, 1992): 58–68.
9. Cited in Mark Walsh, "Disney Holds up School as Model for next Century." *Education Week* XIII. 39 (June 22, 1994): 1.
10. Tom Vanderbilt, "Mickey Goes to Town(s)." *The Nation* 261.6 (August 28/September 4, 1995): 199.
11. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983), p. 25. Also, see Jean Baudrillard, "Consumer Society," in Mark Poster (ed.), *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Works* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), pp. 29–56.
12. Alan Bryman, *Disney and His Worlds* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 26.
13. Eric Smoodin, "How to Read Walt Disney," in *Disney Discourse: Producing the Magic Kingdom* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 18.
14. Jon Wiener, "Tall Tales and True." *The Nation* (January 31, 1994): 134.
15. Actually, Disney's animated film *The Lion King* may be the most financially successful film ever made. Disney's animated films released since 1990 have all been included in the top 10 grossing films. For example *Lion King* ranked no.1 with $253.5 million; *Aladdin* ranked second with $217.4 million; and *Beauty and the Beast* ranked seventh grossing $145.9 million. See Thomas King, "Creative but Unpolished Top Executive for Hire," *The Wall Street Journal* (August 26, 1994): B1.
16. Elizabeth Bell, Lynda Haas, Laura Sells, "Walt's in the Movies," in Elizabeth Bell et. al. (eds.), *From Mouse to Mermaid* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 3.
17. The celebrations of Walt Disney are too numerous to mention in any great detail. But an early example would be Bob Thomas, *Walt Disney: An American Original* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976). Thomas's book followed on the heels of a scathing attack on Disney by Richard Schickel, *The Disney Version* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968). A more recent version of the no-holds-barred critique of Disney can be found in Carl Hiassen, *Team Rodent: How Disney Devours the World* (New York: Ballantine Publishing, 1998). The more moderate position can be found in Steven Watts, *The Magic Kingdom* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997). Disregarding the alleged virtues of balance, I think Schickel's book ranks as one of the best critiques of Disney.
18. Barbara Foley, "Subversion and Oppositionality in the Academy," in Maria-Regina Kecht (ed.), *Pedagogy is Politics: Literary Theory and Critical Teaching* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), p. 79. See also,

Roger I. Simon, "Forms of Insurgency in the Production of Popular Memories." *Cultural Studies* 1.1 (1993): 73–88.

19. A number of recent authors address Disney's imagined landscape as a place of economic and cultural power. See, for example, Zukin, *Landscapes of Power*, op. cit.; Michael Sorkin, "Disney World: The Power of Facade/ the Facade of Power," in Michael Sorkin (ed.), *Variations on a Theme Park* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1992); and see the especially impressive Stephen M. Fjellman, *Vinyl Leaves: Walt Disney World and America* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992).
20. Norman Klein argues in his brilliant book, *7 Minutes: The Life and Death of the American Animated Cartoon* that Disney actually constructed his expanded cartoons as a form of animated consumer memory. As Klein puts it:

> The atmospheric lighting of Disney epic cartoons is very similar to the reverie of shopping, to shopping arcades, even to the permanent dusk of a room illuminated by television. It takes us more to the expanded shopping mall than a planned suburb, to a civilization based on consumer memories more than urban (or suburban) locations. . . . Disney showed us how to stop thinking of a city as residential or commercial, but rather as airbrushed streets in our mind's eye, a shopper's nonscape. If we can make a city remind us of animated consumer memory, it removes the alienation of changing cities, and replaces it with a cloud of imaginary store windows. (In Norman M. Klein, *7 Minutes: The Life and Death of the American Animated Cartoon* (London: Verso, 1993, reprinted 1998), p. 144.)

21. The term "marketplace of culture" comes from Richard de Cordova, "The Mickey in Macy's Window: Childhood Consumerism and Disney Animation," in Eric Smoodin (ed.), *Disney Discourse*, op. cit., p. 209. It is worth noting that Disney was one of the first companies to tie the selling of toys to consuming of movies. Challenging the assumption that toy consumption was limited to seasonal sales, Disney actively pursued creating Mickey Mouse Clubs, advertising its toys in storefront windows, and linking its movies directly to the distribution of children's toys.
22. Cited in Richard Corliss, "The Mouse that Roars." *Time* (June 20, 1994): 59.
23. Cited in Richard Turner, "Walt Disney Presents: Forward to the Future." *The Wall Street Journal*, Marketplace Section (August 26, 1994): B1.
24. Cited in Sallie Hofmeister, "In the Realm of Marketing, the 'Lion King' Rules." *The New York Times* (July 12, 1994): D1.
25. Moira McCormick, "'Hunchback' Soundtrack Tie-Ins Abound," *Billboard* (May 25, 1996): 10.

26. Cited in Robert W. McChesney, *Corporate Media and the Threat to Democracy* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1997), pp. 20–1.
27. For an amazing summation of the merchandizing avalanche that accompanied the movie theater version of *The Lion King*, see Sallie Hofmeister, "In the Realm of Marketing," op. cit., pp. D1, D17.
28. Cited in Karen Schoemer, "An Endless Stream of Magic and Moola." *Newsweek* (September 5, 1994): 47.
29. Tom McNichol, "Pushing 'Pocahontas.'" *USA Weekend* (June 9–11, 1995): 4.
30. Tony Bennett touches on this issue through an explication of his rendering of the concept of reading formation. He argues:

> the concept of reading formation is an attempt to think context as a set of discursive and inter-textual determinations, operating on material and institutional supports, which bear in upon a text not just externally, from the outside in, but internally, shaping it – in the historically concrete forms in which it is available as a text-to-be-read -from the inside out. (In Tony Bennett, "Texts in History: The Determinations of Readings and Their Texts," in Derek Atridge et al. (eds.), *Poststructuralism and the Question of History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 72.)

31. Critiques of Disney's portrayal of girls and women can be found in: Elizabeth Bell et al. (eds.), *From Mouse to Mermaid*, op. cit.; also see Susan White, "Split Skins: Female Agency and Bodily Mutilation in *The Little Mermaid*," in Jim Collins, Hilary Radner, and Ava Preacher Collins (eds.), *Film Theory Goes to the Movies* (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 182–95.
32. Bonnie J. Leadbeater and Gloria Lodato Wilson, "Flipping Their Fins for a Place to Stand: 19th-and 20th-Century Mermaids." *Youth and Society* 27.4 (June 1993): 466–86.
33. Susan Jefford develops this reading of *Beauty and the Beast* in *Hard Bodies: Hollywood Masculinity in the Reagan Era* (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1994), p. 150.
34. All of these quotes and the analysis of this position are taken from the video, *Mickey Mouse Monopoly*, produced by the Media Education Foundation (2001).
35. Janet Maslin, "Disney Turns to a Warrior of the East in 'Mulan.'" *The New York Times* (June 19, 1998): B10.
36. I would like to thank Valerie Janesick for this insight.
37. Cited in June Casagrande, "The Disney Agenda." *Creative Loafing* (March 17–23, 1994): 6–7.

38. Upon its release in 1946, *Song of the South* was condemned by the NAACP for its racist representations.
39. For a historical context in which to understand Frontierland, see Fjellman, *Vinyl Leaves*, op. cit.
40. These racist episodes are highlighted in Jon Wiener, "Tall Tales and True." *The Nation* (January 31, 1994): 133–5.
41. Yousef Salem cited in Richard Scheinin, "Angry Over 'Aladdin.'" *The Washington Post* (January 10, 1993): G5.
42. Howard Green, a Disney spokesperson, dismissed the charges of racism as irrelevant claiming that such criticisms were coming from a small minority and that "most people were happy with [the film]." Cited in Richard Scheinin, "Angry Over Aladdin," op. cit., p. G1.
43. I have taken this criticism from Jack Shaheen, "Animated Racism." *Cineaste* 20:1 (1993): 49.
44. See Susan Miller and Greg Rode, who do a rhetorical analysis of *The Jungle Book* and *Song of the South* in their chapter, "The Movie You See, The Movie You Don't: How Disney Do's That Old Time Derision," in Elizabeth Bell et al. (eds.), *From Mouse to Mermaid*, op. cit.
45. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1993).
46. Susan Willis brilliantly explores this theme in "Fantasia: Walt Disney's Los Angeles Suite." *Diacritics* 17 (Summer, 1987): 83–96.
47. George Gerbner, Larry Gross, Michael Borgan, and Nancy Signorielli, "Growing Up with Television: The Cultivation Perspective," in Jennings Bryant and Dolf Zillmann (eds.), *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1995), p. 17.
48. See, for instance, Andrew Hart (ed.), *Teaching the Media: International Perspectives* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1998).
49. David Buckingham, "Conclusion: Re-Reading Audiences," in David Buckingham (ed.), *Reading Audiences: Young People and the Media* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 211.
50. Cited in Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power*, op. cit, p. 222. While this quote refers to Disney's view of its theme parks, it represents an ideological view of history that strongly shapes all of Disney's cultural productions. For a comment on how it affects Disney's rendering of adult films, see Henry A. Giroux, *Disturbing Pleasures* (New York: Routledge, 1994), especially pp. 25–45.
51. Fjellman, *Vinyl Leaves*, op. cit., p.400.
52. Rustom Bharacuha, "Around Ayodhya: Aberrations, Enigmas, and Moments of Violence." *Third Text* 24 (Autumn, 1993): 51.
53. Tony Bennett, "Texts in History," op. cit., p. 80.

54. Eric Smoodin, "How to Read Walt Disney," in *Disney Discourse* op. cit., pp.4–5.
55. Mark Crispin Miller, "Free the Media." *The Nation* 262.22 (June 3, 1996): 9–15.
56. For an example of such an analysis, see Stanley Aronowitz, *Roll Over Beethoven* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1993); Giroux, *Disturbing Pleasures, op. cit.*
57. Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, "Introduction: Transnational Feminist Practices and Questions of Postmodernity," in Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan (eds.), *Scattered Hegemonies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).





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WEEK 9

16 Celebrity

Chris Rojek

- This chapter discusses the characteristics, organisational features and consequences of celebrity culture.
- Three types of celebrity are identified in this chapter: 'ascribed', 'achieved' and the 'celetoid'.
- It is argued that, in late modernity, the celetoid — an ordinary person of no perceptible talent who acquires durable fame through what I call the 'PR-media complex' — has become ubiquitous.
- After a summary of relevant literature, it is concluded that students can best theorise the rise of celebrity culture when it is related to the rise of the PR-media complex and, consequently, the needs of capitalist society.

What is celebrity?

Over the last decade the academic study of celebrity has grown substantially. Several books have been published, a number of national and international conferences have been held, the subject has featured in many academic articles, and the publisher Taylor & Francis has established a dedicated journal — *Celebrity Studies* (2010) (Cashmore 2006; Marshall 2006; Turner 2004). More academics and students are studying celebrity than ever before. This chapter examines the meaning of celebrity, the reasons for the rise of celebrity culture, and the personal and social consequences of this culture.

Celebrity may be defined as the possession of wide social distinction and esteem. There are three main types (Rojek 2001). 'Ascribed celebrity' refers to the social distinction and esteem that derives from occupying a recognised position in the social hierarchy. Kings, Queens, Dukes and Duchesses are ascribed celebrities. So are the children of famous people such as Connor Cruise, the adopted son of Tom Cruise, or Fifi Trixabelle, Peaches and Pixie Geldof, the children of Bob Geldof. Ascribed celebrity is an involuntary form of fame that is typically based on bloodline. Thus it is unlikely that Prince William or Prince Harry would have fame were it not for the fact that they are heirs to the British throne.

'Achieved celebrity' refers to the acquisition of fame by virtue of the public demonstration of talent and the attainment of accomplishment. Jonah Lomu, Pete Sampras and Cristiano Ronaldo are globally famous sports stars; Chris Martin, Beyoncé and Kanye West are international recording superstars; and Angelina Jolie, Hugh Jackman and Johnny Depp are instantly recognised movie stars. Each has attained celebrity by reason of their talent and dedication.

More recently, a third type has gained prominence in celebrity culture. The 'celetoid' is an ordinary person of no perceptible talent who acquires fame by media exposure. A distinction should be made here between short-life and long-life celetoids. A short-life celetoid is topically famous and does not possess enduring fame. A lottery winner, a hero who foils a terrorist attack or the tallest man in the world, may fill newspapers and television news shows one day and be forgotten the next.

A long-life celetoid is an ordinary person of no perceptible talent who acquires durable fame. Leading examples are the reality television star Jade Goody and the *American Idol* contestant William Hung. Goody, who died in 2009, dominated British reality television for seven years; and Hung, who sang Ricky Martin's 'She Bangs' on *American Idol* with such exacting ineptitude that Simon Cowell was moved to proclaim, 'You can't sing, you can't dance, so what do you want me to say?', has gone on to record albums, appear on chat shows and has a website (williamhung.net) dedicated to him. Long-life celetoids are renowned for their impudent bravado. Although they have no recognised talents or accomplishments they appear to be totally uninhibited about expressing their ordinariness in public.

Ascribed celebrities are pre-eminent in traditional societies where social power is hereditary and political power is based in a clan or kingship system. The subsistent nature of these economies does not generate sufficient wealth to support significant levels of upward social mobility. For the same reason, media categories are not well defined. Therefore, platforms to generate non-ascribed fame are either under-developed or have not yet been born and, due to this, instances of achieved celebrity are low.

Achieved celebrity is associated with the rise of capitalist society. The creation of a significant economic surplus produces opportunities for upward social mobility. That is, it supports a system of mass communication, it requires labour to be geographically mobile and it allocates appreciable sums to civil society, especially the entertainment sector. Achieved celebrities do not rise without reason. On the contrary, specialised enclaves of commercial culture exist to discover, hone and polish people of unusual talent and accomplishment. These enclaves are located in the public relations industry, entertainment management and the media.



Figure 16.1 Achieved celebrity: film actor Clive Owen

I propose to use the term 'PR-media complex' to refer to the aggregate of these relations. Moreover, I will use the term 'cultural intermediaries' to refer to the personnel dedicated to presenting celebrities to the public. These personnel include managers, publicists, personal fitness trainers, manicurists, stylists, chefs and entertainment lawyers. Although the public is used to thinking of celebrities in terms of a one-to-one relationship between the star and the 'star gazer', the truth is that achieved celebrities are always preceded, advised and surrounded by an invisible team of cultural intermediaries dedicated to presenting them in the best possible light.

Celetoids are also the product of urban-industrial-democratic society but crucially, the seat of their fame rests upon the media rather than natural talent or acquired accomplishment. They are ordinary people who are positioned by the PR-media complex in communication platforms that boost their public profile.

Some commentators argue that the rise of celetoid culture represents the triumph of democracy. For now ordinary people, rather than kings and queens or superstars, occupy a prominent field of media attention (Hartley 2009). While there is some truth in the argument that the replacement of ascribed celebrities with celetoids represents growing media interest in everyday culture, it is wrong to attribute this solely or pre-eminently to the progress of democratic forces. Celetoids are selected, packaged and relayed to the public by television channels engaged in a ratings war. Their high current profile in popular culture owes

more to traditional models or labour exploitation. That is, celetoids are employed by television channels as labourers designed to attract mass audiences. The publicity that they generate creates a surplus in the form of advertising revenue and also increases the economic value of programmes to media producers. Reality television celetoids are paid nothing, but their publicity value is often appreciable (Andrejevic 2004).

Why has celebrity become ubiquitous?

A variety of explanations for the prominence of celebrity culture have emerged. They can be organised into supply and demand side models of celebrity.

Supply side models

Supply side models explain celebrity as the result of power structures that place individuals before the public as objects of esteem and social distinction. Thus, in traditional society, the power structure of dominant clans and kinship groups, generally allied with religion, identified ascribed celebrities as people of note and fame. In urban-industrial-democratic society the main supply source of celebrity is the media. The expansion of achieved celebrity culture and the rise of celetoid culture are explained as the inevitable product of the enlargement of the media in everyday life. The greater the outlets of media communication, the more achieved celebrities and celetoids will figure as objects of public attention and interest.

Supply side models present celebrity as the result of manipulation by powerful groups, such as wealthy families or the PR-media complex. Usually, the public is presented as the passive object of manipulation. Edward Bernays (1928), the father of modern public relations, argued that the public is essentially inert and directionless. It requires leaders to give direction and purpose. For Bernays, the science of public relations consists in determining public wants and preoccupations, through various forms of opinion research, and assembling figures of esteem with whom the public can empathise and admire. The celebrities to which Bernays referred were primarily political leaders. But his approach to public relations can be extended to all aspects of celebrity culture.

Supply side explanations, then, perceive public wants and needs as plastic and regard celebrities as PR-media constructed figures of esteem. They hold that the moral purpose of celebrity is to enhance the democratic values of urban-industrial society. However, figures of esteem may also be used to promote anti-democratic values or merely to generate revenue. For this reason, Bernays (1947) and his followers preached eternal vigilance as the price paid for the moulding of public opinion.

Critical accounts of supply side models point out that, on the whole, celebrity is presented as a form of social control rather than a means of resistance or opposition (Adorno and Horkheimer 1979). Economically, celebrity lifestyle and product endorsement boosts commodity culture by encouraging the consumption patterns of ordinary people to emulate the stars. Politically, Hollywood diverts the workforce into non-challenging forms of organised amusement and thus blocks collective agitation for empowerment and distributive justice. Psychologically, celebrities are depicted as living a frontier existence in which gigantic wealth, social opportunities and political influence are normalised. The gulf between them and ordinary men and women is so vast that the social position of the latter as passive consumers is cast and accepted as fate.

Demand side models

Demand side models focus upon the needs or wants of consumers as the causes of celebrity culture. In particular, celebrity is connected to the search for meaning.

In terms of the management of emotional intelligence and emotional labour, celebrities are theorised as playing the parts of role models and unofficial life coaches. A crucial inter-linking concept that needs to be referred to here is *para-social communication.* This term was introduced by Horton and Wohl (1956) to apply to the illusory face-to-face relationships produced by television. Chat and talk show hosts, soap stars, newsreaders, news reporters and other television celebrities became stars in the living room. The interaction is one sided and driven by the performer who is selected and employed by the television channel. Some forms of celebrity behaviour are emulated and internalised by viewers. Para-social communication can produce significant levels of emotional involvement between the audience and the celebrity. Pinsky and Young (2009) refer to the 'mirror effect' produced by celebrity culture. The irresponsible, risk-taking behaviour of celebrities is reflected in the conduct of fans. In some cases, especially where viewers are isolated and vulnerable, para-social relations can supplant primary relations (with family, friends and community). That is, celebrities can become the main external source of emotional support and dependence.

As Horton and Wohl (1956) note, para-social relations have several unusual characteristics that are not present in ordinary social encounters. They involve low levels of reciprocity. While viewers can make their views known through phone-ins or letters, para-social relationships with television stars do not permit strong mutual feedback links. In addition, celebrity interaction is biased. The reason for this is that celebrities do not present exactly as people but as

personas. That is, they come to para-social encounters as constructed personalities. The persona is the product of the labour of cultural intermediaries on exposure management and the celebrity's view of the characteristics of presentation that will achieve high impact factors with the public. Notwithstanding the biased, non-reciprocal character of para-social relationships it is clear that celebrities may be readily accepted by viewers as a friend, counsellor, comforter or role model. In social conditions where levels of geographic and social mobility are high, para-social communication offers a sense of social continuity. Television celebrities are dependable, regular presences on the airwaves. Sociologically, celebrity culture challenges our conventional notions of socialisation and belonging.

Bourdieu's (1984) concept of *habitus* refers to the frameworks of meaning, vernacular and patterns of practice that enable us to have a coherent, informed view of the world. He identifies the family, community and schooling as vital crucibles of *habitus*. It is necessary to add celebrity culture to this list. In societies organised around networks of global telecommunications, celebrity culture provides patterns of idealised behaviour which meaningfully shapes identity, association and practice.

In recent years the emergence of 'celanthropy' has extended this function in striking and interesting ways. Celanthropy refers to the celebrity-led involvement in philanthropic endeavours. Thus, Bob Geldof and Bono have made a *cause célèbre* of tackling hunger and inequality in Africa; Oprah Winfrey has opened a girls' school for deprived children in Johannesburg; George Clooney is involved in fieldwork relief in Darfur; Madonna's *Raising Malawi* charity is dedicated to ending extreme hardship and poverty in Malawi; and Angelina Jolie is the UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees) Goodwill Ambassador.

Strictly speaking, the involvement of celebrities in charity and relief work is not new. What is new is the public expectation that superstars have a responsibility to engage in humanitarian and environmental work as proxy leaders for the silent majority. The role of achieved celebrities in fundraising, agenda setting and networking between political and business leaders is now widely accepted as a responsibility of the seriously famous. Engaging in this work has the capacity to increase the celebrity impact factor with the public. Additionally, humanitarian work by celebrities enable the public to act out frustrated wishes to make a difference in solving global problems of inequality, injustice and environmental decay.

Celanthropy raises a set of critical issues for students of celebrity culture. To begin with, since celebrities act as the unelected representative of the people, the basis of their legitimacy is not transparent. Several critics argue that fame is no guarantee of effective problem solving. Theroux (2006) has criticised Bono for unwittingly misdirecting aid money to Africa. Instead of investing the money in long-term infrastructural reform of the electoral and transport systems, it has been absorbed in high-profile, publicity-friendly activities of famine relief. Theroux calls for a more balanced strategy for the distribution of relief funds for Africa, and explicitly condemns Bono for being ill informed and naïve.

For charity campaigns, stars are assets in attracting publicity and funds. The *Look to the Stars* charity website (www.looktothestars.org) lists Bono as supporting 29 charities; George Clooney is involved with 21 charities; Sting has 22; Angelina Jolie has 24; Elton John has 35; and Annie Lennox has 33. In literature of celebrity product endorsement, the term *celebrity vamping* refers to the over-development of celebrity endorsement of commodities (see for example, Jack 2007). If celebrities develop a portfolio of commodity endorsement that is too extensive it becomes subject to the law of diminishing returns. The same applies to celanthropy. If celebrities over-extend involvement in a charity portfolio that is too diverse and wide, public sympathy is likely to decline.

But this is to draw attention to problems of exposure management. To come back to the demand side point at issue, para-social communication positions celebrities as significant agents of emotional intelligence and emotional labour in popular culture. They fulfil the demand for 'big citizens' to act on the world stage to redress inequality and injustice, and they act as role models and life coaches for star gazers. Incidentally, 'star gazers' are distinct from 'fans'. A fan develops a leisure career and internalises a dedicated identity with respect to a given celebrity. A star gazer is a person who follows celebrity news regularly without developing a focused interest, a leisure career or internalising a dedicated identity.

Another contribution that celebrity culture makes in the popular culture of meaning is to cover the rift left by the decline in organised religion. Celebrity culture is now the milieu in which religious recognition and belonging are now most widely performed. Fan behaviour at rock/rap concerts and film premieres is akin to the collective effervescence and emotional transport of religious ceremony. Some celebrities are credited with powers of clairvoyance and healing, which is one reason why crowds often want to touch them when they appear in public. Sites of celebrity birth and death have become modern tourist pilgrim routes, much as physical settings associated with the saints defined routes of medieval pilgrimage. Similarly, just as saintly relics were, and are, exalted and coveted, there is a huge international market in celebrity autographs, locks of hair, clothing and other validated possessions.

For some strata in the public, the frontier existence of celebrity is layered with qualities of the sacred. To propose that celebrity culture has simply filled the gap left by the waning of organised religion is over simplistic. To be sure, some celebrities do present their beliefs as having the power of messianic intervention and healing. For example, in proselytising Scientology, Tom Cruise submits that '[w]e are the authorities on getting people off drugs, we are the authorities on the mind, we are the authorities on improving conditions ... we can rehabilitate criminals ... [w]e can bring peace and unite communities (quoted in Ward 2011: 129).

Scientology may use many devices from religious revivalism, but it does not claim powers of divination or miracle. Tom Cruise does not claim for himself extraordinary or supernatural powers. The language he uses certainly contains religious references to transformation and purification but it does not invoke a deity or deities. Compared with traditional organised religion no claim of divine inspiration or the gift of grace is made. On the contrary, the devices of persuasion that Scientology employ would be familiar to most personnel in the PR-media complex. That is, it pinpoints common causes of concern, delineates principles of social inclusion and exclusion, and designates a leader or code of practice to attain integrity and purification.

Nonetheless, in cultures that have been historically moulded by the Christian belief system and where this system is in decline, celebrity culture is an avenue in popular culture that enables stars and audiences to act out rituals of collective certainty and exchange, and develop symbols of purification and transcendence. Celebrity cultures do not replace traditional religion, but the elective affinity that the cultural practices have with religious belief allow people to retain quasi-religious experience in an age dominated by science, technology and public relations.

The consequences of celebrity culture

The media is frequently condescending about celebrity culture. It holds that this culture is responsible for deep social malaise. The main characteristics of this condition are an exaggerated and widespread preoccupation with social impact, the nurturing of the desire for acclaim and reward over and above achievement, and an unbalanced interest in social relations with surfaces over depth. It goes without saying that this media reaction is contradictory. For just as the media condemns the culture of celebrity, it profits from it and expands it through news items, special features, op-ed (editorial opinion) pieces, documentaries, interviews and various other items of journalistic data.

Putting this to one side, media reaction and the public disquiet related to it, suggests that contemporary society is subject to 'fame attack'. That is, a psycho-social pathology that produces negative social tendencies and types of dysfunctional behaviour. This attack is the unintended consequence of the pre-eminence of the PR-media complex and the enlargement of networks of para-social communication. The relevant social transformation is that primary relationships based in face-to-face relationships with families, friends and communities are being supplanted with secondary relations involving figures of esteem on radio, television, film and the internet.

Social psychologists argue that vulnerable and isolated people now suffer from personality disorders and various other morbid systems related to dependencies on celebrity culture. McCutcheon, Lange and Houron (2002) have coined the term 'celebrity worship syndrome'. This refers to a type of obsessive-compulsive behaviour involving general states of disassociation and borderline events. Non-pathological borderline events include: devoting excessive non-work labour to tracking celebrity news, monitoring rumours; imitating the physical appearance of stars; adopting celebrity catchphrases; writing obsessively to celebrities; and visiting the addresses or other physical settings associated with the stars.

These forms of behaviour may appear quirky and occasionally cranky to others. They are also related to narcissistic tendencies as star gazers identify over-closely with the stars of their choice and develop a sense of entitlement, self-worth, mania and a preoccupation with life full of incident and emergency. However, generally, they do not lead to the disruption of primary relations, the involvement of policing or clinical intervention.

Pathological forms of celebrity worship syndrome are quite different. The main categories are stalking and self-harm. Stalking involves intrusive attention, contact or surveillance that causes distress to the victim. It covers physical attack, being followed, having notes pinned to property, receiving unwanted gifts or unwanted telephone calls, e-mails or letters. The murders of John Lennon, Rebecca Schaefer and the Mexican Tejano singer, Selena, were all fan related. In addition, stalkers have received jail sentences, probation or referrals to psychiatric hospitals for harassing Richard Gere, Jodie Foster, Madonna, Steven Spielberg, Uma Thurman, Keira Knightley, Miley Cyrus, Britney Spears, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Janet Jackson, Kirsten Dunst and many others.

Stalking is the result of narcissistic fantasies focused upon an unattainable external object. It is perfectly normal for people to desire external objects that they do not have. However, in the case of stalking, respect for the independence of the external object is erased. The stalker acts as if he (or she) has an entitlement to control and possess the external object of desire. Celebrities are in

252
Chap16

the high risk category for stalking because the PR-media machine portrays them to the public as super-glamorous figures. Para-social forms of communication reinforce relations of presumed intimacy between an audience and the star. This condition is intensified by the constant stream of details relating to the private lives of celebrities released by the PR-media complex. Star gazers are deluded into believing that they have preferential or intimate relations with celebrities and are unable to draw the line between reasonable and unreasonable conduct.

Self-harm refers to cases of self-mutilation, attempted suicide and suicide related to celebrity dependency. Star gazers may engage in this behaviour when a) a celebrity dies, b) they realise that the social distance between the celebrity and themselves can never be bridged, or c) they over-identify with vicissitudes of the star's career, so that a crisis for the star is translated into a crisis in their own lives.

Social psychologists estimate that up to one-third of the population have symptoms of some form of celebrity worship syndrome (McCutcheon, Lange and Houron 2002). This supports the proposition that celebrity culture is now as much a part of *habitus* as family and community. Further, it adds weight to the more controversial argument that the centrality of para-social communication in contemporary Western society means that primary relations are being supplanted by secondary relations.

The social reaction to celebrity culture does not end with an account of the issue of celebrity worship syndrome. The question of social malaise extends to celebrities. To put it directly, celebrities are also regarded to suffer symptoms of fame attack. Fowles (1992) has compared mortality data pertaining to 100 US celebrities and compared it with the average for the US population. He found that celebrities have lower levels of life expectancy. In 1992 the average death rate for Americans was 71.9 years. For celebrities it was 58.7. More recent work compared survival rates of celebrity musicians and matched them to general health data in Europe and North America (Bellis et al. 2007). It reports that pop stars who experienced 3–25 years of fame have significantly higher levels of mortality (more than 1.7 times) than demographically matched populations in the UK and USA. The higher mortality rates found by Fowles (1992) and Bellis et al. (2007) are explained as a result of high stress, high-risk environments in which the use of alcohol, drugs, travel and hazardous behaviour is higher than in the mean population. The conclusion is that fame can be a killer.

Fame is associated with gigantic economic reward, sexual opportunity, political influence and cultural acclaim. These experiences are from ordinary. Psychologists argue that the acquisition of fame is associated with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). The main features of this condition are a grandiose sense of self-importance, vanity, an acute sense of entitlement and a supercilious, arrogant manner. Pinsky and Young (2009) argue that the highly public dysfunctional and self-destructive behaviour of celebrities like Lindsay Lohan, Britney Spears, Nicole Richie and Paris Hilton are textbook examples of NPD. Other recent examples of celebrity behaviour that appear to suggest an exaggerated sense of entitlement, arrogance and grandiose self-importance, include Winona Ryder's conviction for shoplifting US$5,500 worth of goods from a Beverly Hills department store in 2002; Charlie Sheen's arrest for criminal mischief following an incident of domestic violence in 2009; Mel Gibson's anti-semitic outburst after being arrested by police for a traffic offence in 2006 and his menacing phone calls to his partner Oksana Grirorieva in 2010; and Tiger Woods, who initially denied allegations of adultery, before making a damaging public apology to the media in 2010.

253

Conclusion

Although celebrity is often portrayed in progressive terms as bringing groups, cultures and generations together, the crux of the relationship is social inequality. The essence of the star is to be categorically distant and remote from ordinary people (Castles 2008). In his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, Rousseau (1984: 114) observed, '[h]e who sings or dances the best, he who is most handsome, the strongest, and most adroit or the most eloquent becomes the most highly regarded'. This is an embryonic statement of what we now call achieved celebrity. For as Rousseau goes on to remark, the inequality of talents and accomplishments is the basis for economic division and social domination. In this sense, fame is universal in the human condition. There will always be someone who sings or dances the best, is most handsome, strongest, most adroit and most eloquent.

For students of culture, the main challenge is not to address the nature of talents. It is to examine how accomplishments are developed, judged and distributed. First and foremost this is a question of the representation and coding of celebrity. In Western capitalist society this requires us to focus deeper attention on the role of the PR-media complex. Today, and for some time past, this is the gateway to fame. While it is true that the internet offers new opportunities for building celebrity through cooperative, non-commercial forms of labour, it would be foolish to regard the PR-media complex as anything other than pivotal (Ewen 1996).

Celebrity is a source for good as well as the seed of social malaise. The same mechanisms of coding and representation that bring Mother Teresa and Nelson Mandela to our attention transmit the antics of Paris Hilton, Kanye West, Lindsay Lohan and Pete Doherty. Bernays (1928) was right in holding that a society organised around print and telecommunications requires leaders and

opinion-makers that are different in kind from traditional society. Most concretely, ordinary people now recognise figures of esteem to possess talent and accomplishment rather than, or in addition to, the privileges of birth. Bernays portrayed this as a straightforward matter of finding the right leader to articulate and refine the scientifically calibrated opinions of the majority. He regarded any deviation from this default position to be a matter for the ethical code of the PR-media complex to address. At best this is a complacent position. At worst, it is an outright falsehood. Celebrity culture is not simply the reflection of talent and accomplishment. The gloves of the PR-media complex bring talent and accomplishment out of the cold, assess the wants of the audience, and construct celebrity personas that are positioned to reap high-impact responses from the public. The aim is to engineer high-impact ratings with the public as a tool to enhance product placement campaigns, encourage ordinary people to submit to informal celebrity life coaching which bears on consumption patterns, and brutally perpetuate the gap between the frontier existence lived by the famous and the lives of the masses so as to achieve political compliance.

At the same time, students of celebrity culture who conclude that the role of the PR-media complex is all that needs to be evaluated miss the point. Just as those who contend that talent and accomplishment will always out, misunderstand the nature of modern celebrity. The days have long since gone when an ascribed celebrity may stand before the public and be confident of being recognised as a figure of esteem. People of talent and accomplishment may never be recognised as achieved celebrities — not even if the *Pop Idol* or *Got Talent* franchises select and process them without getting them to the next round. Short-life and long-life celetoids would be of no public note without the PR-media complex. The intersection of individual talent, accomplishment, presumed intimacy and impudent ordinariness with the commercial dynamics of the PR-media complex — which of course reflect considerations of the state, cultural and subcultural groups — is where the cultural study of celebrity is most fruitfully located.

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2

The Cultural Economy of Fandom

JOHN FISKE

Fandom is a common feature of popular culture in industrial societies. It selects from the repertoire of mass-produced and mass-distributed entertainment certain performers, narratives or genres and takes them into the culture of a self-selected fraction of the people. They are then reworked into an intensely pleasurable, intensely signifying popular culture that is both similar to, yet significantly different from, the culture of more 'normal' popular audiences. Fandom is typically associated with cultural forms that the dominant value system denigrates – pop music, romance novels, comics, Hollywood mass-appeal stars (sport, probably because of its appeal to masculinity, is an exception). It is thus associated with the cultural tastes of subordinated formations of the people, particularly with those disempowered by any combination of gender, age, class and race.

All popular audiences engage in varying degrees of semiotic productivity, producing meanings and pleasures that pertain to their social situation out of the products of the culture industries. But fans often turn this semiotic productivity into some form of textual production that can circulate among – and thus help to define – the fan community. Fans create a fan culture with its own systems of production and distribution that forms what I shall call a 'shadow cultural economy' that lies outside that of the cultural industries yet shares features with them which more normal popular culture lacks.

In this essay I wish to use and develop Bourdieu's metaphor of describing culture as an economy in which people invest

-378-

and accumulate capital. The cultural system works like the economic system to distribute its resources unequally and thus to distinguish between the privileged and the deprived. This cultural system promotes and privileges certain cultural tastes and competences, particularly through the educational system, but also through other institutions such as art galleries, concert halls, museums, and state subsidies to the arts, which taken together constitute a 'high' culture (ranging from the traditional to the avant-garde). This culture is socially and institutionally legitimated, and I shall refer to it as official culture, in distinction from popular culture which receives no social legitimation or institutional support. Official culture, like money, distinguishes between those who possess it, and those who do not. 'Investing' in education, in acquiring certain cultural tastes and competences, will produce a social 'return' in terms of better job prospects, of enhanced social prestige and thus of a higher socio-economic position. Cultural capital thus works hand in hand with economic capital to produce social privilege and distinction.

Bourdieu (1984) has analyzed in detail how accurately cultural tastes can be mapped onto economic status within the social space. He models our society first as a two-dimensional map in which the vertical, or north–south, axis records the amount of capital (economic *and* cultural) possessed, and the horizontal, or east–west, records the type of capital (economic *or* cultural). Those on the west, or left, are higher in cultural capital than economic capital (e.g. academics, artists, etc.), whereas those on the east or right possess more economic than cultural (business people, manufacturers). In the top center of the map reside those rich in both forms of capital – the professions such as architects, doctors, lawyers and so on, the educated, 'tasteful' capitalists! The south, or bottom, of the diagram is occupied by those deprived of both, whom Bourdieu calls 'the proletariat.'

Both forms of capital are complicated further by whether they have been inherited or acquired. The difference between old and new money is a crucial distinction for the 'northerners' though ludicrous to the poor; similarly the distinction between acquired and inherited cultural capital becomes more important as we move northwards in the social space. Briefly,

acquired cultural capital is that produced by the educational system and consists of the knowledge and critical appreciation of a particular set of texts, 'the canon,' in literature, art, music and now, increasingly, film. Inherited cultural capital is manifest in lifestyle rather than in textual preference – in fashion, furnishings, manners, in choice of restaurant or club, in sport or vacation preferences.

This is a productive model, but it has two main weaknesses. The first is its emphasis on economics and class as the major (if not the only) dimension of social discrimination. We need to add to Bourdieu's model gender, race and age as axes of discrimination, and thus to read his account of how culture works to underwrite class differences as symptomatic of its function in other axes of social difference. In this essay I wish to focus on class, gender and age as axes of subordination. I regret being unable to devote the attention to race which it deserves, but I have not found studies of non-white fandom. Most of the studies so far undertaken highlight class, gender and age as the key axes of discrimination.

Bourdieu's other weakness, for my particular purposes, is his failure to accord the culture of the subordinate the same sophisticated analysis as that of the dominant. He subdivides dominant culture into a number of competing categories, each characteristic of socially distinguished groups within the bourgeoisie. But he leaves proletarian culture and the proletariat as an undistinguished homogeneity. This leads him seriously to underestimate the creativity of popular culture and its role in distinguishing between different social formations within the subordinated. He does not allow that there are forms of popular cultural capital produced outside and often against official cultural capital.

These two weaknesses can be compensated for, and should not blind us to the value of his work. A concept of his which I find particularly useful is that of the *habitus*. The habitus includes the notion of a habitat, the habitants and the processes of inhabiting it, and the habituated ways of thinking that go with it. It encompasses our position within the social space, the ways of living that go with it and what Bourdieu calls the associated 'dispositions' of mind, cultural tastes and ways of thinking and feeling. The habitus refuses the

traditional distinction between the social and the individual, and it reformulates the relationship between domination and subjectivity.

One final point to make about Bourdieu's model is that the idea of a map includes that of movement. Social space is that through which both class or social groups and individuals move through time. Acquiring or losing capital of either sort changes one's position on the map and thus one's habitus. In this essay I shall base my argument upon Bourdieu's model, modified to take account of gender and age as axes of subordination, and extended to include forms of 'popular cultural capital' produced by subordinate social formations (Fiske 1989a), which can serve, in the subordinate, similar functions to those of official cultural capital in the dominant context. Fans, in particular, are active producers and users of such cultural capital and, at the level of fan organization, begin to reproduce equivalents of the formal institutions of official culture. By the conclusion of this essay I hope to have shown that fan culture is a form of popular culture that echoes many of the institutions of official culture, although in popular form and under popular control. It may be thought of as a sort of 'moonlighting' in the cultural rather than the economic sphere, a form of cultural labor to fill the gaps left by legitimate culture. Fandom offers ways of filling cultural lack and provides the social prestige and self-esteem that go with cultural capital. As with economic capital, lack cannot be measured by objective means alone, for lack arises when the amount of capital possessed falls short of that which is desired or felt to be merited. Thus a low achiever at school will lack official cultural capital and the social, and therefore self-esteem that it brings. Some may well become fans, often of a musician or sports star, and through fan knowledge and appreciation acquire an unofficial cultural capital that is a major source of self-esteem among the peer group. While fandom may be typical of the socially and culturally deprived, it is not confined to them. Many young fans are successful at school and are steadily accumulating official cultural capital, but wish still to differentiate themselves, along the axis of age at least, from the social values and cultural tastes (or habitus) of those who currently possess the cultural and economic capital they

are still working to acquire. Such social distinction, defined by age rather than class or gender, is often expressed by their fandom and by accumulation of unofficial or popular cultural capital whose politics lie in its opposition to the official, dominant one.

Such popular cultural capital, unlike official cultural capital, is not typically convertible into economic capital, though, as will be argued below, there are exceptions. Acquiring it will not enhance one's career, nor will it produce upward class mobility as its investment payoffs. Its dividends lie in the pleasures and esteem of one's peers in a community of taste rather than those of one's social betters. Fans, then, are a good example of Bourdieu's 'autodidacts' – the self-taught who often use their self-acquired knowledge and taste to compensate for the perceived gap between their actual (or official) cultural capital, as expressed in educational qualifications and the socio-economic rewards they bring, and what they feel are their true desserts.

Fandom, then, is a peculiar mix of cultural determinations. On the one hand it is an intensification of popular culture which is formed outside and often against official culture, on the other it expropriates and reworks certain values and characteristics of that official culture to which it is opposed.

I propose to discuss the main characteristics of fandom under three headings: Discrimination and Distinction, Productivity and Participation, and Capital Accumulation. These are characteristics of fandom in general rather than of any one fan or group of fans in particular. No one fan or fan community will exhibit all of them equally, but will differ considerably among themselves in emphasis.

-380-

Discrimination and Distinction

Fans discriminate fiercely: the boundaries between what falls within their fandom and what does not are sharply drawn. And this discrimination in the cultural sphere is mapped into distinctions in the social – the boundaries between the community of fans and the rest of the world are just as strongly

marked and patrolled. Both sides of the boundary invest in the difference; mundane viewers often wish to avoid what they see as the taint of fandom – 'I'm not really a fan, of course, but . . .' On the other side of the line, fans may argue about what characteristics allow someone to cross it and become a true fan, but they are clearly agreed on the existence of the line. Textual and social discrimination are part and parcel of the same cultural activity.

Fan discrimination has affinities to both the socially relevant discrimination of popular culture and the aesthetic discrimination of the dominant (Fiske 1989a). Bourdieu argues that one of the key differences between the culture of the subordinate and that of the dominant is that subordinate culture is functional, it must be *for* something. D'Acci's (1988) study of 'Cagney & Lacey' fans shows how they used the show and its stars to enhance their self-esteem which in turn enabled them to perform more powerfully in their social world. Fans reported that the show gave them the confidence to stand up for themselves better in a variety of social situations – a school girl said that her fandom had made her realize that she could perform as well as boys at school, and an adult woman attributed her decision to risk starting her own business directly to the self-confidence she generated from watching the show. Elsewhere (Fiske 1989b), I have shown how some teenage girl fans of Madonna make use of the self-empowerment their fandom gives them to take control of the meanings of their own sexuality, and to walk more assertively through the streets. Similarly, Radway (1984) tells of the woman romance fan whose reading enables her better to assert her own rights within the structure of a patriarchal marriage. This 'popular' discrimination involves the selection of texts or stars that offer fans opportunities to make meanings of their social identities and social experiences that are self-interested and functional. Those may at times be translated into empowered social behavior, as discussed above, but at other times may remain at the level of a compensatory fantasy that actually precludes any social action.

Other forms of fan discrimination approach the aesthetic discrimination of official culture. Kiste's (1989) study of comic book fans shows how acutely they can discriminate between

various artists and storyliners, and how important it is to be able to rank them in a hierarchy – particularly to 'canonize' some and exclude others. Tulloch and Alvarado (1983) recount how some 'Dr Who' fans canonize the early series and specifically exclude the more widely popular later series in which Tom Baker played the lead. Their criteria were essentially ones of authenticity and as such were not dissimilar to those of the literary scholars who try to uncover what Shakespeare really wrote in preference to that which has been widely performed. Authenticity, particularly when validated as the production of an artistic individual (writer, painter, performer), is a criterion of discrimination normally used to accumulate official cultural capital but which is readily appropriated by fans in their moonlighting cultural economy.

Many of the fans studied by Kiste and by Tulloch and Alvarado were aware that their object of fandom was devalued by the criteria of official culture and went to great pains to argue against this misevaluation. They frequently used official cultural criteria such as 'complexity' or 'subtlety' to argue that their preferred texts were as 'good' as the canonized ones, and constantly evoked legitimate culture – novels, plays, art films – as points of comparison.

In the comparatively few studies of fans available to us, it is possible to trace social factors within the modes of discrimination. They show a slight but regular tendency for the more official or aesthetic criteria to be used by older, male fans rather than by younger, female ones. If further studies reveal this tendency to be structural (as I suspect it is), the explanation may well lie in differential relationships to the structures of power. Those who are subordinated (by gender, age or class) are more likely to have developed a habitus typical of proletarian culture (that is, one without economic or cultural capital): the less a fan suffers from these structures of domination and subordination, the more likely he or she is to have developed a habitus that accords in some respects with that developed by the official culture, and which will therefore incline to use official criteria on its unofficial texts. It would not be surprising in such a case to find that older fans, male fans, and more highly educated fans tend to use official criteria, whereas younger, female and the less educated ones

tend towards popular criteria. Cultural tastes and practices are produced by social rather than by individual differences, and so textual discrimination and social distinction are part of the same cultural process within and between fans just as much as between fans and other popular audiences.

Productivity and Participation

Popular culture is produced by the people out of the products of the cultural industries: it must be understood, therefore, in terms of productivity, not of reception. Fans are particularly productive, and I wish to categorize their productions into three areas, while recognizing that any example of fan productivity may well span all categories and refuse any clear distinctions among them. Categories are produced by the analyst for analytical purposes and do not exist in the world being analyzed but they do have analytical value. The ones I propose to use may be called semiotic productivity, enunciative productivity, and textual productivity. All such productivity occurs at the interface between the industrially-produced cultural commodity (narrative, music, star, etc.) and the everyday life of the fan.

Semiotic productivity is characteristic of popular culture as a whole rather than of fan culture specifically. It consists of the making of meanings of social identity and of social experience from the semiotic resources of the cultural commodity. The Madonna fans who made their own meanings of their sexuality rather than patriarchal ones (Fiske 1989b) or the romance fans who legitimated their own feminine values against patriarchal ones (Radway 1984) were engaging in semiotic productivity. Recent ethnographies of audiences have produced numerous examples of this form of productivity, and we need not spend any longer on it here. (See, for example, Cho and Cho 1990, Dawson 1990, Jones 1990, Leal 1990, Lipsitz 1989).

Semiotic productivity, then, is essentially interior; when the meanings made are spoken and are shared within a face-to-face or oral culture they take a public form that may be called *enunciative productivity*. An enunciation is the use of a semiotic

system (typically, but not exclusively, verbal language) which is specific to its speaker and its social and temporal context. Fan talk is the generation and circulation of certain meanings of the object of fandom within a local community. The talk of women soap-opera fans has been widely studied (see for example, Brown 1987, Hobson 1989 and 1990, Seiter *et al.* 1989) to show how the meanings and evaluations of characters and their behaviour in the soap opera are related more or less directly to the everyday lives of the fans. Indeed, much of the pleasure of fandom lies in the fan talk that it produces, and many fans report that their choice of their object of fandom was determined at least as much by the oral community they wished to join as by any of its inherent characteristics. If colleagues at work or at school are constantly talking about a particular program, band, team or performer, many people become drawn into fandom as a means of joining that particular social group. This is not to suggest that the acquired taste is in any way unauthentic, but rather to point again to the close interrelations between textual and social preferences.

But, important though talk is, it is not the only means of enunciation available. The styling of hair or make-up, the choice of clothes or accessories are ways of constructing a social identity and therefore of asserting one's membership of a particular fan community. The Madonna fans who, on MTV, claimed that dressing like Madonna made people take more notice of them as they walked down the street were not only constructing for themselves more empowered identities than those normally available to young adolescent girls but were putting those meanings into social circulation. Similarly British soccer fans, many of whom are socially and economically disempowered males, can, when wearing their colors and when in their own community of fans, exhibit empowered behavior that may, at times, become violent and lethal but which more typically confines itself to assertiveness. Such assertiveness is often socially offensive and deliberately challenges more normal social values and the discipline they exert; in this, girl Madonna fans and boy soccer fans are identical and both call forth considerable adult disapproval. Indeed, such disapproval is an integral part of this sort of fan pleasure, for its arousal is part of the intention, albeit unstated and possibly unadmitted, of the enunciation.

Enunciation can occur only within immediate social relationships – it exists only for its moment of speaking, and the popular cultural capital it generates is thus limited to a restricted circulation, a very localized economy. But within such a local or fan community the pay-offs from the investment are continuous and immediate.

There is, however, another category of fan productivity that approximates much more closely the artistic productions validated by the official culture, that of *textual productivity*. Fans produce and circulate among themselves texts which are often crafted with production values as high as any in the official culture. The key differences between the two are economic rather than ones of competence, for fans do not write or produce their texts for money; indeed, their productivity typically costs them money. Economics, too, limits the equipment to which fans have access for the production of their texts, which may therefore often lack the technical smoothness of professionally-produced ones. There is also a difference in circulation; because fan texts are not produced for profit, they do not need to be mass-marketed, so unlike official culture, fan culture makes no attempt to circulate its texts outside its own community. They are 'narrowcast,' not broadcast, texts.

A rare exception to this was provided by MTV. In association with Madonna they ran a competition for fans to produce their own videos for her song 'True Blue' and devoted 24 hours to playing a selection of those that poured in, almost swamping the studio. While one might argue that one would have to be the most fervent fan imaginable to endure 24 hours of the same song, nonetheless the means of distribution made the videos available to a wider audience than that of Madonna fans alone.

More typical are the 'Star Trek' fans (Jenkins 1989, Penley 1990) who write full-length novels filling in the syntagmatic gaps in the original narrative, and circulate these novels, and other writings, among themselves through an extensive distribution network. So, too, Bacon-Smith (1988) has shown the productivity of other TV science fiction fans who produce their own music videos by editing shots from their favorite episodes onto the soundtrack of a popular song. While these

fan-artists gain considerable prestige within the fan community, with few exceptions they earn no money for their labor. Indeed, as Henry Jenkins has pointed out to me in correspondence, there is a strong distrust of making a profit in fandom, and those who attempt to do so are typically classed as hucksters rather than fans. The one major exception appears to be fan-artists whose paintings and sketches may occasionally sell for hundreds of dollars at fan auctions. Such figures are, of course, well below those of the dominant art world; but they do indicate a difference between more mundane popular cultural capital, which is never convertible to economic capital, and fan cultural capital which, under certain conditions, may be.

Fan productivity is not limited to the production of new texts: it also participates in the construction of the original text and thus turns the commercial narrative or performance into popular culture. Fans are very participatory. Sports crowds wearing their teams' colors or rock audiences dressing and behaving like the bands become part of the performance. This melding of the team or performer and the fan into a productive community minimizes differences between artist and audience and turns the text into an event, not an art object. This is, again, consistent with Bourdieu's characterization of the subordinate habitus as opposed to the dominant one. The subordinate, or proletarian habitus refuses to distance the text and artist from the audience as it refuses to distance it from everyday life. The reverence, even adoration, fans feel for their object of fandom sits surprisingly easily with the contradictory feeling that they also 'possess' that object, it is *their* popular cultural capital. So Hobson's (1982) fans felt that 'Crossroads' was *their* show, and its leading character, Meg, belonged to them rather than to the producers.

Fan magazines often play up to and encourage this sense of possession, the idea that stars are constructed by their fans and owe their stardom entirely to them. Fandom typically lacks the deference to the artist and text that characterizes the bourgeois habitus: so soap opera fans often feel that they could write better storylines than the scriptwriters and know the characters better (Fiske 1987) and sports fans are frequently at odds with the owner's policies for their teams. The industry takes seriously letters from fans who try to participate in and

thus influence the production of the text (Tulloch and Moran 1986) or its distribution (D'Acci 1989).

When this industrial text meets its fans, their participation reunites and reworks it, so that its moment of reception becomes the moment of production in fan culture. Sports fans who cheer their team on are not just encouraging them to greater effort but are participating in that effort and the reward, if any, that it brings. Cheerleaders symbolically link the fans' cheering to the spectacle on the field of play and 'the wave' in US sports grounds (like the more individualized instances of streaking in European ones) evidences fans' desires to participate in the spectacle on display of which their teams' performance is only a part. The official barriers that separate fans from the field of play – police and security guards, fences, walls, and in extreme cases, moats and barbed wire – are evidences not only of the fans' desire to participate (however disruptively) but also of the dominant culture's need to maintain the disciplinary distance between text and reader: a function that in the academic arena is performed by the critic who polices the meanings of a text and its relationship to its readers in a way that differs from the disciplinary apparatus on sports grounds only by being intellectual rather than physical.

More traditional texts, such as films, can also be participated in communally and publicly by their fans. This makes public and visible the widespread but more private involvement of, for instance, soap opera fans in 'sharing' the lives of their favorite characters by writing and rewriting their narratives in talk and imagination. Cult films such as *The Blues Brothers* or *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* have regular fan screenings (typically at midnight on weekends) that are carnivals of fan participation. Not only do fans take part in and *with* the original industrial text (by dressing like its characters, joining in favourite lines of dialogue, throwing rice during wedding scenes or shooting water pistols in thunderstorms) but they exceed and rework it by inserting fan-written lines of dialogue that change the meaning of the original. When, for instance the straight-faced narrator in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* describes the storm clouds as 'heavy, black and pendulous,' the pause before his line is filled by the audience shouting

'describe your testicles' (Hoberman and Rosenbaum 1981). As Heffernan (1989) argues, such rewriting can, for a particular fan group, change much of the film's heterosexual cliches into more subversive homoerotic meanings.

Fan texts, then, have to be 'producerly' (Fiske 1987, 1989a), in that they have to be open, to contain gaps, irresolutions, contradictions, which both allow and invite fan productivity. They are insufficient texts that are inadequate to their cultural function of circulating meanings and pleasure until they are worked upon and activated by their fans, who by such activity produce their own popular cultural capital.

Capital Accumulation

There is a complex, often contradictory relationship of similarities and differences between fan and official cultural capital: at times fans wish to distance themselves from the official culture, at other times, to align themselves with it. Fan cultural capital, like the official, lies in the appreciation and knowledge of texts, performers and events, yet the fan's objects of fandom are, by definition, excluded from official cultural capital and its convertibility, via education and career opportunity, into economic capital. In this section I wish to trace some of the more significant of these similarities and differences.

In fandom as in the official culture, the accumulation of knowledge is fundamental to the accumulation of cultural capital. The cultural industries have, of course, recognized this and produce an enormous range of material designed to give the fan access to information about the object of fandom. These vary from the statistics that fill the sports pages of our newspapers to gossipy speculations about the private lives of stars. This commercially produced and distributed information is supported, and sometimes subverted, by that produced by and circulated among the fans themselves. The gay community, for instance, circulates the knowledge of which apparently straight stars are actually gay, and thus knew, long before the general public, for instance, that Rock Hudson was gay and Marilyn Monroe was bisexual. Such fan

knowledge helps to distinguish a particular fan community (those who possess it) from others (those who do not): like the official culture, its work is finally one of social distinction. It also serves to distinguish within the fan community. The experts – those who have accumulated the most knowledge – gain prestige within the group and act as opinion leaders. Knowledge, like money, is always a source of power.

But fan cultural knowledge differs from official cultural knowledge in that it is used to enhance the fan's power over, and participation in, the original, industrial text. The *Rocky Horror* fans who know every line of dialogue in the film use that knowledge to participate in and even rewrite the text in a way that is quite different from the way the Shakespeare buff, for instance, might use his or her intimate knowledge of the text. This dominant habitus would enable the buff not to participate in the performance, but to discriminate critically between it and other performances or between it and the 'ideal' performance in the buff's own mind. Textual knowledge is used for discrimination in the dominant habitus but for participation in the popular.

In the same way, the dominant habitus uses information about the artist to enhance or enrich the appreciation of the work, whereas in the popular habitus such knowledge increases the power of the fan to 'see through' to the production processes normally hidden by the text and thus inaccessible to the non-fan ('he had to be sent to South America on business because they couldn't agree on the terms to renew his contract'). This knowledge diminishes the distance between text and everyday life ('I know that she's not just "acting" here, she "really" knows what it's like to have a marriage collapse around her'), or between star and fan ('If he can come from a black depressed neighbourhood and win a gold medal and a fortune so can I'). The popular habitus makes such knowledge functional and potentially empowering in the everyday life of the fan.

The accumulation of both popular and official cultural capital is signalled materially by collections of objects – artworks, books, records, memorabilia, ephemera. Fans, like buffs, are often avid collectors, and the cultural collection is a point where cultural and economic capital come together.

The 'northerners' in Bourdieu's social space – those high in both economic and cultural capital – will often conflate the aesthetic and economic value of, for instance, a collection of paintings, of first editions or of antique furniture, so that the role of the insurance assessor becomes indistinguishable from that of the critic. The 'north-westerners,' however, who have greater cultural than economic capital are more likely to collect cheaper lithographs or prints rather than original paintings, and to have a library of 'ordinary' books rather than first editions, because such collections allow them to invest culturally rather than economically.

Collecting is also important in fan culture, but it tends to be inclusive rather than exclusive: the emphasis is not so much upon acquiring a few good (and thus expensive) objects as upon accumulating as many as possible. The individual objects are therefore often cheap, devalued by the official culture, and mass-produced. The distinctiveness lies in the extent of the collection rather than in their uniqueness or authenticity as cultural objects. There are, of course, exceptions to this: fans with high economic capital will often use it, in a non-aesthetic parallel of the official cultural capitalist, to accumulate unique and authentic objects – a guitar, an autographed piece of sporting equipment, an article of clothing 'genuinely' worn by the star, or an object once possessed by him or her.

But even the everyday fans, with their collections of cheap, mass-produced fan objects, will often ape official culture in describing their collections in terms of their economic as well as their cultural capital. So Kiste's (1989) comic book fans were eager to comment upon both the economic values of their collections, and their investment potential: how much they expected them to increase, or how much the value of a particular issue had increased over the price they paid for it. Particularly valuable issues were, in another shadowing of the official cultural economy, the first issues of comics or story lines – the popular equivalent of first editions whose scarcity and age become markers of authenticity, originality, and rarity, which give them a high cultural capital which is, in its turn, readily convertible into high economic capital. The conventions at which comic fans gather are as much market places for buying and selling 'collectibles' as they are cultural

fora for the exchange and circulation of knowledge and the building of a cultural community.

Capitalist societies are built upon accumulation and investment, and this is as true of their cultural as well as financial economies. The shadow economy of fan culture in many ways parallels the workings of the official culture, but it adapts them to the habitus of the subordinate. A habitus involves not only the cultural dimension of taste, discrimination, and attitude towards the cultural objects or events, but also the social dimension of economics (and education) upon which those tastes are mapped: a habitus is thus both a mental disposition and a 'geographical' disposition in the social space. So the differences between fan collections and art collections are socio-economic. Fan collections tend to be of cheap, mass-produced objects, and stress quantity and all-inclusiveness over quality or exclusivity. Some fans, whose economic status allows them to discriminate between the authentic and the mass-produced, the original and the reproduction, approximate much more closely to the official cultural capitalist, and their collections can be more readily turned into economic capital.

While fan and official culture are similar in at least some respects in their material versions of accumulated cultural capital and its convertibility to the economic, they differ widely in the convertibility of their non-material capital. The knowledge and discrimination that comprise official cultural capital are institutionalized in the educational system, and thus can be readily converted into career opportunities and earning power. In Bourdieu's map of the social space education plays a key role, for it is related both to class on the vertical axis and to cultural and economic capital on the horizontal. It is the exclusion of popular or fan cultural capital from the educational system that excludes it from the official and disconnects it from the economic. This, of course, makes it an appropriate culture for those in subordinated formations of the people who feel themselves to be unfairly excluded from the socio-economic or status-enhancing rewards that the official culture can offer because of its direct interconnections, via the educational system, with the social order.

Fans and Commercial (Popular) Culture

Fans make their culture out of the commercial commodities (texts, stars, performances) of the cultural industries. Fandom thus has dual relationships to what is often, if wrongly, called mass culture, and by way of conclusion I would like to raise some of the central issues within them.

First there is the relationship of fandom to popular culture generally, of the fan to the more 'normal' audience member. Elsewhere (Fiske 1989a) I have argued that fandom is a heightened form of popular culture in industrial societies and that the fan is an 'excessive reader' who differs from the 'ordinary' one in degree rather than kind. The romantic and pornographic novels written by 'Star Trek' fans to fill the gaps in the original text would therefore be understood as elaborated and public versions of the interior, semiotic productions of more normal viewers, many of whom might imagine for themselves similar 'extra-textual' relationships among the crew of the *SS Enterprise*. So, too, we would understand the videos produced by Madonna fans as textualizations of the interior fantasies of others who either lacked access to video equipment or the desire (or talent) to turn their fantasies into texts. The commonly recurring features of these fan videos can then be understood as typical of semiotic, and thus invisible, productivity that is characteristic of popular culture generally. And a textual analysis of the videos does indeed reveal features that accord well with ethnographic investigations into the way that people make popular culture out of mass-cultural products, and that support theorizations of this process. The videos consistently exhibited the characteristics of relevance (Madonna's words, music, movements and appearance were inserted meaningfully into the everyday lives and surroundings of the fans), empowerment (Madonna was shown giving her fans power over boys, parents, teachers and even politicians), and participation (the fans 'became' Madonna in a way that denied any distance between performer and audience; they participated in constructing and circulating the 'meanings of Madonnaness' in their own culture).

Fan culture is also related to the commercial interests of the

culture industries. For the industries fans are an additional market that not only buys 'spin-off' products, often in huge quantities, but also provides valuable free feedback on market trends and preferences. There are thus contradictory functions performed by cultural commodities which on the one hand serve the economic interests of the industry and on the other the cultural interests of the fans. There is a constant struggle between fans and the industry, in which the industry attempts to incorporate the tastes of the fans, and the fans to 'excorporate' the products of the industry.

Official culture likes to see its texts (or commodities) as the creations of special individuals or artists: such a reverence for the artist and, therefore, the text necessarily places its readers in a subordinate relationship to them. Popular culture, however, is well aware that its commodities are industrially produced and thus do not have the status of a uniquely crafted art-object. They are thus open to the productive reworking, rewriting, completing and to participation in the way that a completed art-object is not. It is not surprising then that the dominant habitus, with its taste for official culture, denigrates and misunderstands both the production and reception of popular culture. It fails to realize that many industrially-produced texts have producerly characteristics that stimulate popular productivity in a way that official art-works cannot. It fails to realize, too, that such popular productivity works better on industrial texts with their contradictions, inadequacies and superficialities, because it is these very qualities that make the text open and provocative rather than completed and satisfying. Because the industrial text is not an art-object to be preserved, its ephemerality is not an issue; indeed its disposability and constant, anxious search for that which is new, stimulating and yet acceptable to the people are among its most valuable characteristics.

It may be ironic or regrettable that the economic imperative has brought capitalist industries closer to the culture of the people than the purer motives of those within official culture. But it should not surprise us. Official cultural capital, like economic capital, is systematically denied to the people and their lack then functions to distinguish them from those that possess it. In capitalist societies popular culture is necessarily

-386-

produced from the products of capitalism, for that is all the people have to work with. The relationship of popular culture to the culture industries is therefore complex and fascinating, sometimes conflictive, sometimes complicitous or co-operative, but the people are never at the mercy of the industries – they choose to make some of their commodities into popular culture, but reject many more than they adopt. Fans are among the most discriminating and selective of all formations of the people and the cultural capital they produce is the most highly developed and visible of all.

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-388-

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"Get a Life!": Fans, Poachers, Nomads

When *Star Trek* star William Shatner (Captain James T. Kirk) appeared as a guest host of *Saturday Night Live,* the program chose this opportunity to satirize the fans of his 1960s television series. The "Trekkies" were depicted as nerdy guys with glasses and rubber Vulcan ears, "I Grok Spock" T-shirts stretched over their bulging stomachs. One man laughs maliciously about a young fan he has just met who doesn't know Yeoman Rand's cabin number, while his friend mumbles about the great buy he got on a DeForest Kelly album. When Shatner arrives, he is bombarded with questions from fans who want to know about minor characters in individual epi-



1.1 "Get a Life": Two "Trekkies" on *Saturday Night Live*

sodes (which they cite by both title and sequence number), who seem to know more about his private life than he does, and who demand such trivial information as the combination to Kirk's safe. Finally, in incredulity and frustration, Shatner turns on the crowd: "Get a life, will you people? I mean, I mean, for crying out loud, it's just a TV show!" Shatner urges the fans to move out of their parent's basements and to proceed with adult experiences ("you, there, have you ever kissed a girl?"), to put their fannish interests behind them. The fans look confused at first, then, progressively more hurt and embarrassed. Finally, one desperate fan asks, "Are you saying we should pay more attention to the movies?" Enraged, Shatner storms off the stage, only to be confronted by an equally angry convention organizer. After a shoving match and a forced rereading of his contract, an embarrassed Shatner takes the stage again and tells the much-relieved fans that they have just watched a "recreation of the evil Captain Kirk from episode 27, 'The Enemy Within.' "

This much-discussed sketch distills many popular stereotypes about fans. Its "Trekkies":

a. are brainless consumers who will buy anything associated with the program or its cast (DeForest Kelly albums);

b. devote their lives to the cultivation of worthless knowledge (the combination to Kirk's safe, the number of Yeoman Rand's cabin, the numerical order of the program episodes);

c. place inappropriate importance on devalued cultural material ("It's just a television show");

d. are social misfits who have become so obsessed with the show that it forecloses other types of social experience ("Get a Life");

e. are feminized and/or desexualized through their intimate engagement with mass culture ("Have you ever kissed a girl?");

f. are infantile, emotionally and intellectually immature (the suggestion that they should move out of their parents' basement, their pouting and befuddled responses to Shatner's criticism, the mixture of small children and overweight adults);

g. are unable to separate fantasy from reality ("Are you saying we should pay more attention to the movies?").

Those in doubt about the "credibility" of this representation of fan culture need only flip to the cover story of the December 22, 1986 issue of *Newsweek* to see an essentially similar depiction of a fan convention, though in this case, one which claimed no comic exaggeration (Leerhsen, 1986). (Fans saw little comic exaggeration in the *Saturday Night Live* sketch, in any case, since Shatner had repeatedly expressed many of these same sentiments in public interviews and clearly meant what he said to his fans.) Where *Saturday Night Live* served its audience jokes, *Newsweek* interviewed "experts" who sought to explain "the enduring power of *Star Trek*"; where *Saturday Night Live* featured comic actors as stereotypical characters, *Newsweek* provided actual photographs of real *Star Trek* fans—a bearded man ("a Trekkie with a phaser") standing before an array of commercially produced *Star Trek* merchandise; three somewhat overweight, middle-aged "Trekkies" from Starbase Houston dressed in Federation uniforms and Vulcan garb; an older woman, identified as "Grandma Trek," proudly holding a model of the Enterprise. The article's opening sentences could easily be a description of the *Saturday Night Live* fan convention: "Hang on: You are being beamed to one of those *Star Trek* conventions, where grown-ups greet each other with the Vulcan salute and offer in reverent tones to pay $100 for the autobiography of Leonard Nimoy" (66). Fans are characterized as "kooks" obsessed with trivia, celebrities, and collectibles; as misfits and "crazies"; as "a lot of overweight women, a lot of divorced and single women" (68); as childish adults; in short, as people who have little or no "life" apart from their fascination with this particular program. Starbase Houston is "a group of about 100 adults who have their own flag, jackets and anthem" (68); Amherst's Shirley Maiewski ("Grandma Trek") "has a Klingon warship hanging from her rec-room ceiling and can help you find out what three combinations Captain Kirk used to open his safe" (68); one man was married in Disneyland wearing a Federation uniform and his "Trekkie" bride wore (what else), rubber Vulcan ears. Such details, while no doubt accurate, are selective, offering a distorted picture of their community, shaping the reality of its culture to conform to stereotypes already held by *Newsweek's* writers and readers. The text and captions draw their credibility from the seemingly "natural" facts offered by the photographs and quotes, yet actually play an important role fitting those "facts" into a larger "mythology" about fannish identity (Barthes, 1973). The smug and authoritative tone of the *Newsweek* article, especially

when coupled with countless other similar reports in local newspapers and on local newscasts, lends credibility to the only slightly more hyperbolic *Saturday Night Live* sketch, until "everyone knows" what "Trekkies" are like and how they would be likely to react to being chastised by William Shatner. These representations won widespread public acceptance and have often been quoted to me by students and colleagues who question my interest in fan culture; their recognition and circulation by non-fans reflects the degree to which these images fit comfortably within a much broader discourse about fans and their fanaticism.

FANS AND "FANATICS"

Many of these stereotypes seem to have been attached to the term "fan" from its very inception. "Fan" is an abbreviated form of the word "fanatic," which has its roots in the Latin word "fanaticus." In its most literal sense, "fanaticus" simply meant "Of or belonging to the temple, a temple servant, a devotee" but it quickly assumed more negative connotations, "Of persons inspired by orgiastic rites and enthusiastic frenzy" (*Oxford Latin Dictionary*). As it evolved, the term "fanatic" moved from a reference to certain excessive forms of religious belief and worship to any "excessive and mistaken enthusiasm," often evoked in criticism to opposing political beliefs, and then, more generally, to madness "such as might result from possession by a deity or demon" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Its abbreviated form, "fan," first appeared in the late 19th century in journalistic accounts describing followers of professional sports teams (especially in baseball) at a time when the sport moved from a predominantly participant activity to a spectator event, but soon was expanded to incorporate any faithful "devotee" of sports or commercial entertainment. One of its earliest uses was in reference to women theater-goers, "Matinee Girls," who male critics claimed had come to admire the actors rather than the plays (Auster, 1989). If the term "fan" was originally evoked in a somewhat playful fashion and was often used sympathetically by sports writers, it never fully escaped its earlier connotations of religious and political zealotry, false beliefs, orgiastic excess, possession, and madness, connotations that seem to be at the heart of many of the representations of fans in contemporary discourse.

-390-

Robert Jewett and John Shelton Lawrence (1977), for example, come close to the original meaning of the word, "fanaticus," in their absurdly literal account of the mythic aspects of *Star Trek* and of "Trekkie Religion." Drawing on the work of Joseph Campbell, Jewett and Lawrence claim that science fiction television and its fans constitute a kind of secular faith, "a strange, electronic religion . . . in the making" (24). The hyperbolic rhetoric of fan writing is read literally as "written in the spirit of . . . religious devotion" (26); Kirk and Spock are understood as "redeemers," fans as their "disciples," and fanzines as "apocryphal literature" forming the basis for a new "theology" (27–31). Jewett and Lawrence are particularly concerned with the program's female devotees, whose erotic fantasies about the characters are likened to the "temple rites" of vestal virgins. The writers both celebrate and distrust this zealous relationship to fictional texts, seeing it as evidence supporting their own claims about the mythic possibilities of *Star Trek*, yet also comparing it to the obsessiveness of the Manson family and the suicidal Werther cult of 19th-century Germany. In the end, Jewett and Lawrence are unable to understand how a television program could produce this extreme response, a confusion they pass onto the fans who are characterized as inarticulate about the series' popularity.

Building on the word's traditional links to madness and demonic possession, news reports frequently characterize fans as psychopaths whose frustrated fantasies of intimate relationships with stars or unsatisfied desires to achieve their own stardom take violent and antisocial forms. The murderous actions of Charles Manson (a Beatles fan), John Hinkley (a Jodie Foster fan), and Dwight Chapman (a John Lennon fan), as well as less-publicized incidents like the attack on *Cagney and Lacey*'s Sharon Gless by a "lesbian loony" as one tabloid described it, are explained according to a stereotypical conception of the fan as emotionally unstable, socially maladjusted, and dangerously out of sync with reality. Julie Burchill (1986) evokes this same myth of the "unbalanced" fan in her account of the destructive quality of celebrity culture:

> A harmless crush can become a clinical obsession when held a beat too long. The fan has no power over the performer but to destroy. . . . The thin line between love and hate, between free will and fate, gradually disappears for the fan in the attic, lumping around his unacknowledged, unwanted love like an embarrassing erection all stressed

> up with nowhere to go; and the love turns into a weapon as he realizes he can never touch the one he wants, except with a bullet. (143)

What Burchill describes as "the fan in the attic" is a stock figure in suspense films, detective novels, and television cop shows, one of the "usual suspects" for the commission of crimes and a source of almost instantaneous threat. So powerful is this stereotype that the opening of one recent film, *The Fan* (1981), provokes terror simply by depicting a lone fan (Michael Biem) sitting in a darkened room slowly typing a letter to his favorite Broadway actress (Lauren Bacall): "Dear Ms. Ross, I am your greatest fan because unlike the others, I want nothing from you." The camera's slow pan over a room strewn with countless autographed photographs, playbills, and posters and the relentless clatter of his keys already primes the viewer for the horrible acts of violence which will follow. Unable to get a personal response to his persistent letters, the fan slaughters those closest to the star, breaks into and vandalizes her apartment, sends her death threats, and finally kidnaps her and threatens rape and murder. Similar images of dangerous fans can be found in films such as *Fade to Black* (1980), *King of Comedy* (1983), and *Misery* (1990), each of which represent fans as isolated, emotionally and socially immature, unable to achieve a proper place for themselves in society, and thus prone to replace grim realities with rich media fantasies.

If the psychopathic "fan in the attic" has become a stock character of suspense films, comic representations offer a more benign but no less socially maladjusted figure: the star-struck projectionist in Buster Keaton's *Sherlock Jr.* (1924), the escapist book publishers in *The Seven Year Itch* (1955) and *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (1947), the movie-mad extras in *Ali Baba Goes to Town* (1937) and *The Errand Boy* (1951), the accident-prone comedy fiend in *Stoogemania* (1985), and the romantically frustrated film critic in *Play It Again, Sam* (1972). Like their counterparts in more dramatic films, these men live unrewarding lives, have few social ties, unsuccessful or threatening romantic relationships, and hectic or demeaning jobs, often at the periphery of show business. They are drawn inward toward a rich and varied realm of personal fantasy that substitutes for the decisive action they fail to display in their everyday lives. Such figures can, no doubt, trace their roots back to earlier representations of distracted or overidentified readers, such as *Don Quixote* or *Madame Bovary*, and enjoy a place in centuries-old debates about the dangers of consuming fiction.

The myth of the "orgiastic" fan, the groupie, survives as a staple fantasy of rock music reporting and criticism, exemplified perhaps most vividly by the lurid promotion of Fred and Judy Vermorel's *Starlust* (1985). That book promises its readers "the secret fantasies of fans," fantasies largely erotic in nature (such as the confessions of a woman who thinks about Barry Manilow while making love to her husband). The book's editors claim their project was initiated by a desire to offer a sympathetic treatment of fans "not [as] passive victims of showbiz exploitation, but real and socially functioning people working through and acting out the consequences of fandom for all of us" (247). However, their presentation of this material, from the image of a screaming woman on the cover to chapters with titles like "Possession," "Obsession," "Ecstasy," and "Delirium," confirms traditional stereotypes. The Vermorels' fans speak endlessly of their desire to possess and be possessed by their favorite celebrities.

Significantly, if the comic fan and the psychotic fan are usually portrayed as masculine, although frequently as de-gendered, asexual, or impotent, the eroticized fan is almost always female (the shrieking woman on the cover of the Vermorels' book); the feminine side of fandom is manifested in the images of screaming teenage girls who try to tear the clothes off the Beatles or who faint at the touch of one of Elvis's sweat-drenched scarfs, or the groupie servicing the stars backstage after the concert in rockamentaries and porn videos. Not only are these women unable to maintain critical distance from the image, they want to take it inside themselves, to obtain "total intimacy" with it. Yet, these representations push this process one step further: the female spectator herself becomes an erotic spectacle for mundane male spectators while her abandonment of any distance from the image becomes an invitation for the viewer's own erotic fantasies.

As these examples suggest, the fan still constitutes a scandalous category in contemporary culture, one alternately the target of ridicule and anxiety, of dread and desire. Whether viewed as a religious fanatic, a psychopathic killer, a neurotic fantasist, or a lust-crazed groupie, the fan remains a "fanatic" or false worshiper, whose interests are fundamentally alien to the realm of "normal" cultural experience and whose mentality is dangerously out of touch with reality.

"A SCANDALOUS CATEGORY"

To understand the logic behind these particular discursive constructions of fans, we must reconsider what we mean by taste. Concepts of "good taste," appropriate conduct, or aesthetic merit are not natural or universal; rather, they are rooted in social experience and reflect particular class interests. As Pierre Bourdieu (1979) notes, these tastes often seem "natural" to those who share them precisely because they are shaped by our earliest experiences as members of a particular cultural group, reinforced by social exchanges, and rationalized through encounters with higher education and other basic institutions that reward appropriate conduct and proper tastes. Taste becomes one of the important means by which social distinctions are maintained and class identities are forged. Those who "naturally" possess appropriate tastes "deserve" a privileged position within the institutional hierarchy and reap the greatest benefits from the educational system, while the tastes of others are seen as "uncouth" and underdeveloped. Taste distinctions determine not only desirable and undesirable forms of culture but also desirable and undesirable ways of relating to cultural objects, desirable and undesirable strategies of interpretation and styles of consumption. Witness, for example, the ways that Shakespeare's plays have provoked alternative responses, demanded different levels of intellectual investment as they have moved from popular to elite culture (Levine, 1988).

Though the enculturation of particular tastes is so powerful that we are often inclined to describe our cultural preferences not simply as natural but as universal and eternal, taste is always in crisis; taste can never remain stable, because it is challenged by the existence of other tastes that often seem just as "natural" to their proponents. The boundaries of "good taste," then, must constantly be policed; proper tastes must be separated from improper tastes; those who possess the wrong tastes must be distinguished from those whose tastes conform more closely to our own expectations. Because one's taste is so interwoven with all other aspects of social and cultural experience, aesthetic distaste brings with it the full force of moral excommunication and social rejection. "Bad taste" is not simply undesirable; it is unacceptable. Debates about aesthetic choices or interpretive practices, then, necessarily have an important social dimension and often draw upon social or psychological categories as a source of justification. Materials viewed as undesirable within

a particular aesthetic are often accused of harmful social effects or negative influences upon their consumers. Aesthetic preferences are imposed through legislation and public pressure; for example, in the cause of protecting children from the "corrupting" influence of undesired cultural materials. Those who enjoy such texts are seen as intellectually debased, psychologically suspect, or emotionally immature.

The stereotypical conception of the fan, while not without a limited factual basis, amounts to a projection of anxieties about the violation of dominant cultural hierarchies. The fans' transgression of bourgeois taste and disruption of dominant cultural hierarchies insures that their preferences are seen as abnormal and threatening by those who have a vested interest in the maintenance of these standards (even by those who may share similar tastes but express them in fundamentally different ways). As Bourdieu (1980) suggests, "The most intolerable thing for those who regard themselves as the possessors of legitimate culture is the sacrilegious reuniting of tastes which taste dictates shall be separated" (253). Fan culture muddies those boundaries, treating popular texts as if they merited the same degree of attention and appreciation as canonical texts. Reading practices (close scrutiny, elaborate exegesis, repeated and prolonged rereading, etc.) acceptable in confronting a work of "serious merit" seem perversely misapplied to the more "disposable" texts of mass culture. Fans speak of "artists" where others can see only commercial hacks, of transcendent meanings where others find only banalities, of "quality and innovation" where others see only formula and convention. One *Beauty and the Beast* fan, for example, constructed a historical account of American broadcasting, echoing the traditional narrative of a '50s golden age followed by a '60s wasteland, yet, using it to point toward certain fan favorites (*Twilight Zone*, *Outer Limits*, *Star Trek*, *The Avengers*, *The Prisoner*) as representing turning points or landmarks. These series stand apart from the bulk of broadcast material because of their appeal to the intelligence and discrimination of their viewers, contrasting sharply with "mediocre series," such as *Lost in Space*, *Land of the Giants*, *The Invaders*, or *The Greatest American Hero*, which were characterized by their "poor writing, ridiculous conflicts offering no moral or ethical choices, predictable and cardboard characterizations, and a general lack of attention to creativity and chance-taking" (Formaini 1990, 9–11). His historical narrative ends, naturally enough, with the appearance of his favorite series, *Beauty and the*

Beast, which achieves the perfect melding of fantasy, science fiction, and classical literature that had been the goal of this "great tradition" of pop "masterpieces." Such an account requires not simply an acknowledgement of the superior qualities of a desired text but also a public rejection of the low standards of the "silly and childish offerings" that fall outside of the fan canon. The fan's claims for a favored text stand as the most direct and vocal affront to the legitimacy of traditional cultural hierarchies.

Yet the fans' resistance to the cultural hierarchy goes beyond simply the inappropriateness of their textual selections and often cuts to the very logic by which fans make sense of cultural experiences. Fan interpretive practice differs from that fostered by the educational system and preferred by bourgeois culture not simply in its object choices or in the degree of its intensity, but often in the types of reading skills it employs, in the ways that fans approach texts. From the perspective of dominant taste, fans appear to be frighteningly out of control, undisciplined and unrepentant, rogue readers. Rejecting the aesthetic distance Bourdieu suggests is a cornerstone of bourgeois aesthetics, fans enthusiastically embrace favored texts and attempt to integrate media representations into their own social experience. Unimpressed by institutional authority and expertise, the fans assert their own right to form interpretations, to offer evaluations, and to construct cultural canons. Undaunted by traditional conceptions of literary and intellectual property, fans raid mass culture, claiming its materials for their own use, reworking them as the basis for their own cultural creations and social interactions. Fans seemingly blur the boundaries between fact and fiction, speaking of characters as if they had an existence apart from their textual manifestations, entering into the realm of the fiction as if it were a tangible place they can inhabit and explore. Fan culture stands as an open challenge to the "naturalness" and desirability of dominant cultural hierarchies, a refusal of authorial authority and a violation of intellectual property. What may make all of this particularly damning is that fans cannot as a group be dismissed as intellectually inferior; they often are highly educated, articulate people who come from the middle classes, people who "should know better" than to spend their time constructing elaborate interpretations of television programs. The popular embrace of television can thus be read as a conscious repudiation of high culture or at least of the traditional boundaries between high culture and popular culture. What cannot easily be dismissed as ignorance must be read

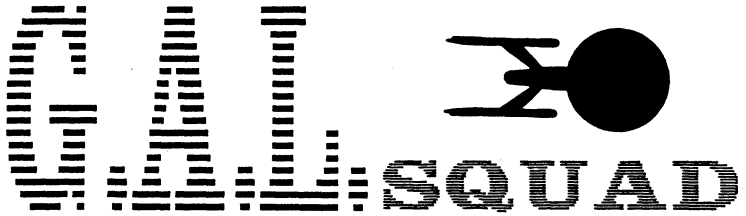
-393-

as aesthetic perversion. It is telling, of course, that sports fans (who are mostly male and who attach great significance to "real" events rather than fictions) enjoy very different status than media fans (who are mostly female and who attach great interest in debased forms of fiction); the authority to sanction taste, then, does not rest exclusively on issues of class but also encompasses issues of gender, which may account for why popular publications like *Newsweek* or programs like *Saturday Night Live* find themselves aligned with the academy in their distaste for media fans as well as why stereotypes portray fans either as overweight women (see *Misery*) or nerdy, degendered men (see *Fade to Black*).

The fan, whose cultural preferences and interpretive practices seem so antithetical to dominant aesthetic logic, must be represented as "other," must be held at a distance so that fannish taste does not pollute sanctioned culture. Public attacks on media fans keep other viewers in line, making it uncomfortable for readers to adapt such "inappropriate" strategies of making sense of popular texts or to embrace so passionately materials of such dubious aesthetic merit. Such representations isolate potential fans from others who share common interests and reading practices, marginalize fan activities as beyond the mainstream. These representations make it highly uncomfortable to speak publicly as a fan or to identify yourself even privately with fan cultural practices.

Even within the fan community, these categories are evoked as a way of policing the ranks and justifying one's own pleasures as less "perverse" than those of others: a flier circulated at a recent science fiction convention categorized *Star Trek* fans as belonging to the "G.A.L." ("Get a Life") club, part of an ongoing struggle between literary science fiction fans and media fans; the advocate of an unpopular opinion in a *Twin Peaks* computer net discussion group was dismissed as a "Trekkie" and told to seek his company elsewhere; a critic for a commercial publication aimed at science fiction fans dismissed one professional *Star Trek* novel as "too fannish." There is always someone more extreme whose otherness can justify the relative normality of one's own cultural choices and practices. As C. E. Amesley (1989) notes, "I have yet to find a self-identified 'Hardcore Trekkie.' Whether fans watch the show every night, miss other events to come home to watch, go to conventions, participate in contests, collect all the novels or study Klingon, they always know others who, unlike them, are 'really hardcore.' The idea of a 'hardcore Trekkie' influences their beliefs concerning their

Are you a Star Trek fan? Do you dream at night that you're aboard the starship Enterprise, giving the orders to boldly go where no man has gone before? Do you dream about this **all the time**? If you answered yes, then you may be the sort of pellucid go-getter we've been looking for ! This may be your once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to join the elite ranks of the.....



Yes, freind, the G.A.L. squad is looking for people just like yourself to partake in the exciting, glamourous life already enjoyed by members the world over.

* Attend conventions!
* Wear authentic costumes!
* Be heard at our never-ending technical infofmation debates!
* Enjoy our fast food buffets!
* Join in our monthly laundry excursions!
* Go on trips to exotic, distant lands and spend your time in the best mediocre hotel suites!
* See Jimmy Doohan ten, twenty, fifty times!
* Learn how to speak Klingon-our teachers will also help you understand and memorize every detail of the **Enterprise**!

No Club Gimmicks!

Sound too good to be true? Guess again! It's all happening even as you read this! Never again will you feel alone in your absolutely worthwhile devotion to the most celebrated cultural enigma in world history-**STAR TREK!** Join the proud members of the G.A.L. squad and you too will enjoy all the exciting hebetude!
If you're a thoroughly anserous, exacting person, then delay no longer! Just send $200.00 today! After you recieve your membership certificate, you automatically inherit all the benefits existing in the G.A.L. SQUAD! So what are you waiting for? **Join today!**

GET YOUR ROCKETS OFF

IMPROVE YOUR IMAGE

Live it to the limit

(Sign) _____

YES! I WANT TO JOIN THE G.A.L. SQUAD! ENCLOSED IS TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS IN CRISP, UNMARKED BILLS. PLEASE RUSH ME MY MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATE!

Name _____
Address _____ Apt. _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
P.S. You don't need to spend a fortune to get a good American Value.

Join the Adventure!

1.2 "G.A.L. Squad" (Get a Life Squad): Anti-*Star Trek* fan flier circulated by literary science fiction fans

own behavior, but does not, except in theory, exist" (338). Fans prefer to describe themselves as "Trekkers" rather than "Trekkies" (a term which has increasingly come to refer only to the media constructed stereotype)—or better still, to describe themselves simply as fans (a term which signifies their membership within a larger subculture of other fans and denies a fixed reader-text relationship).

Ien Ang (1985) confronted many of these issues in her interpretation of letters solicited by her from a group of Dutch viewers of *Dallas*. Her correspondents found it relatively easy to explain why they disliked the American soap opera, falling back on readily accessible categories from "the ideology of mass culture," gaining security from their commonsensical appeals to widely circulated discourses about cultural contamination. For those who found pleasure in *Dallas*, for those who might consider themselves fans of the program, defending their tastes proved a far more complex and difficult process. None of Ang's letter-writers could fully escape from the categories established by mass culture's critics, none could treat their pleasures as innocent or unproblematic. Critical discourse against mass culture, Ang concludes, had seemingly foreclosed any possibility for the *Dallas* fans to articulate their own social and cultural position or to "hit back" against their critics from a position of authority and strength.

Much like the *Dallas* fans Ang discusses, *Star Trek* fans often find themselves arguing from a position of weakness in attempting to defend their fascination with the program. For many, the only legitimate defense is to assert the "normality" of their lifestyle, professing their general conformity to middle-class culture as a way of creating common ground with nonfan friends. One fan wrote in response to the *Saturday Night Live* sketch:

> I resent having those assumptions made about me. I have 'got a life.' I have a husband and children. I do volunteer work and have opinions on a wide variety of matters, both political and religious. I do shopping, vote in elections and change diapers. I do live in a real world, with all of its tensions and stress. That is the reason I am a Trekker. A hobby is necessary for mental health. *Star Trek* helps me to keep from burning out in all the "important" things I do. It helps me relax. It helps me retain my perspective. It is fun. It is not my religion. I already have a perfectly good religion. (Well, I'm Catholic.) And I suspect that the

majority of fans are more like me than the stereotype. (Kulikauskas, 1988, 5)

Others justify the program's appeal in terms derived from traditional high culture: they cite scripts by renowned literary science fiction writers such as Robert Bloch, Theodore Sturgeon, Norman Spinrad, and Harlan Ellison; they note its confrontation of serious social issues such as racism, terrorism, and drug abuse; they tout its recognition by the industry and educational groups; they insist upon its ability to "change lives" with its optimistic vision, all categories that appear with frequency in the pages of books like *Star Trek Lives!* (Lichtenberg, Marshak, and Winston, 1975) or *The World of Star Trek* (Gerrold, 1973), whose authors explain fandom to mundane and neofan readers. Still others respond from a position of "cultural populism," offering a negative identification of their critics as close-minded and conformist ("know-it-alls" and "cynics") while praising the program's fans for their open-mindedness and communalism. Like Ang's *Dallas* viewers, these fans have internalized many aspects of dominant taste; they are struggling to understand their own relationship to the media within the terms provided by the ideology of mass culture. *Star Trek* can be defended as a kind of ersatz high culture and judged according to its standards (standards that are bound to judge it impoverished, if only because it lacks the history of critical interpretation surrounding earlier popular works that have been absorbed into the official canon); there seems to be no way of defending it as popular culture, as responsive to consumer tastes, as satisfying audience desires and producing immediate pleasures at the moment of its consumption, as "fun."

Yet there is an important difference between Ang's *Dallas* viewers and the *Star Trek* fans. The *Dallas* viewers wrote in isolation, watching the program in their own homes with little or no acknowledgement that others shared their enthusiasm for the series. What led them to write to Ang in response to an advertisement soliciting such letters might have been an attempt to overcome these feelings of cultural isolation, to gain a larger identity as fans apart from the alienation imposed on them by dominant discourse about mass culture. Ang's respondents were *Dallas* fans only in the narrow sense that they watched the program regularly but they lacked social connections to a larger network of fans and did not participate in the complex fan culture described here. The Trekkers, however, see themselves as already participating in a larger social and cultural

-395-

community, as speaking not only for themselves but for *Star Trek* fans more generally. These fans often draw strength and courage from their ability to identify themselves as members of a group of other fans who shared common interests and confronted common problems. To speak as a fan is to accept what has been labeled a subordinated position within the cultural hierarchy, to accept an identity constantly belittled or criticized by institutional authorities. Yet it is also to speak from a position of collective identity, to forge an alliance with a community of others in defense of tastes which, as a result, cannot be read as totally aberrant or idiosyncratic. Indeed, one of the most often heard comments from new fans is their surprise in discovering how many people share their fascination with a particular series, their pleasure in discovering that they are not "alone."

This book is written on the assumption that speaking as a fan is a defensible position within the debates surrounding mass culture. Rejecting media-fostered stereotypes of fans as cultural dupes, social misfits, and mindless consumers, this book perceives fans as active producers and manipulators of meanings. Drawing on the work of Michel de Certeau, it proposes an alternative conception of fans as readers who appropriate popular texts and reread them in a fashion that serves different interests, as spectators who transform the experience of watching television into a rich and complex participatory culture. Viewed in this fashion, fans become a model of the type of textual "poaching" de Certeau associates with popular reading. Their activities pose important questions about the ability of media producers to constrain the creation and circulation of meanings. Fans construct their cultural and social identity through borrowing and inflecting mass culture images, articulating concerns which often go unvoiced within the dominant media.

The fans' response typically involves not simply fascination or adoration but also frustration and antagonism, and it is the combination of the two responses which motivates their active engagement with the media. Because popular narratives often fail to satisfy, fans must struggle with them, to try to articulate to themselves and others unrealized possibilities within the original works. Because the texts continue to fascinate, fans cannot dismiss them from their attention but rather must try to find ways to salvage them for their interests. Far from syncopathic, fans actively assert their mastery over the mass-produced texts which provide the raw materials for their own cultural productions and the basis for their social inter-

actions. In the process, fans cease to be simply an audience for popular texts; instead, they become active participants in the construction and circulation of textual meanings.

Fans recognize that their relationship to the text remains a tentative one, that their pleasures often exist on the margins of the original text and in the face of the producer's own efforts to regulate its meanings. While fans display a particularly strong attachment to popular narratives, act upon them in ways which make them their own property in some senses, they are also acutely and painfully aware that those fictions do not belong to them and that someone else has the power to do things to those characters that are in direct contradiction to the fans' own cultural interests. Sometimes, fans respond to this situation with a worshipful deference to media producers, yet, often they respond with hostility and anger against those who have the power to "retool" their narratives into something radically different from that which the audience desires.

-396-

TEXTUAL POACHERS

Michel de Certeau (1984) has characterized such active reading as "poaching," an impertinent raid on the literary preserve that takes away only those things that are useful or pleasurable to the reader: "Far from being writers . . . readers are travellers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write, despoiling the wealth of Egypt to enjoy it themselves" (174). De Certeau's "poaching" analogy characterizes the relationship between readers and writers as an ongoing struggle for possession of the text and for control over its meanings. De Certeau speaks of a "scriptural economy" dominated by textual producers and institutionally sanctioned interpreters and working to restrain the "multiple voices" of popular orality, to regulate the production and circulation of meanings. The "mastery of language" becomes, for de Certeau, emblematic of the cultural authority and social power exercised by the dominant classes within the social formation. School children are taught to read for authorial meaning, to consume the narrative without leaving their own marks upon it: "This fiction condemns consumers to subjection because they are always going to be guilty of infidelity or ignorance. . . . The text becomes a cultural weapon, a private hunting reserve" (171).

Under this familiar model, the reader is supposed to serve as the more-or-less passive recipient of authorial meaning while any deviation from meanings clearly marked forth within the text is viewed negatively, as a failure to successfully understand what the author was trying to say. The teacher's red pen rewards those who "correctly" decipher the text and penalizes those who "get it wrong," while the student's personal feelings and associations are rated "irrelevant" to the task of literary analysis (according to the "affective fallacy"). Such judgments, in turn, require proper respect for the expertise of specially trained and sanctioned interpreters over the street knowledge of the everyday reader; the teacher's authority becomes vitally linked to the authority which readers grant to textual producers. As popular texts have been adopted into the academy, similar claims about their "authorship" have been constructed to allow them to be studied and taught in essentially similar terms to traditional literary works; the price of being taken seriously as an academic subject has been the acceptance of certain assumptions common to other forms of scholarship, assumptions that link the interests of the academy with the interests of producers rather than with the interests of consumers. Both social and legal practice preserves the privilege of "socially authorized professionals and intellectuals" over the interests of popular readers and textual consumers. (Jane Gaines, 1990, for example, shows the ways that the primary focus of trademark law has shifted from protecting consumers from commercial fraud toward protecting the exclusive interests of capital for control over marketable images.) The expertise of the academy allows its members to determine which interpretive claims are consistent with authorial meaning (whether implicit or explicit), which fall beyond its scope. Since many segments of the population lack access to the means of cultural production and distribution, to the multiplexes, the broadcast airwaves or the chain bookstore shelves, this respect for the "integrity" of the produced message often has the effect of silencing or marginalizing oppositional voices. The exclusion of those voices at the moment of reception simply mirrors their exclusion at the moment of production; their cultural interests are delegitimized in favor of the commercial interests of authorized authors.

De Certeau's account of academic and economic practice is a highly polemical one; he offers a partial and certainly partisan version of certain traditional beliefs and attitudes. One does not have to abolish all reverence for authorial meaning in order to recognize

the potential benefits of alternative forms of interpretation and consumption. Yet de Certeau poses questions that we as scholars and teachers need to consider—the ways we justify our own positions as critics, the interests served by our expertise, the degree to which our instruction may hinder rather than encourage the development of popular criticism. Education can be a force for the democratization of cultural life. If it couldn't be, there would be no purpose in writing this book for an academic audience or committing oneself to a classroom. Often, however, education is too preoccupied with protecting its own status to successfully fulfill such a role. All too often, teachers promote their own authority at the expense of their students' ability to form alternative interpretations. De Certeau invites us to reconsider the place of popular response, of personal speculations and nonauthorized meanings in the reception of artworks and to overcome professional training that prepares us to reject meanings falling outside our frame of reference and interpretive practice.

De Certeau (1984) acknowledges the economic and social barriers that block popular access to the means of cultural production, speaking of a culture in which "marginality is becoming universal" and most segments of the population remain "unsigned, unreadable and unsymbolized" within dominant forms of representation (xvii). Yet de Certeau seeks to document not the strategies employed by this hegemonic power to restrict the circulation of popular meaning or to marginalize oppositional voices but rather to theorize the various tactics of popular resistance. De Certeau gives us terms for discussing ways that the subordinate classes elude or escape institutional control, for analyzing locations where popular meanings are produced outside of official interpretive practice. De Certeau perceives popular reading as a series of "advances and retreats, tactics and games played with the text," as a type of cultural bricolage through which readers fragment texts and reassemble the broken shards according to their own blueprints, salvaging bits and pieces of the found material in making sense of their own social experience (175).

Like the poachers of old, fans operate from a position of cultural marginality and social weakness. Like other popular readers, fans lack direct access to the means of commercial cultural production and have only the most limited resources with which to influence entertainment industry's decisions. Fans must beg with the networks to keep their favorite shows on the air, must lobby producers to provide desired plot developments or to protect the integrity of favorite characters. Within the cultural economy, fans are peasants, not proprietors, a recognition which must contextualize our celebration of strategies of popular resistance. As Michael Budd, Robert Entman, and Clay Steinman (1990) note, nomadic readers "may actually be powerless and dependent" rather than "uncontainable, restless and free." They continue, "People who are nomads cannot settle down; they are at the mercy of natural forces they cannot control" (176). As these writers are quick to note, controlling the means of cultural reception, while an important step, does not provide an adequate substitute for access to the means of cultural production and distribution. In one sense, then, that of economic control over the means of production, these nomadic viewers truly are "powerless and dependent" in their relationship to the culture industries. Yet, on another level, that of symbolic interpretation and appropriation, de Certeau would suggest they still retain a degree of autonomy. Their economic dependence may not be linked directly to notions of passive acceptance of ideological messages, as these critical writers might suggest; consumers are not governed by "a subjectivity that must, perforce, wander here, then wander there, as the media spotlight beckons," as these writers characterize them (Budd, Entman, Steinman 1990, 176). Rather, consumers are selective users of a vast media culture whose treasures, though corrupt, hold wealth that can be mined and refined for alternative uses. Some of the strategies fans adopt in response to this situation are open to all popular readers, others are specific to fandom as a particular subcultural community. What is significant about fans in relation to de Certeau's model is that they constitute a particularly active and vocal community of consumers whose activities direct attention onto this process of cultural appropriation. As such, they enjoy a contemporary status not unlike the members of the "pit" in 19th-century theatre who asserted their authority over the performance, not unlike the readers of Dickens and other serial writers who wrote their own suggestions for possible plot developments, not unlike the fans of Sherlock Holmes who demanded the character's return even when the author sought to retire him. Fans are not unique in their status as textual poachers, yet, they have developed poaching to an art form.

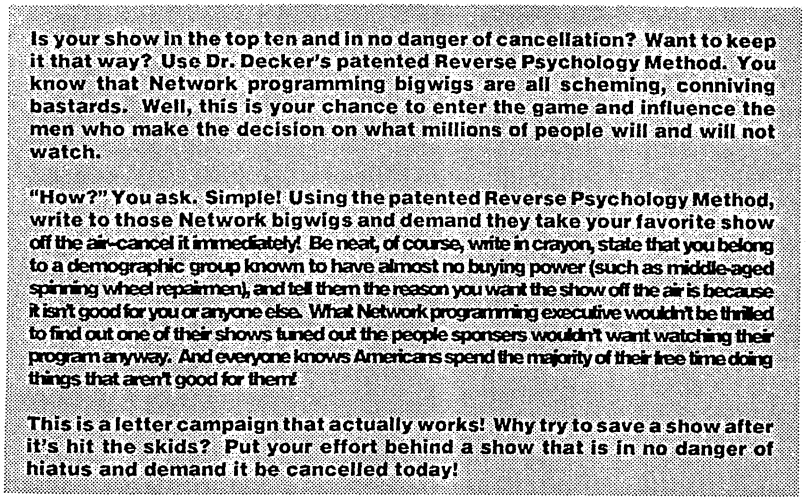
-397-

FANS AND PRODUCERS

The history of media fandom is at least in part the history of a series of organized efforts to influence programing decisions—some successful, most ending in failure. Many have traced the emergence of an organized media fan culture to late 1960s efforts to pressure NBC into returning *Star Trek* to the air, a movement which has provided a model for more recent attempts to reverse network decisions, such as the highly publicized efforts to save *Beauty and the Beast* or *Cagney and Lacey* (D'acci, 1988). Local *Blake's 7* clubs emerged in many American cities throughout the 1980s, with their early focus on convincing local PBS stations to buy the rights to this British science fiction program. American *Doctor Who* supporters volunteer their time at PBS stations across the country, trying to translate their passion for the program into pledge drive contributions that will ensure its continued airing. *War of the Worlds* devotees directed pressure against its producers trying to convince the studio not to kill some of their favorite characters, playfully suggesting that the only rationale for such a decision could be that "aliens have infiltrated Paramount studios!!!!!" (flier distributed at MediaWest, 1989). COOP, a national *Twin Peaks* fan organization, employed local rallies and computer networking to try to keep that doomed series on the air ("All we are saying is give *Peaks* a chance!") Chapter five will document a similar movement on behalf of *Beauty and the Beast.*

The television networks often help to publicize such audience campaigns, especially when they later decide to return programs from hiatus, as evidence of their responsiveness to their viewership. *Cagney and Lacey* producer Barney Rosenzweig actively solicited viewer support in his effort to convince CBS to give the series a second chance to attract higher ratings and publicizing the degree to which he had incorporated audience reactions directly into "the actual production process" (D'Acci, 1988). A recent commercial for *Quantum Leap* showed viewers swamping the network offices with their letters, forcing a reconsideration of its scheduling. Yet, just as often, fan campaigns produce little or no result. When ABC canceled the science fiction series, *Starman* (86–87), after less than a full season on the air, five of the program's fans organized Spotlight Starman to lobby for its return (Menefee, 1989). At its peak, the group maintained a mailing list of more than 5,000 names from across the United States and Canada and some 30 regional coordinators maintained systematic contact among its various chapters. Since then, the group has hosted several national conventions of *Starman* fans, has sustained three different monthly publications focused on the movement, has worked closely with the PTA to publicize the family orientation of the program, and has continued to target both network executives and program producers with letters on behalf of the short-lived series. Despite such extensive efforts and some signs of receptiveness by the program's producer and stars, the network has so far not returned the series to the air nor has it released rights to broadcast the series in syndication. The fans have found themselves powerless to alter the program's fate.

While this grassroots campaign suggests extraordinary efforts by the program's audience and a remarkable success given how few viewers saw or even heard of the series during its initial airing, their numbers still amount to a small fraction of the ratings required to make such a series profitable for the networks. Moreover, even if the audience's ranks expanded dramatically, even if the campaign to save *Starman* was truly national in scope, it is doubtful that the viewers could force their will upon the network executives. As Eileen Meehan (1990) has suggested, despite the myth of popular choice that surrounds them, the *Nielsen* ratings reflect only a narrowly



1.3 Advice from a frustrated fan: from *(Not) The MediaWest Convention Program*

chosen segment of the television audience—a "commodity audience"—which can be sold to national advertisers and networks, but which reflects neither mass taste nor the taste of an intellectual elite. Meehan's history of the different rating systems employed by American network television suggests that shifts between different systems reflect economic interests rather than attempts toward greater social scientific accuracy; changing forms of data collection result in the appearance of shifts in cultural preference that are the product of the different "commodity audiences" constituted by the systems of measurement. The ratings are not statistically sound, according to standards of social science research, yet, they allow the networks to dismiss popular movements or to justify otherwise questionable programing decisions. The myth is, of course, that the American public gets the programing it wants (and can thus blame no one but itself for the banality of mass culture); the reality is that the American public gets programing that is calculated to attract the "commodity audience" with limited concern for what most viewers actually desire (see also Streeter, 1988).

-399-

Many program producers are sympathetic to such campaigns and have shrewdly employed them as a base of support in their own power struggles with the network executives. Others, however, have responded to such fan initiatives with contempt, suggesting that fan efforts to protect favorite aspects of fictional texts infringe upon the producer's creative freedom and restrict their ability to negotiate for a larger audience. Confronted with a letter campaign by *Batman* comic book fans angry about the casting of Michael Keaton as the Dark Knight, *Batman* director Tim Burton responded: "There might be something that's sacrilege in the movie.... But I can't care about it.... This is too big a budget movie to worry about what a fan of a comic would say" (Uricchio and Pearson 1991, 184). William Shatner adopts a similar position in his characterization of *Star Trek* fans: "People read into it [the series] things that were not intended. In *Star Trek*'s case, in many instances, things were done just for entertainment purposes" (Spelling, Lofficier, and Lofficier 1987, 40). Here, Shatner takes on himself the right to judge what meanings can be legitimately linked to the program and which are arbitrary and false.

In extreme cases, producers try to bring fan activities under their supervision. Lucasfilm initially sought to control *Star Wars* fan publications, seeing them as rivals to their officially sponsored and corporately run fan organization. Lucas later threatened to prosecute editors who published works that violated the "family values" associated with the original films. A letter circulated by Maureen Garrett (1981), director of the official *Star Wars* fan club, summarized the corporation's position:

> Lucasfilm Ltd. does own all rights to the Star Wars characters and we are going to insist upon no pornography. This may mean no fanzines if that measure is what is necessary to stop the few from darkening the reputation our company is so proud of.... Since all of the *Star Wars* Saga is PG rated, any story those publishers print should also be PG. Lucasfilm does not produce any X-rated *Star Wars* episodes, so why should we be placed in a light where people think we do?.... You don't own these characters and can't *publish* anything about them without permission.

This scheme met considerable resistance from the fan-writing community, which generally regarded Lucas's actions as unwarranted interference in their own creative activity. Several fanzine editors continued to distribute adult-oriented *Star Wars* stories through an underground network of "special friends," even though such works were no longer publicly advertised or sold. A heated editorial in *Slaysu*, a fanzine that routinely published feminist-inflected erotica set in various media universes, reflects these writers' opinions:

> Lucasfilm is saying, "you must enjoy the characters of the *Star Wars* universe for male reasons. Your sexuality must be correct and proper by my (male) definition." I am not male. I do not want to be. I refuse to be a poor imitation, or worse, of someone's idiotic ideal of femininity. Lucasfilm has said, in essence, "This is what we see in the *Star Wars* films and we are telling you that this is what you will see." (Siebert, 1982, 44)

C. A. Siebert's editorial asserts the rights of fan writers to revise the character of the original films, to draw on elements from dominant culture in order to produce underground art that explicitly challenges patriarchal assumptions. Siebert and other editors deny the traditional property rights of producers in favor of a readers' right of free play with the program materials. As another *Star Wars* fan explained in response to this passage:

> I still don't agree with the concept that property rights over fiction, such as *Star Wars*, include any rights of the author/producer to determine *how* readers or viewers understand the offering. In this sense, I don't believe fans can take from the producers anything which the producer owns. . . . Any producer or author who wants to ensure as a legal right that audiences experience the same feelings and thoughts s/he put into the work, has misread both the copyright law and probably the Declaration of Independence. . . . Fans' mental play is no business of producers and neither are their private communications, however lengthy." (Barbara Tennison, Personal Correspondence, 1991)

This conflict is one which has had to be actively fought or at least negotiated between fans and producers in almost every media fandom; it is one which threatens at any moment to disrupt the pleasure that fans find in creating and circulating their own texts based on someone else's fictional "universe"—though an underground culture like fandom has many ways to elude such authorities and to avoid legal restraint on their cultural practices.

The relationship between fan and producer, then, is not always a happy or comfortable one and is often charged with mutual suspicion, if not open conflict. Yet lacking access to the media, lacking a say in programing decisions, confronting hostility from industry insiders, fans have nevertheless found ways to turn the power of the media to their own advantage and to reclaim media imagery for their own purposes. Spotlight Starman may have failed to return its series to the air, but in the process of lobbying for its return, as the group notes, "an impressive body of 'fan art'—visual, literary and musical—has been created" which extends the body of the primary text in directions never predicted by the program's producers (Werkley, 1989). *Star Wars* fans continued to circulate erotic stories that expressed their desires and fantasies about the characters, even though such stories were forced even further underground by Lucas's opposition.

De Certeau's term, "poaching," forcefully reminds us of the potentially conflicting interests of producers and consumers, writers and readers. It recognizes the power differential between the "landowners" and the "poachers"; yet it also acknowledges ways fans may resist legal constraints on their pleasure and challenge attempts to regulate the production and circulation of popular meanings.

And, what is often missed, de Certeau's concept of "poaching" promises no easy victory for either party. Fans must actively struggle with and against the meanings imposed upon them by their borrowed materials; fans must confront media representations on an unequal terrain.

READING AND MISREADING

A few clarifications need to be introduced at this time. First, de Certeau's notion of "poaching" is a theory of appropriation, not of "misreading." The term "misreading" is necessarily evaluative and preserves the traditional hierarchy bestowing privileged status to authorial meanings over reader's meanings. A conception of "misreading" also implies that there are proper strategies of reading (i.e., those taught by the academy) which if followed produce legitimate meanings and that there are improper strategies (i.e., those of popular interpretation) which, even in the most charitable version of this formulation, produce less worthy results. Finally, a notion of "misreading" implies that the scholar, not the popular reader, is in the position to adjudicate claims about textual meanings and suggests that academic interpretation is somehow more "objective," made outside of a historical and social context that shapes our own sense of what a text means. (This problem remains, for example, in David Morley's *Nationwide* study (1980) which constructs a scholarly reading of the program against which to understand the deviations of various groups of popular readers.) De Certeau's model remains agnostic about the nature of textual meaning, allows for the validity of competing and contradictory interpretations. De Certeau's formulation does not necessarily reject the value of authorial meaning or academic interpretive strategies; such approaches offer their own pleasures and rewards which cannot easily be dismissed. A model of reading derived from de Certeau would simply include these interpretive goals and strategies within a broader range of more-or-less equally acceptable ways of making meaning and finding pleasure within popular texts; it questions the institutional power that values one type of meaning over all others.

Secondly, de Certeau's notion of "poaching" differs in important ways from Stuart Hall's more widely known "Encoding and Decoding" formulation (1980). First, as it has been applied, Hall's model of dominant, negotiated, and oppositional readings tends to

imply that each reader has a stable position from which to make sense of a text rather than having access to multiple sets of discursive competencies by virtue of more complex and contradictory place within the social formation. Hall's model, at least as it has been applied, suggests that popular meanings are fixed and classifiable, while de Certeau's "poaching" model emphasizes the process of making meaning and the fluidity of popular interpretation. To say that fans promote their own meanings over those of producers is not to suggest that the meanings fans produce are always oppositional ones or that those meanings are made in isolation from other social factors. Fans have chosen these media products from the total range of available texts precisely because they seem to hold special potential as vehicles for expressing the fans' pre-existing social commitments and cultural interests; there is already some degree of compatibility between the ideological construction of the text and the ideological commitments of the fans and therefore, some degree of affinity will exist between the meanings fans produce and those which might be located through a critical analysis of the original story. What one fan says about *Beauty and the Beast* holds for the relationship many fans seek with favorite programs: "It was as if someone had scanned our minds, searched our hearts, and presented us with the images that were found there." (Elaine Landman, "The Beauty and the Beast Experience," undated fan flier). Yet, as chapter four will suggest, the *Beauty and the Beast* fans moved in and out of harmony with the producers, came to feel progressively less satisfied with the program narratives, and finally, many, though not all, of them rejected certain plot developments in favor of their own right to determine the outcome of the story.

Such a situation should warn us against absolute statements of the type that appear all too frequently within the polemical rhetoric of cultural studies. Readers are not *always* resistant; *all* resistant readings are not necessarily progressive readings; the "people" do not *always* recognize their conditions of alienation and subordination. As Stuart Hall (1981) has noted, popular culture is "neither wholly corrupt [n]or wholly authentic" but rather "deeply contradictory," characterized by "the double movement of containment and resistance, which is always inevitably inside it" (228). Similarly, Hall suggests, popular reception is also "full of very contradictory elements—progressive elements and stone-age elements." Such claims argue against a world of dominant, negotiating, and oppositional readers in favor of one where each reader is continuously

re-evaluating his or her relationship to the fiction and reconstructing its meanings according to more immediate interests.

In fact, much of the interest of fans and their texts for cultural studies lies precisely in the ways the ambiguities of popularly produced meanings mirror fault lines within the dominant ideology, as popular readers attempt to build their culture within the gaps and margins of commercially circulating texts. To cite only one example, Lynn Spigel and Henry Jenkins (1991) interviewed a number of "thirtysomethings" about their childhood memories of watching *Batman* on television. Our study sought not so much to reconstruct actual viewing conditions as to gain a better sense of the roles those memories played in the construction of their personal identities. The memories we gathered could not have been fit into ideologically pure categories, but rather suggested complex and contradictory attitudes towards childhood and children's culture. Remembering *Batman* evoked images of a personal past and also of the intertextual network of 1960s popular culture. Remembering the series provided a basis for a progressive critique of contemporary political apathy and cynicism, suggesting a time when social issues were more sharply defined and fiercely fought. Participants' memories also centered on moments when they resisted adult authority and asserted their right to their own cultural choices. For female fans, Catwoman became a way of exploring issues of feminine empowerment, of resistance to male constraints and to the requirement to be a "good little girl." Yet remembering *Batman* also evoked a more reactionary response—an attempt to police contemporary children's culture and to regulate popular pleasures. The adults, no longer nostalgic for childhood rebellion, used the 1960s series as the yardstick for what would constitute a more innocent style of entertainment. The same person would shift between these progressive and reactionary modes of thinking in the course of a single conversation, celebrating childhood resistance in one breath and demanding the regulation of childish pleasures in the next. These very mixed responses to the series content suggest the contradictory conceptions of childhood that circulate within popular discourse and mirror in interesting ways the competing discourses surrounding the television series when it was first aired.

As this study suggests, we must be careful to attend to the particularities of specific instances of critical reception, cultural appropriation, and popular pleasure—their precise historical context, their concrete social and cultural circumstances, for it is the specifics

of lived experience and not simply the abstractions of theory which illuminate the process of hegemonic struggle. For that reason, among others, this book is primarily a succession of specific case studies designed to document particular uses of the media within concrete social and historical contexts rather than a larger theoretical argument which would necessarily trade such specificity for abstraction and generalization. Having established in this chapter some general concepts regarding fan culture and its relationship to the dominant media, I want to illustrate these concepts in action, show how fan culture responds to actual historical and social contexts and trace some of the complex negotiations of meanings characterizing this cultural community's relationship to its favored texts.

NOMADIC READERS

De Certeau offers us another key insight into fan culture: readers are not simply poachers; they are also "nomads," always in movement, "not here or there," not constrained by permanent property ownership but rather constantly advancing upon another text, appropriating new materials, making new meanings (174). Drawing on de Certeau, Janice Radway (1988) has criticized the tendency of academies to regard audiences as constituted by a particular text or genre rather than as "free-floating" agents who "fashion narratives, stories, objects and practices from myriad bits and pieces of prior cultural productions" (363). While acknowledging the methodological advantages and institutional pressures that promote localized research, Radway wants to resist the urge to "cordon" viewers for study, to isolate one particular set of reader-text relationships from its larger cultural context. Instead, she calls for investigations of "the multitude of concrete connections which ever-changing, fluid subjects forge between ideological fragments, discourses, and practices" (365).

Both academic and popular discourse adopt labels for fans—"Trekkies," "Beastie Girls," "Deadheads"—that identify them through their association with particular programs or stars. Such identifications, while not totally inaccurate, are often highly misleading. Media fan culture, like other forms of popular reading, may be understood not in terms of an exclusive interest in any one series or genre; rather, media fans take pleasure in making intertextual connections across a broad range of media texts. The female *Star Trek* fans discussed earlier understood the show not simply within its own terms but in relationship to a variety of other texts circulated at the time (*Lost in Space*, say, or NASA footage on television) and since (the feminist science fiction novels of Ursula LeGuin, Joanna Russ, Marion Zimmer Bradley, and others). Moreover, their participation within fandom often extends beyond an interest in any single text to encompass many others within the same genre—other science fiction texts, other stories of male bonding, other narratives which explore the relationship of the outsider to the community. The *Batman* fans Spigel and I interviewed likewise found that they could not remain focused on a single television series but persistently fit it within a broader intertextual grid, linking the Catwoman across program boundaries to figures like *The Avengers*' Emma Peel or the *Girl from UNCLE*, comparing the campy pop-art look of the series to *Mad* or *Laugh In*. Fans, like other consumers of popular culture, read intertextually as well as textually and their pleasure comes through the particular juxtapositions that they create between specific program content and other cultural materials.

On the wall of my office hangs a print by fan artist Jean Kluge—a pastiche of a pre-Raphaelite painting depicting characters from *Star Trek: The Next Generation:* Jean-Luc Picard, adopting a contemplative pose atop a throne, evokes the traditional image of King Arthur; Beverly Crusher, her red hair hanging long and flowing, substitutes for Queen Guinevere; while in the center panel, Data and Yar, clad as knights in armor, gallop off on a quest. Visitors to my literature department office often do a double-take in response to this picture, which offers a somewhat jarring mixture of elements from a contemporary science fiction series with those drawn from chivalric romance. Yet, this print suggests something about the ways in which *Star Trek* and other fan texts get embedded within a broader range of cultural interests, indicating a number of different interpretive strategies. The print could be read in relation to the primary series, recalling equally idiosyncratic juxtapositions during the holodeck sequences, as when Picard plays at being a tough-guy detective, when Data performs *Henry V* or studies borscht-belt comedy, or when the characters dash about as Musketeers in the midst of a crewmember's elaborate fantasy. Indeed, Kluge's "The Quest" was part of a series of "holodeck fantasies" which pictured various *Star Trek* characters at play. The combinations of characters foreground two sets of couples—Picard and Crusher, Yar and Data—which were suggested by program subplots and have formed the

-402-

focus for a great deal of fan speculation. Such an interpretation of the print would be grounded in the text and yet, at the same time, make selective use of the program materials to foreground aspects of particular interest to the fan community. Ironically, spokesmen for *Star Trek* have recently appeared at fan conventions seeking to deny that Data has emotions and that Picard and Crusher have a romantic history together, positions fans have rejected as inconsistent with the series events and incompatible with their own perceptions of the characters.

The image could also invite us to think of *Star Trek* transgenerically, reading the characters and situations in relation to tradition of quest stories and in relation to generic expectations formed through fannish readings of popular retellings of the Arthurian saga, such as Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Mists of Avalon* (1983), Mary Stewart's *The Crystal Cave* (1970), T. H. White's *The Once and Future King* (1939), or John Boorman's *Excalibur*. Such an interpretation evokes strong connections between the conventional formula of "space opera" and older quest myths and hero sagas.

The print can also be read extratextually, reminding us of actor Patrick Stewart's career as a Shakespearean actor and his previous screen roles in sword and sorcery adventures like *Excalibur*, *Beast Master*, and *Dune*. Fans often track favored performer's careers, adding to their video collections not simply series episodes but also other works featuring its stars, works which may draw into the primary text's orbit a wide range of generic traditions, including those of high culture.

A fan reader might also interpret the Kluge print subculturally, looking at it in relation to traditions within fan writing which situate series characters in alternate universes, including those set in the historical past or in the realm of fantasy, or which cross media universes to have characters from different television series interacting in the same narrative.

Finally, a fan reader might read this print in relation to Kluge's own ouevre as an artist; Kluge's works often juxtapose media materials and historical fantasies, and encompass not only her own fannish interests in *Star Trek* but a variety of other series popular with fans (*Blake's 7*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Alien Nation*, among others).

Contemplating this one print, then, opens a range of intertextual networks within which its imagery might be understood. All available to *Trek* fans and active components of their cultural experience,

these networks link the original series both to other commercially produced works and to the cultural traditions of the fan community. Not every fan would make each of these sets of associations in reading the print, yet most fans would have access to more than one interpretive framework for positioning these specific images. Thinking of the print simply as an artifact of a *Star Trek*-fixated fan culture would blind us to these other potential interpretations that are central to the fans' pleasure in Kluge's art.

Approaching fans as cultural nomads would potentially draw scholars back toward some of the earliest work to emerge from the British cultural studies tradition. As Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson's *Resistance through Rituals* (1976) or Dick Hebdidge's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979) document, British youth groups formed an alternative culture not simply through their relationship to specific musical texts but also through a broader range of goods appropriated from the dominant culture and assigned new meanings within this oppositional context. The essays assembled by Hall and Jefferson recorded ways symbolic objects—dress, appearance, language, ritual occasions, styles of interaction, music—formed a unified signifying system in which borrowed materials were made to reflect, express, and resonate aspects of group life. Examining the stylistic bricolage of punk culture, Hebdidge concluded that the meaning of appropriated symbols, such as the swastika or the safety pin, lay not in their inherent meanings but rather in the logic of their use, in the ways they expressed opposition to the dominant culture.

Feminist writers, such as Angela McRobbie (1980, 1976), Dorothy Hobson (1982, 1989), Charlotte Brunsdon (1981), and Mica Nava (1981), criticized these initial studies for their silence about the misogynistic quality of such youth cultures and their exclusive focus on the masculine public sphere rather than on the domestic sphere which was a primary locus for feminine cultural experience. Yet their own work continued to focus on subcultural appropriation and cultural use. Their research emphasized ways women define their identities through their association with a range of media texts. McRobbie's "Dance and Social Fantasy," (1984) for example, offers a far reaching analysis of the roles dance plays in the life of young women, discussing cultural materials ranging from a children's book about Anna Pavlova to films like *Fame* and *Flashdance* and fashion magazines. Like Hebdidge, McRobbie is less interested in individual texts than in the contexts in which they are inserted; McRobbie

shows how those texts are fit into the total social experience of their consumers, are discussed at work or consumed in the home, and provide models for social behavior and personal identity.

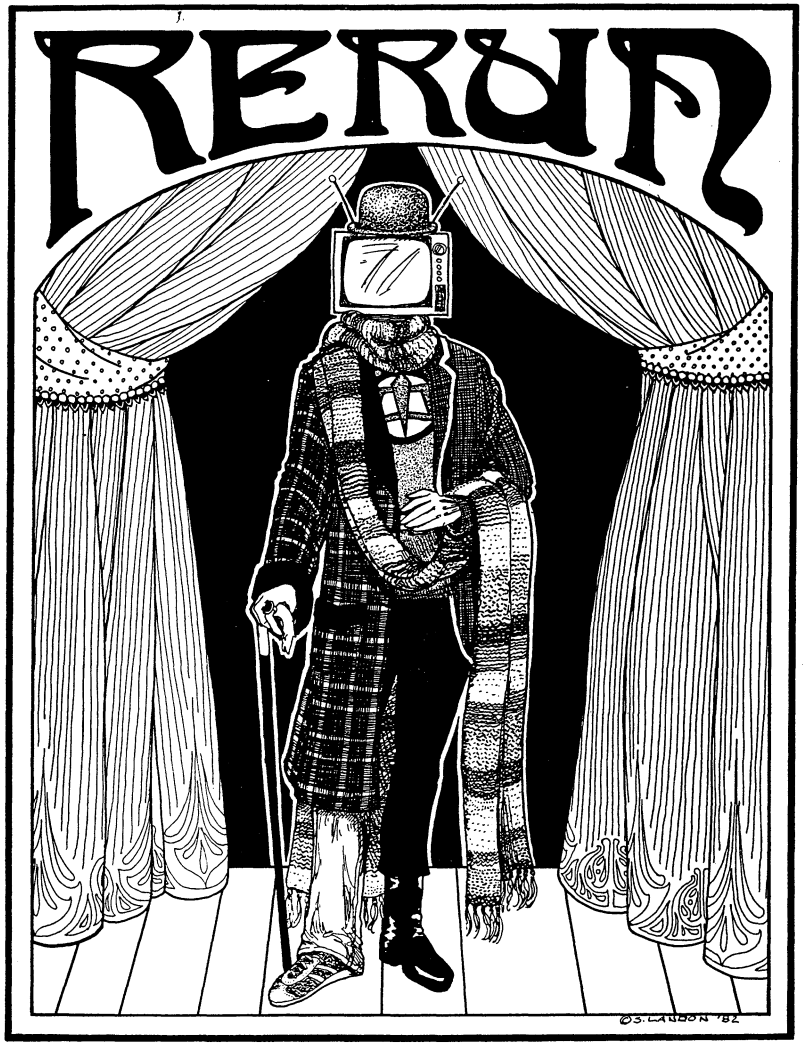
These British feminist writers provide useful models for recent work by younger feminists (on both sides of the Atlantic) who are attempting to understand the place of media texts in women's cultural experiences, (for useful overviews of this work, see Long, 1989; Rotman, Christian-Smith, and Ellsworth, 1988; Schwictenberg, 1989; Woman's Studies Group, 1978). Drawing on McRobbie's research, Lisa Lewis (1987), for example, has explored what she describes as "consumer girl culture," a culture which converges around the shopping mall as a specifically female sphere. Lewis links the "woman-identified" music videos of Cyndi Lauper and Madonna to the concerns of this "consumer girl culture," suggesting that these pop stars provide symbolic materials expressing the pleasure female adolescents take in entering male domains of activity. The young women, in turn, adapt these symbolic materials and weave them back into their everyday lives, imitating the performers' idiosyncratic styles, and postering their walls with their images. Images appropriated from MTV are linked to images drawn from elsewhere in consumer culture and form the basis for communication among female fans about topics common to their social experience as young women.

Following in this same tradition, I want to focus on media fandom as a discursive logic that knits together interests across textual and generic boundaries. While some fans remain exclusively committed to a single show or star, many others use individual series as points of entry into a broader fan community, linking to an intertextual network composed of many programs, films, books, comics, and other popular materials. Fans often find it difficult to discuss single programs except through references and comparisons to this broader network; fans may also drift from one series commitment to another through an extended period of involvement within "fandom." As longtime fan editor Susan M. Garrett explains: "A majority of fans don't simply burn out of one fandom and disappear. . . . In fact, I've found that after the initial break into fandom through a single series, fans tend to follow other people into various fandoms, rather than stumble upon programs themselves" (Personal correspondence, July 1991). Garrett describes how fans incorporate more and more programs into their interests in order to facilitate greater communication with friends who share common interests

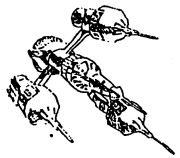
or possess compatible tastes: "Well, if she likes what I like and she tends to like good shows, then I'll like this new show too" (Personal correspondence, July 1991). To focus on any one media product—be it *Star Trek* or "Material Girl"—is to miss the larger cultural context within which that material gets embedded as it is integrated back into the life of the individual fan.

Fans often form uneasy alliances with others who have related but superficially distinctive commitments, finding their overlapping interests in the media a basis for discussion and fellowship. Panels at MediaWest, an important media fan convention held each year in Lansing, Michigan, combine speakers from different fandoms to address topics of common interest, such as "series romances," "disguised romantic heroes," "heroes outside the law," or "Harrison Ford and his roles." Letterzines like *Comlink*, which publish letters from fans, and computer net interest groups such as Rec.Arts.TV, which offer electronic mail "conversation" between contributors, facilitate fan discussion and debate concerning a broad range of popular texts. Genzines (amateur publications aiming at a general fan interest rather than focused on a specific program or star) such as *The Sonic Screwdriver*, *Rerun*, *Everything But . . . The Kitchen Sink*, *Primetime*, or *What You Fancy* offer unusual configurations of fannish tastes that typically reflect the coalition of fandoms represented by their editors; these publications focus not on individual series but on a number of different and loosely connected texts. *Fireside Tales* "encompasses the genre of cops, spies and private eyes," running stories based on such series as *Hunter*, *I Spy*, *Adderly*, *Riptide*, and *Dempsey and Makepeace* while *Undercover* treats the same material with a homoerotic inflection. *Walkabout* centers around the film roles of Mel Gibson including stories based on his characters in *Lethal Weapon*, *Year of Living Dangerously*, *Tim*, *Tequila Sunrise*, and *The Road Warrior*. *Faded Roses* focuses on the unlikely combination of *Beauty and the Beast*, *Phantom of the Opera*, and *Amadeus*, "three of the most romantic universes of all time." *Animazine* centers on children's cartoons, *The Temporal Times* on time-travel series, *The Cannell Files* on the series of a particular producer, *Tuesday Night* on two shows (*Remington Steele* and *Riptide*) which were once part of NBC's Tuesday night line-up, and *Nightbeat* on stories in which the primary narrative action occurs at night, "anything from vampires to detectives."

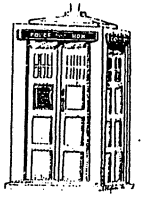
This logic of cultural inclusion and incorporation is aptly expressed within the flier for one fan organization:



1.4 Signe Landon Danler, *Rerun*. This cover for a multi-media zine borrows iconography from a number of different series, including the Doctor's scarf, Barnabas Collins' cane and ring, John Steed's bowler, and Jim Kirk's pants.



DO YOU :



Have the urge to wear a 17-foot scarf?
Desire to be known as 'Madam President?'
Find it "Elementary, my dear Watson?"
Are you continually looking toward
the sky for 'unwelcomed' visitors?

OR

Do you just want to visit "Fawlty Towers?" or
Join CI-5 to become a true 'Professional?'
Then you need search no further!
Set your time/space/relative dimention coordinates

FOR:



Anglofans Unlimited

(A British Media/Doctor Who/Blake's 7, etc. club)

Begun by a merry troup of loonies and ex-Federation convicts in February of 1987. Our boundries encompass the entire colonies of Britain (U.S., Canada & Australia). Among the benifits we offer are:

- A bi-monthly newsletter, "PLAIN ENGLISH," filled with club news, articles, fanzine reviews, convention reports, trivia and more.
- Round Robins--a way to make friends while participating in lively discussions about your favorite subjects.
- A Writing Department for those interested in creating fan fiction.
- Meetings for local members.
- And much, much more!

THE CI5 PROFESSIONALS

UFO

1.5 Nomadic Poaching: AngloFans Unlimited (A British Media/Doctor Who/Blake's 7, etc. Club)

DO YOU:

Have the urge to wear a 17-foot scarf?
Desire to be known as "Madame President?"
Find it "Elementary, my dear Watson?"
Are you continually looking toward the sky for "Unwelcome" visitors?

OR

Do you just want to visit "Fawlty Towers?" Or
Join CI-5 to become a true "Professional?"
Then you need search no further!
Set your time/space/relative dimension coordinates

FOR:
ANGLOFANS UNLIMITED
(A British media/Doctor Who/Blake's 7, etc. club).

Members of this club share not simply or even primarily a strong attachment to any given series but a broader configuration of cultural interests and a particularly intimate relationship to media content. The "etc." in the club's description foregrounds the group's constant and "unlimited" ability to accommodate new texts.

WHAT DO POACHERS KEEP?

If I find de Certeau's notions of textual poaching and nomadic reading particularly useful concepts for thinking about media consumption and fan culture, I want to identify at least one important way in which my position differs from his. (Other differences will surface throughout the discussion). De Certeau draws a sharp separation between writers and readers: "Writing accumulates, stocks up, resists time by the establishment of a place and multiplies its production through the expansionism of reproduction. Reading takes no measures against the erosion of time (one forgets oneself *and* also forgets), it does not keep what it acquires, or it does so poorly" (174). Writing, for de Certeau, has a materiality and permanence which the poached culture of the reader is unable to match; the reader's meaning-production remains temporary and transient, made on the run, as the reader moves nomadically from place to place; the reader's meanings originate in response to immediate concerns and are discarded when they are no longer useful. De Certeau draws a useful distinction between strategies and tactics:

strategies are operations performed from a position of strength, employing the property and authority that belong exclusively to literary "landowners," while tactics belong to the mobile population of the dispossessed and the powerless, gaining in speed and mobility what they lack in stability. The tactical strength and the strategic vulnerability of reading, he contends, lies in its inability to form the basis for a stable or permanent culture; readers maintain a freedom of movement at the expense of acquiring resources which might allow them to fight from a position of power and authority. Tactics can never fully overcome strategy; yet, the strategist cannot prevent the tactician from striking again.

While this claim may be broadly applicable to the transient meaning-production which generally characterizes popular reading, it seems false to the specific phenomenon of media fandom for two reasons. First, de Certeau describes readers who are essentially isolated from each other; the meanings they "poach" from the primary text serve only their own interests and are the object of only limited intellectual investment. They are meanings made for the moment and discarded as soon as they are no longer desirable or useful. Fan reading, however, is a social process through which individual interpretations are shaped and reinforced through ongoing discussions with other readers. Such discussions expand the experience of the text beyond its initial consumption. The produced meanings are thus more fully integrated into the readers' lives and are of a fundamentally different character from meanings generated through a casual and fleeting encounter with an otherwise unremarkable (and unremarked upon) text. For the fan, these previously "poached" meanings provide a foundation for future encounters with the fiction, shaping how it will be perceived, defining how it will be used.

Second, fandom does not preserve a radical separation between readers and writers. Fans do not simply consume preproduced stories; they manufacture their own fanzine stories and novels, art prints, songs, videos, performances, etc. In fan writer Jean Lorrah's words (1984), "Trekfandom. . . . is friends and letters and crafts and fanzines and trivia and costumes and artwork and filksongs and buttons and film clips and conventions—something for everybody who has in common the inspiration of a television show which grew far beyond its TV and film incarnations to become a living part of world culture." (N.P.) Lorrah's description blurs the boundaries between producers and consumers, spectators and participants, the commercial and the homecrafted, to construct an image of fandom

as a cultural and social network that spans the globe. Fandom here becomes a participatory culture which transforms the experience of media consumption into the production of new texts, indeed of a new culture and a new community.

Howard Becker (1982) has adopted the term "Art World" to describe "an established network of cooperative links" (34) between institutions of artistic production, distribution, consumption, interpretation, and evaluation: "Art Worlds produce works and also give them aesthetic values" (39). An expansive term, "Art World" refers to systems of aesthetic norms and generic conventions, systems of professional training and reputation building, systems for the circulation, exhibition, sale, and critical evaluation of artworks. In one sense, fandom constitutes one component of the mass media Art World, something like the "serious audience" which Becker locates around the symphony, the ballet, or the art gallery. Not only do "serious audience members" provide a stable base of support for artistic creation, Becker suggests, they also function as arbiters of potential change and development. Their knowledge of and commitment to the art insures that they "can collaborate more fully with artists in the joint effort which produces the work" (48). Historically, science fiction fandom may be traced back to the letter columns of Hugo Gernsbeck's *Amazing Stories*, which provided a public forum by which fans could communicate with each other and with the writers their reactions to published stories; critics suggest that it was the rich interplay of writers, editors, and fans which allowed science fiction to emerge as a distinctive literary genre in the 1930s and 1940s (Ross, 1991; Del Rey, 1979; Warner, 1969; Moskowitz, 1954; Carter, 1977). Since Gernsbeck and other editors also included addresses for all correspondents, the pulps provided a means by which fans could contact each other, enabling a small but dedicated community of loyal science fiction readers to emerge. Fans, under the approving eye of Gernsbeck and the other pulp editors, organized local clubs and later, regional science fiction conventions to provide an arena where they could exchange their ideas about their favorite genre. By 1939, fandom had grown to such a scale that it could ambitiously host a world science fiction convention, a tradition which has continued to the present day.

So, from its initiation, science fiction fandom has maintained close ties to the professional science fiction writing community and has provided intelligent user criticism of published narratives. Fan conventions play a central role in the distribution of knowledge

about new releases and in the promotion of comic books, science fiction novels, and new media productions. They offer a space where writers and producers may speak directly with readers and develop a firmer sense of audience expectations. Fan awards, such as the Hugo, presented each year at the World Science Fiction Convention, play a key role in building the reputations of emerging writers and in recognizing outstanding accomplishment by established figures. Fan publishing has represented an important training ground for professional writers and editors, a nurturing space in which to develop skills, styles, themes, and perhaps most importantly, self confidence before entering the commercial marketplace. Marion Zimmer Bradley (1985) has noted the especially importance of fandom in the development of female science fiction writers at a time when professional science fiction was still male-dominated and male-oriented; fanzines, she suggests, were a supportive environment within which women writers could establish and polish their skills.

Yet media fandom constitutes as well its own distinctive Art World, operating beyond direct control by media producers, founded less upon the consumption of pre-existing texts than on the production of fan texts. Much as science fiction conventions provide a market for commercially produced goods associated with media stories and as a showcase for professional writers, illustrators, and performers, the conventions are also a marketplace for fan-produced artworks and a showcase for fan artists. Fan paintings are auctioned, zines are sold, performances staged, videos screened, and awards are given in recognition of outstanding accomplishments. Semiprofessional companies are emerging to assist in the production and distribution of fan goods—song tapes, zines, etc.—and publications are appearing whose primary function is to provide technical information and commentary on fan art (*Apa-Filk* for fan music, *Art Forum* for fan artists, *Treklink* and *On the Double* for fan writers, etc.) or to publicize and market fan writing (*Datazine*). Convention panels discuss zine publishing, art materials, or costume design, focusing entirely on information needed by fan artists rather than by fan consumers. MediaWest, in particular, has prided itself on being fan-run and fan-centered with no celebrity guests and programing; its activities range from fan video screenings and fanzine reading rooms to workshops with noted fan artists, focused around providing support for the emergence of fan culture. These institutions are the infrastructure for a self-sufficient fan culture.

From its initiation in the 1960s in the wake of excitement about *Star Trek*, media fandom has developed a more distant relationship to textual producers than that traditionally enjoyed within literary science fiction fandom. If literary fans constituted, especially in the early years, a sizeable segment of the potential market for science fiction books, active media fans represent a small and insignificant segment of the audience required to sustain a network television series or to support a blockbuster movie. Media producers and stars have, thus, looked upon organized fandom less as a source of feedback than as, at best, an ancillary market for specialized spin-off goods. The long autograph lines that surround media stars often prohibit the close interaction that fans maintain with science fiction writers and editors.

Indeed, the largely female composition of media fandom reflects a historical split within the science fiction fan community between the traditionally male-dominated literary fans and the newer, more feminine style of media fandom. Women, drawn to the genre in the 1960s, discovered that the close ties between male fans and male writers created barriers to female fans and this fandom's traditions resisted inflection or redefinition. The emergence of media fandom can be seen, at least in part, as an effort to create a fan culture more open to women, within which female fans could make a contribution without encountering the entrenched power of long-time male fans; these fans bought freedom at the expense of proximity to writers and editors. Where this closeness has developed, as in the early years of American *Blake's 7* fandom, it has proven short-lived, since too many institutional pressures separate media professionals and fans.

Moreover, since copyright laws prohibit the commercial distribution of media fan materials and only a small but growing number of fans have gone on to become professional writers of media texts, these fan artists have a more limited chance of gaining entry into the professional media art world and thus have come to regard fandom less as a training ground than as a permanent outlet for their creative expression. (A growing number of media fans have "turned pro," writing professional *Trek* novels, contributing to commercial publications, pursuing careers as science fiction writers, or submitting scripts to television programs, a fact that offers inspiration to many current fan writers who have similar aspirations, yet, I would argue that the importance of media fan cultural production far exceeds its role as a training ground for professional

publishing.) Some fanzine stories and novels, such as the writing of Jean Lorrah, Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Leslie Fish, and Alexis Fagin Black, have remained in print since the late 1960s while others continue to circulate in mangled second-hand editions or faded photocopies. Works by some respected fan artists, such as Jean Kluge, Karen River, Suzan Lovett, and Barbara Fister-Liltz, may fetch several hundred dollars in convention auctions. There are a sizeable number of people who have been active in fandom for most or all of their adult lives and who are now raising children who are active fans. (Perhaps even a few have grandchildren in fandom.)

Media fandom gives every sign of becoming a permanent culture, one which has survived and evolved for more than twenty-five years and has produced material artifacts of enduring interest to that community. Unlike the readers de Certeau describes, fans get to keep what they produce from the materials they "poach" from mass culture, and these materials sometimes become a limited source of economic profit for them as well. Few fans earn enough through the sale of their artworks to see fandom as a primary source of personal income, yet, many earn enough to pay for their expenses and to finance their fan activities. This materiality makes fan culture a fruitful site for studying the tactics of popular appropriation and textual poaching. Yet, it must be acknowledged that the material goods produced by fans are not simply the tangible traces of transient meanings produced by other reading practices. To read them in such a fashion is to offer an impoverished account of fan cultural production. Fan texts, be they fan writing, art, song, or video, are shaped through the social norms, aesthetic conventions, interpretive protocols, technological resources, and technical competence of the larger fan community. Fans possess not simply borrowed remnants snatched from mass culture, but their own culture built from the semiotic raw materials the media provides.

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All for love: The Corn fandom, prosumers, and the Chinese way of creating a superstar

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All for love: The Corn fandom, prosumers, and the Chinese way of creating a superstar

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ABSTRACT The 2005 season of *Super Girl* not only turned Li Yuchun into a household name in China but also witnessed the birth of Corn fandom, a massive and predominantly female fan group. In this article, I examine Corns' dedicated support of Li Yuchun's music career, and analyse their free labour from a fan perspective. I argue that with the emergence of 'participatory culture', Corns have been able to participate in the star-making process of Chinese music-entertainment industry on an unprecedented scale. They begin to assume the intriguing new role of 'prosumers' that integrates fan production, fan promotion, and fan consumption all in one. But Corns' partnership with the industry is highly problematic. While it provides a channel for them to assert their collective agency and power, it also leads to target marketing and aggravated corporate exploitation.

KEYWORDS Corns • fan labour • free labour • Mainland China • music-entertainment industry • prosumers

Over the past three years Li Yuchun, the 2005 winner of the extremely popular reality show *Super Girl*,[1] has become the hottest name in Chinese music-entertainment industry. No matter how controversial her success has been viewed, domestically, she has apparently ascended to the throne of national pop idol and cultural icon in the eyes of foreign media. In addition to gracing the cover of the *Time(Asia) Magazine* as an Asian hero, she was allegedly named by a London-based think tank, Royal Institute of International

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Affairs, as one of the 50 persons that hold the most sway in China, in the same league as Chinese President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao (Chunyu xixi, 2008). Li Yuchun's rise to stardom is closely related to the tireless support of her Corns, one of the most high-profile fan groups in contemporary Mainland China.[2] Corns' fierce loyalty, amazing talents, and innovative tactics to connect with their beloved idol have generated extensive media coverage in China and evoked both awe and discomfort in the domestic music-entertainment industry.

As a fan of another finalist of the 2005 season and a quasi 'Corn Powder',[3] I have been immersed in the overall *Super Girl* fandom for three years, paying special heed to Corns both on and off the Internet. It has become a personal habit for me to lurk at Corns' Baidu post bars everyday and browse through their endless gossips of every tiny aspect of Li Yuchun and discussion of various social and personal issues.[4] I have also observed and talked with Corns at award ceremonies and concert events. In this article, I will focus on the Corn fandom in an attempt to explore the changing relations between fans and industry in Mainland China. I will argue that with the emergence of 'participatory culture' (Jenkins, 1992, 2006a,b), fandoms such as the Corns have been able to participate in the star-making process of music-entertainment industry on an unprecedented scale and depth. Instead of the traditional split of fan identity between the 'good' fan-producers and the 'bad' fan-consumers (Hills, 2002: 27), Corns begin to assume the intriguing new role of 'prosumers' that integrates fan production, fan promotion and fan consumption all in one. An examination of the relationship between Corn fandom and the industry will help us reconsider the question of power in cultural production, where emphasis has been too often 'placed on the determining influence of institutional constraints and corporate structures' (Negus, 2002: 115). An account of Corns' efforts of prosumption will also reveal a type of fan behaviour seldom discussed in fan and audience studies, that is, how fans deliberately employ their collective purchasing power to gain leverage over the industry and get directly involved in grassroots marketing. More importantly, I would like to use the case study of Corn fandom to shed light on the issue of fan labour. Some questions I want to raise are: how do Corns perceive their huge amount of free labour offered to the entertainment industry? Are there any gaps or conflicts in Corns' new role of 'prosumers'? Since Corns are predominantly female, what kind of cultural-specific gender norms are implied in their fan labour? How does the free labour of celebrity fans such as Corns differ from the 'co-creative labour' of more technologically-driven and more male-dominated fandom such as gamers (Banks and Humphreys, 2008; Postigo, 2007)?

I begin my article with a brief overview of recent developments in the Mainland Chinese music industry in order to provide an institutional context for the formation of an idol-centered business model stimulated by reality TV shows. In the second part of the article, I give a detailed description of Corns' enthusiastic promotion of Li Yuchun's music and public image.

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One defining characteristic of fans is that they are excessive consumers. The Corns, however, are also obsessive promoters and have designed a whole new pattern of prosumption. The third section of my article analyses Corns' promotional efforts in terms of Tiziana Terranova's (2004) concept of 'free labour', and compares Corns' labour of love with fan programmers' labour of art. I also dwell on corporate exploitation of fan labour and appropriation of fan discourse, as well as Corns' self-reflection and self-justification of their behaviours. In conclusion, I offer a sketch of Corns' vision of a fan conglomerate, which has the potential to challenge and transform the existing structure of the music-entertainment industry.

The besieged industry

With the spread of digital technology throughout the global music industry (Leyshon et al., 2005; Longhurst, 2007), pop music industry in Mainland China has undergone a difficult transitional period and a frantic search for new business models and revenue streams. Unlike its more mature counterparts in the West, the indigenous record companies have never enjoyed any economies of scale or healthy market growth due to multiple structural problems at the level of production and distribution, rampant physical and digital piracy, and a woeful lack of venture capital (Mao, 2006: 38). By the end of 2007, sales of the mainland music industry suffered a consecutive five-year decline and showed no sign of rebounding in the first season of 2008 (Bai, 2008). Currently legal CD sales are so dismal that hardly any record companies in Mainland China could make money from album producing and few singers could afford new releases continuously.

The falling CD sales are accompanied by the growing number of consumers accustomed to a culture of free music. Since China is one of the biggest sources of illegal downloads in the world with a digital piracy rate of 99 per cent (IFPI, 2008), it is not difficult to understand why ordinary customers are unwilling to pay for legal downloads. It also explains why only 10 or so online digital music service providers out of 7000 are legitimate in China, and the combined annual sales of those legitimate providers accounts for less than 10 per cent of the overall digital market (Ming, 2006). Compared to the online music market, the mobile music market that gained momentum in 2004 seems to be more promising. Although the music industry could receive only 10 per cent of profits from mobile operators, given the huge base of mobile phone users, a handful of record companies who happen to own the copyrights of the hottest downloads were able to reap a big profit. After the novelty of CRBT (colour ring back tone, a personalized ring back tone service first invented by a South Korean company in 2001) wore out among urban users, however, the frequency of downloads decreased sharply. Starting from 2007, in a dearth of any super hit songs to spur customers' downloads, the growth of the mobile market has experienced a substantial slowdown (Li, 2007).

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When the mobile market goes into a slump and the online digital market has almost no chance to grow, *Super Girl* unexpectedly provides a new business model for the music industry – a star system. Utilizing the star system to promote music products has long been an important marketing strategy in the pop industry, and what the pop industry sells has always been more than catchy tunes and lyrics (Burton, 2007: 172). But before the 2005 season of *Super Girl*, the mainland music industry rarely produced superstars. Instead, the mainland pop music market had been dominated by idols imported from Hong Kong and Taiwan, and increasingly from South Korea and Japan. With the arrival of *Super Girl*, things changed. The prolonged contest schedule, extensive publicity campaigns, along with diverse tactics to elicit active audience participation, have managed to cultivate a vast number of enthusiastic fans urgently needed by the industry. During the 2005 season, the producer of the programme, Hunan Satellite TV, pocketed 30m RMB (US$4.29m) solely from audience's SMS (Short Message Service) votes. Hunan Satellite TV also co-invested in the establishment of an artist managing agency named Shanghai Tianyu Media Co. Ltd (hereafter 'Tianyu') to handle the marketing of 'Super Girls' through lucrative advertising deals, sold-out nationwide concert tours, and a release of a best-selling album comprised of songs performed during the contest (Duan and Deng, 2006: 334–8). The financial success brought by the *Super Girl* phenomenon prompted many people to believe that the future of the mainland music industry lies in the creation of brand name singers and performers, or 'stars', in short.

Prosumption practices of Corn fandom

The idea of *Super Girl* was borrowed from the US reality show *American Idol*, which in turn imitated the British *Pop Idol*. What makes those reality TV programmes work so successfully across diverse cultural and national contexts is certainly 'the fantasy of empowerment' – the audience is given the right to choose their own idols (Jenkins, 2006b: 64). For fans of *Super Girl*, however, audience empowerment and participation (Tong, 2006), be they fantasy or not, has concurrently brought a 'real' sense of responsibility and an escalation of commitment. Corns, in particular, feel that it is their obligation to continue to support Li Yuchun even after she won the contest. Their reasoning is that if Corns could bring her the championship with their votes, they could also help her become a superstar with their devotion. Vehement attacks on her vocal skills and androgynous appearance from Li Yuchun haters only harden Corns' determination to support and protect her. After Li Yuchun signed an album contract with Taihe Rye Music Co. Ltd (hereinafter, 'Taihe Rye'), the biggest record company in Mainland China, at the end of 2005, many Corns have consciously positioned themselves as guardians of her music career, the 'catchers in the Rye', rather than a group of hysterical star-chasers.

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Since the end of the contest, Corns have tried every possible means to help Li Yuchun become the most valuable singer in mainland pop music industry. Among their promotional efforts, several activities are particularly noteworthy. First and foremost is their continuous effort to promote Li's singles and albums on the Internet through chart beating (*da bang*) and trial listening (*shi ting*). All music charts in China run a voting and/or trial listening system on the webpage for audience (fans) to vote for their favorite songs. Top positions on those charts could lead to music awards given by the industry and considerable media exposure. While web voting is free of charge, some charts also provide the platform of mobile phone voting that usually costs 1 RMB per vote. Like voting in the *Super Girl* contest, voting for those charts is practically unlimited so that fans can vote as much as their time and wallets permit. At the 2008 MTV Asia Awards, for instance, Li Yuchun was nominated along with three other well-known domestic singers for the 'Award of Most Popular Singer in Mainland China' and finally won it with over 97 per cent of the votes (Sina Entertainment, 2008). The stunning vote percentage indicates that *Super Gir*l fans have been much more accustomed to voting activities than traditional music fans. With the solid backing of Corns' votes and hits, Li Yuchun has won more than a dozen of 'most popular singer' or 'most influential singer' awards in less than three years, despite the fact that hardly any of her songs has become truly popular beyond the Corn fandom.

Besides the 'global' media of Internet, Corns have also turned their eyes to local media through the production and circulation of the *Special Publication of Li Yuchun's Music* (*Li Yuchun yinyue tekan*). Starting from 2006, Corns have produced two issues to mark the release of Li's two albums. The purpose of the publication is to 'help those media professionals who possess the discursive power reduce their misunderstanding of Li Yuchun and get them focused on her music', according to the editors. To facilitate the success of the project, hundreds of Corns have donated money to it, while scores of others have contributed their time, effort, and professional skills to the production and distribution process. Each publication consists of a list of music awards Li Yuchun won in the year, posh album and concert reviews, and sleek photos of her live performance. In 2006, 2230 copies of the publication were printed; in 2007, this number increased to 2500 copies, along with approximately the same number of Li Yuchun desk calendars and specially-designed paper bags. Those materials were first printed in Beijing and then mailed to reliable Corns across the country. Upon receiving the package, local Corns matched each copy of publication and calendar with a copy of Li Yuchun's new album, and put all three items into the special paper bag before hand-delivering the packages to various local newspapers, radio and TV stations. Corns' carefully prepared promotional packages have elicited favourable response from many media workers. Some DJs would immediately introduce Li Yuchun's new album on the radio as a token of appreciation or invite Corns to participate in their programmes.

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To improve the public image of Li Yuchun and themselves, Corns have conscientiously extended love of their idol to love of charity and established a Corn Love Foundation (*yumi aixin jijin*) with the China Red Cross Foundation. As the first Chinese charity foundation that is named after fans rather than celebrities, the Corn Love Foundation has received nearly 5m RMB (US$700,000) in total donations by July 2008. While Li Yuchun has contributed generously to the foundation, most of the donation comes in small amounts from ordinary Corns. The foundation has paid for the medical treatment of 28 children with leukemia, built 4 clinics in rural areas and a 'Corn Village' for peasants who lost their home in a flood. It has also contributed a large sum of money to victims of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake.[5] The foundation not only provides a focal point for continuous positive media coverage of Li Yuchun but also a free channel to advertise her public personae. In 2007, a group of well-connected Corns reached an agreement with metro stations in Beijing and Nanjing to place advertisements of the Corn Love Foundation either at the entrance of the metro, along the hallways, or inside trains. Regular long-term advertising at those coveted places could cost up to millions of RMB, but since the advertisement of Corn Love Foundation is qualified as 'public advertising', Corns got to display their posters all for free, with no specific time limits. As the permanent ambassador of Corn Love Foundation, Li Yuchun's image naturally appeared large on those posters (Shensheng wushui, 2007; Zhang, 2007).

In addition to fan promotion, Corns provide a strong customer base for Li Yuchun's legal music products. Before the release of Li Yuchun's first album in 2006, two young female corns in Zhejiang Province, accompanied by a male friend, embarked on a 15-day, over-20-city bicycle trip to raise public awareness of anti-piracy. It was the first long distance anti-piracy action initiated by fans in China. Their self-made 10-meter banner read, 'Piracy stops at true love. Please support legal audio-video products and support good music' (Tom Entertainment, 2006). This banner acutely reveals the root cause of piracy – a lack of genuine connection between artists and the public. As Ian Condry (2004: 358) has shown in his study of Japanese consumers, when people feel connection with music producers, they are willing to buy legal products. But Corns are more than willing to buy; they are willing to buy repetitively in order to boost the sales number of Li Yuchun's albums. They believe that in order to be a superstar, one must be commercially successful; if Li Yuchun could achieve commercial success, she is not far from being a superstar. The popular slogan of 'prove your love for her with sales numbers' among her fans vividly sums up Corns' way of thinking. Although there is no accurate sales chart in China as a result of record companies' long-standing practice of giving grotesquely exaggerated sales numbers for publicity reasons, Li Yuchun's first and second albums are both believed to be top sellers on the mainland with combined sales exceeding 1m copies.

Corns have perfected a consumption tactic called 'hiking' (*bao zou*), which is made up by 'CD sweeping' (*sao die*) and ground promotion. CD sweeping

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refers to the activity of visiting local legal CD outlets to collect distribution, promotion, and sales information of Li Yuchun's new album, and to increase sellers' confidence by purchasing multiple copies of her album at selected stores. Ground promotion refers to fans' promotional activities at sales outlets and free give-outs of Li Yuchun's album at large supermarkets, cafes, and other commercial leisure facilities. While only working Corns could afford to do CD sweeping due to the high cost of repetitive purchases, many student Corns choose to participate in ground promotion.

After the release of Li Yuchun's second album, a middle-aged female Corn from Shenzhen City of Guangdong Province shared her CD sweeping experience with other Corns at a Baidu post bar. On a Tuesday afternoon, she 'hiked' for 7 hours in downtown Shenzhen and visited altogether 10 retail outlets, mostly by foot, bus, and metro. At each outlet, she would first check the stock and display of Li Yuchun's album as well as the volume of customers, then decide the number of copies to buy. She would intentionally increase the amount of purchase as a reward to those outlets that had sufficient stock and proper display of Li Yuchun's album. At outlets that had only one or two copies on the shelf, she would buy them up and tell the sellers to refill their inventory (Zongyaonie, 2007). Since the legal CD market has been continuously shrinking, many retail outlets would only carry the albums of a few established Hong Kong and Taiwan singers. It is therefore crucial for Corns to encourage retailers to carry Li Yuchun's album so as to improve its distribution rate. During the critical first month of the new release, over 100 of such CD sweeping reports, written by Corns from all over the country, could be seen at post bars.

Corns have also tried to entice non-fans to purchase Li Yuchun's album by holding in-store promotional activities. On a Sunday in November 2007, more than 50 local Corns worked together and held a successful on-site promotion at Shenzhen Book City. They first cut a deal with Book City to offer all buyers a 15 per cent discount that day on Li Yuchun's second album, *Mine*. Then they prepared calendar cards, paper bags, and fan-made CDs of Li Yuchun' s concert as free gifts to buyers. On the day of the event, a high quality stereo system played the new album non-stop. The promotional site was decorated with posters, banners, hand signboards, and balloons. Some fans gave out fliers to passers-by while others explained to potential buyers in detail special features of the album. Within 5½ hours, 310 legal copies were sold, one third of which were bought by non-fans (Aichun de YIE, 2007). This was an amazing achievement, considering that popular singers like Jay Chou – the R&B King from Taiwan – could merely sell a dozen on a regular business day at an urban CD retailer. Due to the low profit margin of legal CDs and the small number of buyers, no retailers will spend time and effort to promote CD sales, unless they are given the opportunity to hold an album signing event. Record companies' promotional machinery generally focuses on media publicity and excludes in-store promotion. What Shenzhen Corns did at Book City certainly makes up for the insufficiency of corporate promotion.

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Fan labour on trial

The prosumption practices of Corns bear remarkable similarity to the 'free labour' of Internet users described by Tiziana Terranova (2004: 74) as 'simultaneously voluntarily given and unwaged, enjoyed and exploited'. The double connotation of the word 'free' indicates that the labour of Internet users is both free of charge and free from compulsion, willingly provided 'in exchange for the pleasures of communication and exchange' (Terranova, 2004: 91). Like the digital economy that depends on a huge amount of free labour of Internet tinkerers to build websites, modify software packages, and establish online communities (Terranova, 2004: 74), the star system of Chinese music-entertainment industry also requires massive amounts of free labour for fans to post voraciously on online forums, wait patiently at album signing events, travel long distances to attend concerts, and perform a spectacle of shrieking and cheering at award ceremonies. While some online activities such as chat, real-life stories, mailing lists, and amateur newsletters are not immediately recognized as forms of labour in the digital economy (Terranova, 2004: 79), Chinese companies are keenly aware of the value of unpaid fan labour, for when there are not enough real fans to carry out the aforementioned 'fan duties', companies hire 'professional fans' (*zhiye fensi*) to perform them. In the Chinese music industry's current experimentation with new marketing strategies of creating the market (fans) ahead of the products (stars, singles, and albums) through reality TV shows, a steady fan base becomes a crucial asset for young talents and is as important as, if not more than, individual singing skills. Although their fan labour is shamelessly exploited by the industry, Corns have also used it as a bargaining chip to gain more pleasure and autonomy for themselves. In this section, I will try to approach the issue of free labour from the perspective of fans by outlining Corns' own interpretation of their active engagement in the star-creating process, their mixed feelings about the role of prosumers, and their painful soul-searching confronted by outrageous exploitation.

Unlike fandom in the USA, which is constantly in conflict with the media industry on copyright issues (Jenkins, 1992, 2006a,b), Corns seem to have no such problem with the domestic entertainment industry. Their fan labour earned them more rights to own Li Yuchun than Tianyu and Taihe Rye, the two companies that respectively hold her agent and album contracts. These companies have generally taken a laid-back attitude towards Corns' extensive usage of supposedly copyrighted materials, for they understand that the more Corns participate, the more they will be loyal to Li Yuchun. Starting from the beginning, a group of Corn 'paparazzi' have filmed almost all public appearances of Li Yuchun, including TV programmes, media interviews, album signing events, award ceremonies, and concerts, and uploaded those video files to a special post bar on Baidu for the free enjoyment of the Corn community. Occasionally, when a handful of Corns try to make money from selling bootleg concert CDs, photo books, and the *Special Publication of Li Yuchun's Music* on the Internet, it is the fandom, rather than

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the companies, who urge them to stop such illegal actions for its double infringement of the copyright of the companies and fellow Corns.

In a survey of modders, fan-programmers who modify commercial games and share their mods freely with other gamers, Postigo (2007: 309–10) identifies three central themes in their motivation: artistic creation, enhanced enjoyment of game play, and prospective job opportunity in the game industry. While some modders do mention that they 'enjoy doing things for others' (Postigo, 2007: 309), their motivations by and large are oriented towards individual expression and personal gains. In their case study of train and rail fans centered around the *Trainz* project, Banks and Humphreys also emphasize the 'mixing motives' of fan participation in co-creative labour, as fan creators constantly oscillate from contributing content to the community for free to selling their content to the company for profit. Even those ostensibly social behaviours could turn out to be 'smart investments in potential markets' as fans could convert their reputation and standing in the community into market opportunities 'by selling the content or turning the skills gained into jobs' (Banks and Humphreys, 2008: 409). In contrast to the 'fluid meshing and mixing of the commercial and non-commercial' in the game community (Banks and Humphreys, 2008: 408), Corn fandom has strenuously tried to keep away from corporate encroachment and those suspect 'professional fans' hired by company. Although some Corns have turned their fan fiction into profitable book contracts, most fan products circulated in the community are either free, sold at production cost, or auctioned for the purpose of raising money for the Corn Love Foundation. Although some Corns have used post bars to exchange job information and expand their social networks, few would join to seek potential job opportunities in the risky and unstable entertainment business. The reason to be a Corn, is always, first and foremost, because of love. Like the passion for artistic creation of those predominantly male modders, Corns are also driven by a creative passion. The major difference is that they want to create a superstar, instead of a perfect game.

The free labour of Corns is thus framed by a discourse of selfless maternal love that has been inherited from Confucian family values and consolidated by the contemporary single-child family pattern in urban China. The parent–child relationship between Corns and Li Yuchun is best evidenced in the affectionate nickname of 'kid' (*xiaohaier*) that Corns use to address her. It is one of several popular nicknames of Li Yuchun in Corn fandom. Corns as young as 15 and as old as 75 would all address her as 'the kid' or 'my kid'. Those who refrain from all-out adulation of Li Yuchun would be jokingly named by other Corns as 'step-mothers', and those who worry excessively about her would be teased as 'too motherly'. According to the traditional parental roles of 'strict father, kind mother' (*yanfu cimu*) advocated by Confucianism, the father is supposed to be strict with the child and provides (most likely) 'him' with moral guidance, whereas the mother should bathe the child with love and care. Since the adoption of the one child policy in the 1980s, most urban Chinese families have only one child, who naturally becomes the focus of attention, love and hope of the whole family. In

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this kind of single-child family, it is often the mother who takes responsibility to look after the child's study and daily life, where the father works as the breadwinner. Like dedicated Chinese parents, Corns feel they are obliged to do whatever they can to help 'the kid' succeed and in turn they also take great pride in her achievements.[6] In addition to the dimension of familial love, Corns' relationship with Li Yuchun also displays a particular intensity of female bonding. One practical reason often cited by Corns to explain their fervent support is that they are deeply concerned about the vulnerable position of a young inexperienced female artist in the male-dominated entertainment industry. According to the 'implicit rule' (*qian guize*) of the Chinese entertainment industry, female artists often need to offer sexual favours to influential male producers, executives, or patrons in order to achieve professional advancement. Corns hope that with strong fan support, Li Yuchun would never have to compromise herself in her journey to superstardom.

While Corns' relationship with Tianyu is thoroughly antagonistic and the company staff is generally viewed as a bunch of greedy idiots, their relationship with Taihe Rye is far more complicated, fraught with expectation and frustration. Many Corns are aware that the domestic music industry is losing money nowadays and they have to be the 'cash cow' for Taihe Rye so that the label can invest more in Li Yuchun's music production. Taihe Rye has found many ways to generate revenues from Corns. Li Yuchun's albums are invariably among the most expensive ones in the market, and so are her concert tickets. To promote her second album, Taihe Rye organized a 5-city concert tour for Li Yuchun in 2007, which drew nearly 30,000 Corns and created a sales 'miracle'. But this miracle was based on a very unusual ticketing structure. While the ticket cost ranged from 180, 380, 680, 980, 1280 to 1680 RMB (US$25, US$54, US$97, US$140, US$180 to US$240), VIP seats, that is, seats priced at 1680 and 1280 RMB, often accounted for a significant portion of total available seats.[7] In one case, half of a venue was designated a VIP area and the seats turned out to be no more than shabby plastic stools. As Hardt (1999: 95) has remarked, entertainment and cultural industries are 'focused on the creation and manipulation of affects', and Taihe Rye is no exception. In fact, it has done a much better job in manipulating fan affect than producing music. While squeezing profits from Corns, Taihe Rye also carefully watches fan talk on Baidu post bars in order to understand and cater to fan desires. Recognizing Corns' anxiety about Li Yuchun's vulnerable position in the music industry, Song Ke, the label President, openly declared himself as a Corn on several occasions, implying that he and his company have been taking good care of Li Yuchun. To satisfy the Corn's desire of seeing a more independent artist, Taihe Rye allowed Li Yuchun to be the co-producer of a mini-album in 2008, and showered her with praise for her artistic decisions. As a result of Li Yuchun's involvement in the production, this mini-album was sold at a price that only Corns could afford.

Corns are highly conscious of Taihe Rye's deft exploitation of fan attachment. As early as the release of Li Yuchun's first EP in 2006, a

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well-known Corn in the fandom expressed her qualms of fan consumption in this way:

> If the record company produces a crude single and I call upon you to boycott it, would you follow my words? If you boycott her [Li Yuchun] music products, would you still identify yourselves as fans? If you are fans, would you be determined to raise the sales of her first album to an incredible figure? But could that figure really represent her musical achievement? If we are fans, should we support her unconditionally and pardon all her weakness? If we are like that, are we still the group of people who claim to be objective, cool-headed, mature, and have independent judgment in daily life? (Nanxi, 2006)

Like British football supporters who protested against the implementation of all-seater stadia and subsequent increased prices in the 1990s, while their 'love of team and game' made 'the exercise of the ultimate fan action – that of a boycott – unlikely to succeed' (Brown, 1998: 64), Corns are torn between disgust of corporate rip-off and overwhelming love of Li Yuchun, which frequently leaves them in doubt and even feeling guilty about their support. When a poor sound system forced Li Yuchun to apologize twice to the audience during a concert tour in Chongqing, one Corn wrote despairingly in her blog that it might be Corns' solidarity, excessive participation, and unconditional consumption that led to Taihe Rye's negligence in the tour. She also pointed out that Taihe Rye's practice of target marketing in Corn fandom had virtually isolated Li Yuchun from the mainstream audience she deserves (Daodao, 2007).

Many Corns have attempted to justify their excessive support by referring to the nature of fandom. They argue that being a fan, by definition, means fanatic and unconditional support of the object of fandom. One Corn wrote in her blog that as a 'standard' fan she felt it was her obligation to support Li Yuchun's music regardless of quality. All she needed to do was to keep buying Li Yuchun's music products until her songs became really good (Nuanyang, 2006). Corns further differentiate fans from song lovers (*ge mi*), by suggesting that fans invest far more emotion, time, and money in a singer while song lovers are only eager to appreciate their favorite singer's new songs. Every successful singer has a continuum of supporters, including both extremely loyal fans and relatively less loyal song lovers. With regard to the exorbitant cost of concert tickets, one Corn responded that it was because Chinese people have not got used to spending their leisure time on concerts. They would rather enjoy themselves at Karaoke rooms or indulge in alcohol. As long as cultural consumption remains insufficiently developed in China, concerts are bound to be enjoyed by fans:

> Corns are willing to spend money for those concerts, as they alone know how much pleasure they can derive from them. In this materialistic society, few are willing to give instead of take. Those who give must have been imbued with passion and power. It is wonderful to have such an experience in life.[8]

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This Corn defends her fan consumption by a mixed discourse of economic necessity, private pleasure, and moral superiority. On one hand, she views her attendance of Li Yuchun's concerts as a fair give-and-take according to the market logic. Big pleasure naturally costs big bucks. On the other hand, she is aware that Li Yuchun's concerts do not live up to market standards and therefore tactically deploys the discourse of noble sacrifice and free labour, so as to distinguish herself from the 'all-rational', 'calculating' sovereign consumer (McGuigan, 2000: 297).

Here lies the intrinsic contradiction of Corns' role as both a faithful supporter and a shrewd consumer, which is closely related to the paradoxical position of Li Yuchun as both a beloved, invaluable friend and family member and a well-marketed, highly valuable 'celebrity-commodity', as Graeme Turner (2004: 34) phrases it. Since Corns have to access Li Yuchun through purchasing her image, performance, and music products, their intimate personal relations with her are inevitably tinged by market relations. But just as the game industry cultivates the 'work as play' ethos for more effective recruiting and higher worker productivity (Deuze, 2007: 208–9), the celebrity industry also relies on fans' ability to treat 'heavenly bodies' as 'significant others', rather than commercial products, to generate higher profits. Yet the tension between family and business, and between the social and commercial is always there, erupting from time to time in the form of heated in-group debates. Corns, in general, however, have stubbornly clung to their familial relations with Li Yuchun and only assert their consumer rights in their castigation of corporate misconduct. Li Yuchun's reciprocal, sincere, and creative way of expressing her gratitude to Corns' supporting efforts further convinces Corns that she is worthy of their whole-hearted devotion. In their love–hate triangular affair with Li Yuchun and the mainland entertainment industry, Corns like to perceive the industry as 'the necessary evil', while Li Yuchun is the embodiment of angelic beauty and goodness.

Conclusion: A fan conglomerate?

Bitterly disappointed by the company's unprofessional management of the 2007 concert tour, a Corn with the handle name of 'angelnostop' proposed to set up a multinational and diversified Corn conglomerate. This witty utopian message posted at Li Yuchun Bar immediately received many humorous replies. Based on the proposal, Li Yuchun would be elected head of this fan conglomerate and all Corns would be its shareholders. The conglomerate would be involved in all kinds of industries related to Li Yuchun's performing career, such as entertainment, recording, publishing, and fashion. Capable Corns from various professions would be hired by the conglomerate as Li Yuchun's personal photographer, PR expert, project director, accountant, fashion designer and so forth. The conglomerate would employ world-class session musicians and songwriters to put together

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the best music for Li Yuchun, as well as a top-notch music video director. The marketing department of the conglomerate would utilize all forms of media from print, radio, TV, to Internet, mobile phone, and a special Corn satellite channel to launch a massive promotional campaign for Li Yuchun's new release. Headquartered in a landmark corn-shaped skyscraper in Beijing, right next to the new headquarters of CCTV (China Central Television), the conglomerate would establish branches in Hong Kong, New York, and London, respectively responsible for business in South-east Asia, North America, and Europe. With the conglomerate's IPO in an unspecified year of the 21st century, Li Yuchun would become one of the richest women in the world and be entitled to the extravagance reserved for political leaders of developed nations (angelnostop, 2007).

The utopian vision of a Corn conglomerate could be seen as fans' appropriation of the business model of entertainment industry to radically uproot the unequal power relations between industry and fans, as opposed to corporate appropriation of fandom for profits. It is telling that Corns are not contented with Li Yuchun's status as a cultural icon, but desire her to be a business tycoon who could wield immense power in economic and political fields, on top of the influence she already has in the cultural field. As the title of Li Yuchun's first album 'the Queen and the Dream' indicates, Corns are working collectively, ambitiously, for a dream of a new queendom that would affirm the power and talent of women. The fact that Corns dare to put forward such a 'fantastic' idea of a fan conglomerate at a public online forum speaks volumes to the potential of fans as a force of social change in contemporary Mainland China. As Kelly (2004: 13) remarked on the ambivalent position of fans in consumer society: 'Fans represent the fondest hopes and worst fears of a culture capitalist', one could not help wondering what will happen if fans like Corns turn into culture capitalists themselves? Will they bring more happy tidings or exploitative nightmares to the market? Will they be able to replace corporate greed with a more feminine or feminist ideology of love and responsibility? Will they become 'the agent of change that unsettles existent industrial knowledge regimes' (Banks and Humphrey, 2008: 416)? One thing seems to be sure, when the two trends of media convergence and participatory culture in the entertainment industry intersect (Jenkins, 2006b), fan prosumers will have a fair opportunity to showcase their will and agency.

Notes

1 *Super Girl* (*chaoji nüsheng*) is a TV singing contest inspired by *American Idol* and organized by Hunan Satellite TV, a provincial TV station in central China. The only requirement of the participants of the show is that they must be female. The show started in 2004 and reached its peak in 2005 with phenomenal success. Four-hundred million viewers reportedly tuned in for the

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grand finale of the season and Li Yuchun was the champion with 3.5m votes. The viewing rate of the third season in 2006 dropped remarkably, however, due to a variety of factors. In 2007, Hunan Satellite TV stopped airing *Super Girl* and replaced it with the male version of *Super Boy* (*kuaile nansheng*).

2 'Corn' (*yumi*) is the nickname of Li Yuchun's fans. While the word 'yu' is a homophone of the middle character in Li Yuchun's name, 'mi' is a pun on the Chinese character that stands for the English word 'fan'. All top finalists of the 2005 season attracted a substantial following. Armed with digital technology, those fans have built up an incredibly rich fan culture, including tremendous amount of fan talk, fan essays, fan photos, fan fictions, fan videos and fan manga. Being the most populous among *Super Girl* fans, Corns are also the most dedicated and productive. But their evangelical zeal has frequently irritated many other fans. Early post bar polls show that 90 per cent of Corns are female, aged between 16–45, either students or working women from all walks of life.

3 The phrase 'Corn Powder' (*yumi fen*) refers to the fan of Corns, that is, the fan of Li Yuchun's fans. 'Fen' is the Chinese word used to transliterate the English word 'fan'. A few Corns have openly admitted that they are more committed to the Corn fandom as a whole than to Li Yuchun alone. Some non-Corns who do not have much interest in Li Yuchun are nonetheless attracted to the Corn fandom. Constance Penley (1992: 491) in her article on slash fandom has also mentioned that she was told by a friend that she was not really 'a fan of *Star Trek*', but a fan of the fandom.

4 'Post Bar' (*tieba*) is an online product launched by Baidu company, the leading Chinese search engine. It is a searchable keyword-based discussion forum generated by users. There are more than 50 fan-run post bars dedicated to Li Yuchun on Baidu.com alone, among which 'Li Yuchun Bar' has been the most important and influential, providing Corns from all over the world a 'home' to meet and talk. Set up in April 2005, this fan-managed bar has played an excellent role of official website of Li Yuchun, whereas the actual official website run by the company attracted so few visitors that it was allegedly closed down in 2008.

5 *Baidu baike* [Baidu Encyclopedia], s.v. 'Yumi aixin jijin', URL (consulted August 2008): http://baike.baidu.com/view/1204333.htm

6 Interestingly, scholars of Japanese popular culture (Tierney, 2004; Yano, 2004) have also noted that fans (patrons) sometimes develop an intimate parent–child relationship with stars in Japan, but the stars in their studies are all male and therefore carry a different gender inflection from my study of Corn fandom.

7 Chinese urban residents' per capita disposable income in 2007 was 13,786 RMB (US$2000). For more information, see URL (consulted August 2008): http://cn.chinagate.com.cn/economics/2008–04/16/content_14965906.htm

8 See Xishan caicha's post titled 'Writing after the Nanjing Leg of the Concert Tour – Li Yuchun?' for a lengthy debate of the 2007 concert tour and the particular quote I used here.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
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Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

WEEK 10

Chapter 3

Romancing The Girl: Adolescent Romance Novels and the Construction of Femininity

Linda K Christian-Smith

-429-

Introduction

One important contribution of feminism to cultural studies has been in focusing inquiry on the ways that culture as social processes and practices constructs people's subjectivity, that is, the ways that people reflect on and live out their recognition of sexual differences in relation to particular configurations of power and control. Recent theorizations of the subject from the perspective of Lacanian and feminist psychoanalysis (Belsey, 1980; Gallop, 1982; Henriques *et al.*, 1984; Kristeva, 1980; Marks and de Courtivron, 1981; Mitchell and Rose, 1982) suggest that gendered subjectivity is discursively and historically produced, rather than being already given. In this, language is essential in constructing subject positions within femininity and masculinity.

Several recent studies of romance fiction intimate that particular uses of language, such as written narrative, constitute powerful ways of influencing how women understand themselves and their relation to the conditions under which they live. While there have been several studies of adult romance fiction (Finn, 1984; Kaplan, 1986; Modleski, 1984; Radford, 1986; Radway, 1984; Snitow, 1984), adolescent romance fiction has only been recently explored (Christian, 1984a, 1984b; Christian-Smith, 1986, 1987a, 1987b). Given the importance that romance in general occupies within teenage girls' lives (McRobbie, 1978; McRobbie and Nava, 1984; Sarsby, 1983; Thompson, 1984), it offers an opportunity for understanding how adolescent girls' gender identity is formed through their experiences in romance.[1] The present essay examines how femininity is discursively constructed in a sample of thirty-four adolescent romance novels written from

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1942 to 1982 by American authors.[2] It will be my argument that these romance texts offer adolescent female readers subject positions within femininity as future keepers of heart and hearth.

Adolescent Fiction and the Political Economy of Publishing

Previously I have discussed the importance of locating gender discourses constructed in popular cultural forms within their economic and political conditions of production (Christian, 1984a; Christian-Smith, 1987b). Through bookclubs, library purchases, and reading and language arts programs, romance novels have become popular reading materials for teenage girls, both inside and outside of school. These romance novels, which feature girls' first love experiences, are the points of convergence of certain changes in the structure of publishing and are the object of controversy on the part of parents, teachers, and librarians regarding their representations of gender relations (Harvey, 1982; Lanes, 1981).

One change in current publishing is evident in the flurry of large-scale mergers in the 1980s, concentrating ownership of the 'culture industry' (music, film, television and book publishing) in the hands of a few multinational corporations. One of the most spectacular mergers occurred in the Fall of 1984 when Gulf + Western acquired Prentice-Hall and Simon & Schuster, leaders in educational publishing, thus making Gulf + Western the largest publisher of school materials in the world (Reuter and Mutter, 1985). This is characteristic of publishing today: small family-owned business have been consistently absorbed into mega-publishing concerns.

These changed patterns of ownership have wrought significant modifications in the very structure of publishing and have ramifications for the kinds of books published. Coser, Kadushin and Powell (1982) suggest that as publishing houses are incorporated into multimedia conglomerates, the bottom line of the ledger assumes a new importance. Editors in the old-fashioned sense are no longer key people. Rather, professional managers having business or legal backgrounds now occupy key decision-making positions (Coser *et al.*, 1982) and editorial decisions are often made on the basis of which books possess the character of instant appeal and will turn quick profits. A consistent worry expressed by insiders in publishing and those who study book production (Turow, 1978; Whiteside, 1981) is that this emphasis on a book's immediate salability may narrow the range of books published, making it difficult for initially unprofitable but important books to be published in the first place. Teen romance novels, especially the new teen romance series, are one response to dominant publishing interests centering on profitability and instant appeal (Christian-Smith, 1986a).

According to *Publisher's Weekly*, by 1982 romance novels netted over 200 million dollars, representing by 1985 almost half of all general interest books purchased (L. Wainger, Personal Communication). As of late, a new audience for this fiction has emerged in girls ages 9 to 15 and teen romance novels rank in the top three kinds of books read and purchased by girls (Market Facts, 1984). Of course, teen romances for girls are nothing new. In the 1940s and 1950s, Maureen Daly, Betty Cavanna and Rosamond du Jardin wrote novels focusing on teen romance. What is new, however, is the transposing of adult romance formats from Harlequin Romances to young adult publishing. This is evident in the way that audiences for these books are identified, in big-budget marketing campaigns, and in the use of the series format in which several books each month are issued. Scholastic Books, a leader in educational publishing, conducted internal market research in its popular school bookclub TAB, regarding which books were most frequently ordered. Based on the popularity of romance novels, it developed the first teen romance series, 'Wildfire', in the 1980s (Lanes, 1981). The success of Wildfire can be gauged from the 2.25 million (as of 1982) books sold (Harvey, 1982, p. 48), with many of these in the TAB bookclub. Quick to notice such successes, other publishers have developed their own teen romance series, so that today more than a dozen are available.

While teen romance novels have been enthusiastically welcomed by the publishing industry as one way to maintain profits, their appearance has not been without controversy (Lanes, 1981). In particular, Scholastic's reputation for supplying quality books through its bookclubs (Bridgman, 1984), has been questioned lately by parents and professionals within the field of children's literature and library science because of the limited representations of femininity produced in these novels (Harvey, 1982). Lanes (1981) notes that in her interviews of male and female educators, parents, and librarians, the general consensus was that the teen romances center their versions of femininity on devotion to home, heart, and hearth, that a woman is incomplete without a man, that motherhood is women's destiny, and women's rightful place is at home. My recent (Christian-Smith, 1987a) study of romance novel-reading among teenage girls documented teachers' misgivings regarding the romances in their classrooms. Mrs M., a teacher at a suburban junior high school, expresses her apprehension thus:

> I feel guilty about letting the girls order these books through TAB (a Scholastic Inc. bookclub). I read a couple of them once. They are so simple and the characters in the novels are stereotypes. You know, mom at home in her apron, dad reading the paper with his feet up . . . (p. 11)

But despite the concerns of many adults over girls' romance novel reading, these novels continue to enjoy a wide readership among teenage girls and have been a boon for many a publishing house.

Methodology

Sampling Techniques

The period of 1942–1982 was chosen since it represents the very beginnings of romance fiction for young readers (Burton, 1965; Edwards, 1952) and brings the form to its current state of development. Also, the novels span four decades which have significance for women and girls regarding domesticity, employment and educational opportunities. The sample of novels in the study was developed through the use of selection guides commonly used by school and public librarians and educators when choosing books for young readers. Most prominent among them are *The Junior High School Library Catalog, Booklist, Hornbook, School Library Journal,* and bibliographies contained in critical texts within the field of children's literature. The present sample represents a fraction of the original list and was developed through the use of bibliographies of recommended adolescent books and through critiques of individual books having strong romantic components. An individual title had to be positively recommended by two different sources to remain in the sample. The intention was to locate books that would be representative of adolescent romance fiction and provide a somewhat even distribution of titles over the forty years. The original list was subsequently culled to include only those titles positively reviewed in one of the previously mentioned selection guides. Hence, the thirty-four titles in this study represent those books positively recommended by a number of selection tools. The use of the same guides as employed by teachers and librarians when choosing books made it likely that these books might be included in collections easily accessible to adolescents. Searches of a large metropolitan library system and several school libraries revealed that many of the books in the sample are indeed contained in their collections. A listing of the selection tools used in this study may be found at the end of this article.

Procedure

In order to determine how femininity was constructed within the sample of novels, a reading methodology was developed using semiotic analysis as it

appears in the work of Barthes (1967, 1974, 1977), Greimas (1966, 1970), and McRobbie (1978). Greimas has employed semiotic analysis to investigate the structure and meaning of narrative, while Barthes and McRobbie have applied semiotics to the study of popular cultural texts such as fashion systems and girls' teen magazines. Semiotic analysis proceeds by locating sets of codes through which meaning is produced (Belsey, 1980; Lovell, 1980). These codes constitute the grammar or rule systems which determine what elements are combined. The code of *romance* was very important in structuring the feminine discourse in the novels.[3]

However, content is the only one focus of the production of meaning. As Barrett (1981) argues, texts have structures which interrelate with content in complex ways. The narrative structure of the romance novels I studied was organized through the codes of character in the form of two pairs of binary oppositions. The Good/Bad and Weak/Strong were the most significant of these codes. The codes of action and character which I have thus far discussed have a long tradition in women's fiction, from the Brontës to modern Harlequin romances, as the structuring mechanisms of books focusing on women's lives (Brownstein, 1984; Modleski, 1984).

Analysis of the novels revealed that they could be grouped into three periods according to the specific characteristics of the code of *romance,* as follows:

Period I	1942–1959
Period II	1963–1979
Period III	1980–1982

Although the code of *romance* contains elements that remained quite stable over the forty years, there were aspects of the code which pointed to the fact that the novels were not of one fabric and that gender relations are the object of struggle with teenage romance novels. While the changes were not of a great magnitude, they do merit discussion and the periodization provides an analytical tool for accounting for and addressing such changes, as well as allowing for an analysis of the relationship of the novels to the historical context in which they were written.

The novels of Period I (1942–1959) chronicle the introduction of the adolescent female into a world that she had only known as a spectator. It is a world of proms, the malt shop, Saturday night dates and, above all, attaining the affection of that special boy. She and her boyfriend share a common perception regarding how each should act towards the other. He leads, she follows. She does not assert, but is heard through her informal influence. They share a love that is signified by an occasional chaste kiss and through this love the girl changes from an uncertain girl into a poised young woman.

In Period II (1963–1979) teenage girls continue to immerse themselves in romance. However, romance itself is an experience that is now fraught with conflict and disappointment for girls. Girls and their boyfriends no longer possess a community of interest regarding how to relate to one another. Pressures towards genital relationships generate intense struggles for power and control between girls and boys. The experience of having to take a stand makes girls more assertive than was the case in Period I. However, this assertiveness is only apparent in matters of romance and rarely extends itself to other areas of girls' lives.

In Period III (1980–1982) romance continues to be the experience that provides the teenage girl's initiation into womanhood. Romance proceeds rather smoothly with the strenuous conflicts between boyfriends and girlfriends in Period II replaced with more harmony in relationships. In order to influence the course of their romances, girls have returned to that system of informal influence (characteristic of Period I) that stops short of actual confrontation.

With this synopsis in mind, I will now present an extended analysis of the ways that the code of *romance* structures a sample of teen romance novels, and in so doing, demonstrate how this code contributes to constructing the novels' version of femininity.

The Code of Romance

The code of *romance* organized the version of adolescent femininity in all periods. It involves not only emotion and caring, but is also about the negotiation of relations of power and control between females and males within romance. In this section I discuss the dominant elements of this code over the forty years, indicating how these elements begin to form the particular conception of femininity the novels offer. The dominant elements are as follows:

Dominant Elements of the Code of Romance

1 Romance is a market relationship.
2 Romance is a heterosexual practice.
3 Romance manages sexuality while privileging non-genital forms of sexual expression.
4 Romance is a transforming experience giving meaning to girls' lives and endowing girls with prestige and importance.

-431-

5 Romance is about the dominance of males and the subordination of females.
6 Romance is about learning to relate to males.
7 Romance is a personal, private experience.

Romance is a market relationship

In each period, romance is organized as a market relationship in which the terms of the fair exchange are established. Transactions are gender-coded regarding the qualities boyfriends and girlfriends bring to romance. The feminine terms involve fidelity and devotion, which are exchanged for the support and prestige accruing to being the girlfriend of a popular boy. Getting a boyfriend confers status on girls and gives them special privileges. This is graphically seen in several novels where boys are presented as popular and are the leaders of a crowd of boys and girls. Both Manuel da Silva and Bill Edmond of *Paintbox Summer* (I: 1949) are popular with their respective friends and provide the entré into local society for Kate Vale. In *Up a Road Slowly* (II: 1966) Brett Kingman is described as handsome and always having a trail of girls following him. In *Princess Amy* (III: 1981) Guy Wetherington and Pete Demarest compete for the devotion of Amy Painter, a newcomer amid the posh society of Mackinac Island's summer residents. Guy wastes no time in establishing Amy as his girl. Amy becomes popular through her association with Guy. Amy learns, however, that this popularity creates obligations on her side of loyalty to Guy and not so much as looking at another boy. That boyfriends insist upon absolute fidelity is also in evidence in *Seventeeth Summer* (I: 1942), where Angie Morrow, unaware of this requirement, goes out with another boy. Her actions cause Jack Duluth to withdraw his support and Angie's sense of self is threatened along with her status among her friends. In a similar fashion, in *Drop-out* (II: 1963), Donnie Mueller's disillusionment with her boyfriend Mitch's ability to care for her coincides with the demise of their romance. Part of the success or failure of romantic relationships hinges on the maintenance of the fair exchange, with romances balanced as long as girls and boys live up to the terms of the exchange.

Romance is a heterosexual practice

In the novels, romance is considered to be solely a heterosexual relationship. That boys will be the objects of girls' desires is taken for granted in the texts. In *Wait for Marcy* (I: 1950, p. 14), fifteen-year-old Marcy's initial lack

of interest in boys and preference for female friends prompts concern on the part of her parents that she is not developing in the 'normal direction'. That romance can only involve males and females is very apparent in *Hey, Dollface* (II: 1978) and *Ruby* (II: 1976), where there is a romantic relationship between girls. These novels pivot on the developing romance between Val Hoffman and Chole Fox (*Hey, Dollface*) and Ruby Cathy and Daphne Duprey *(Ruby).* However, their romances are not granted legitimacy in the novels and their relationships are vigorously censured by parents and teachers. In their eyes it is morally wrong that girls have such feelings for one another and subsequently act upon them. While both novels contain elements of homophobia, they are strongest in *Ruby* (1976), in a scene where Ed Brooks, a schoolmate of Ruby and Daphne, discovers the nature of the girls' relationship. He confronts Ruby with these words:

> I knew something was wrong with you. Dykes is your thing. He put his hand to his forever swollen crotch. You want to feel the real thing? Here I'll let you feel it. (p. 58)

Here the 'real thing' symbolized by the penis becomes a larger symbol for legitimate sexual desire. The subsequent attempts of Daphne's mother to compel her 'to go straight' and Ruby's father's reconsideration of his ban on her dating boys helps to establish heterosexuality as the prevailing sexual practice.

Romance manages sexuality

The novels of each period contribute to the establishment of linkages between romance and sexuality by privileging romance as the only legitimate context for sexual expression. Indeed, girls express tremendous consternation if boys attempt any expressions of sexuality, such as kissing or hugging, without professing their love and devotion. Jane Howard of *The Boy Next Door* (I: 1956) demands that Ken Sanderson go through the rituals of romance before he can kiss her. In *Princess Amy* (III: 1981), Amy Painter's outrage at Guy Wetherington's kiss can only be understood within this larger context that makes the kiss a symbol of love and commitment.

In each period any display of sexuality constitutes a troublesome element in romance as far as girls are concerned. It poses even more difficulties when it includes genital aspects, as in the novels of Period II (1963–1979) Although girls understand that sexual favors are one element of exchange in romance, they are by no means happy about it. As Jean Burnaby of *Sorority Girl* (I: 1952, p. 142) notes, one is expected to pay for an evening's entertainment with kisses. However, girls have even more

reservations about sexuality when it goes beyond hugs and kisses. Genital relationships do not occur with great frequency in the novels and are mostly found in Period II (1963–1979). The novels overwhelmingly reinforce a 'wait until we are married' attitude towards genital relationships by presenting such relationships as 'dangerous' (*Drop-Out,* II: 1963) or using pregnancy as a consequences of intercourse (*Mr and Mrs Bo-Jo Jones,* II: 1967; *My Darling, My Hamburger,* II· 1969). Boys' pressures towards intercourse in romance generate tremendous conflicts and eventually cause the disintegration of romances in Period II novels like *Very Far Away from Anywhere Else* (1976), *My First Love and Other Disasters* (1979), *Up in Seth's Room* (1979) and *My Darling, My Hamburger* (1969). Each of these novels exemplifies the basic difficulty that the heroines of Period II have with accepting genitality as an aspect of romance.

Romance, sexuality, and power are linked by the novels' privileging of romance as the experience where heroines' sense of their own sexuality arises. The heroine's head throbs (*My First Love and Other Disasters*), her stomach feels fluttery *(Practically Seventeen)* and she feels tingly all over *(P.S. I Love You)* once that special boy has sealed his love for her with a kiss. Just as Prince Charming awakens Sleeping Beauty in the fairy tale, a girl's capacity for sexual feelings is awakened by her boyfriend during the moment of romantic confirmation in which the girl is assured of the boy's love and commitment. It is as the juncture of the twin moments of romance and specialness that the adolescent female becomes sexually aware and at the same time subjected to the male power and control underlying sexuality. This represents the moment of the heroine's positioning within sexual difference.

Romance endows girls' lives with meaning and importance

Just as romance has this darker side, it also functions as a larger field in which girls are elevated and given recognition by virtue of becoming a girlfriend. Becoming popular with peers is but a part of this 'individual specialness' which girlfriends experience. That Angie Morrow's (*Seventeeth Summer,* I· 1942) romance with Jack Duluth is clearly the turning point in her life is seen in the following passage:

> It's funny what a boy can do. One day you're nobody and the next you're the girl some fellow goes with and the other fellows look at you harder and wonder what you've got and wish that they'd been the one to take you out first. And the girls say hello and want you to walk down to the drugstore to have cokes with them because the

> boy who likes you might come along and he might have other boys with him. Going with a boy gives you a new identity — especially going with a fellow like Jack Duluth. (Daly, 1942, p. 60).

The very practical side of specialness is evident in Jean Burnaby's observation (*Sorority Girl,* I: 1952) that Tom Kitchell 'had brought her to a pinnacle of repute; she had become known as one of the popular girls who . . . was seen everywhere that mattered' (Emery, 1952, p. 143). Romantic recognition contains a certain magic that occurs at the moment when the girl is cherished. The magic of this moment is captured in *Seventeenth Summer* (I: 1942) in the seconds preceding the kiss that seals Angie Morrow's and Jack Duluth's romance;

> I felt a new, breathless caution as if I were sitting in a bubble . . . In the loveliness of the next moment I think I grew up . . . Sitting on the cool grass in my new sprigged dimity with the little blue and white bachelor's buttons pinned in my hair, Jack kissed me and his lips were as smooth and babysoft as a new raspberry. (Daly, 1942, p. 59)

Romance is about power

However, implicit in this moment of specialness are dynamics of power and control which circumscribe the form and expression of female authority while celebrating male prerogative. In becoming 'his girl', the girlfriend takes up a position within this nexus of male power and control in which she literally is his. That boyfriends do consider girlfriends their property underlies the many references to ownership. Mark Waverley's arm on Jennie Webster's shoulder is a signal to all the world that 'this girl belongs to [him]' (*California Girl,* III: 1981, p. 71). Calling Ludell (*Ludell and Willie,* II: 1981) 'his girl' is only one manifestation of Willie's perception of Ludell as his property. This also extends to dismissing Ludell's desire to work once they are married.

Furthermore, through the process by which the girl becomes the girlfriend, feminine power becomes confined to that informal system of persuasion, fragility and seeming helplessness that I have alluded to. These informal manifestations of power were not given formal recognition in the novels and were often censured when discretion and moderation were not exercised. A case in point is Kentucky Jackson of *Practically Seventeen* (I· 1943), whose seeming helplessness was a way of controlling the course of her romances. Heroines such as Victoria Martin of *My First Love and Other Disasters* (II: 1979) and Finn Rousseau of *Up in Seth's Room* (II: 1979) did try

to manage gender relations so that they could secure a role in shaping the power structure of romance. However, existing power relations determined the nature and degree of their resistances as well as the control they experienced. That is, each of the girl's romances ended through their efforts to exercise formal control. Through these mechanisms the social relations of dominance and subordination were maintained in the novels.

Romance involves learning to relate to males

Romance is about learning how to relate to males and the importance of this lesson. As Kate Vale of *Paintbox Summer* notes: 'getting along with men was important . . . [It] was one of the things Kate knew she must learn to do' (Cavanna, 1949, p. 42). Here, 'getting along' and establishing a relationship with a boy means becoming a girlfriend. What Kate and other heroines learn is that the ability to 'get along' is primarily worked out within romance, a set of relations of power and control that do not favor feminine power and initiative. The novels contain no mention of female and male parity. Rather, romance situates girls within a set of relations whereby they are the ones who must compromise and change. A novel such as *Very Far Away from Anywhere Else* (II: 1976) promotes the idea that other forms of female and male relationships, such as friendship, are all but impossible.

Romance is a personal experience

Romance is never rendered in the novels as a form of social experience, one that many people have experienced. Each romance in the novels is presented as if it were entirely unique and happening for the first time ever. As Angie Morrow notes, 'people can't tell you about things like that, you have to find them out for yourself' (Daly, 1942, p. 3). Since romance is situated in personal life, whatever problems girls have are considered to be individual and not perhaps common to romance in general. This privatization of romance is one way in which its power relations remain hidden and not open to public scrutiny and perhaps change. Girls in the novels never 'compare notes', never realize that what they experience in romance may not be unique, but a part of the course of romance.

This discussion of the code of *romance* has shown that romance is highly contradictory for girls. While romance bestows recognition and importance on them, it ultimately involves the construction of feminine identity in

terms of a significant other, the boyfriend. This process of romantic recognition is contradictory in that it creates young women themselves as terms in a circuit of exchange where their value is acquired through affiliation with males. Romance is one of the sites for the learning of gendered relations of subordination and domination. The code of *romance* ultimately about power: who has it and who may legitimately exercise it. These power relations become visible through sexuality in romance. The linking of sexuality with romance is an important element of control over females. Through the emphasis on love and commitment as prerequisites to any expression of sexuality, sexual control is passed to boyfriends. Boyfriends' actions generate girls' sexual feelings in the first place. This control is buttressed by the books' insistence that boys are the only objects of girls' desires. Boyfriends are in crucial positions as the definers of an important aspect of girls' identity, their sexuality.

Narrative Structure: Becoming a Woman through Romance

Femininity is also developed through a narrative structure in which the Good/Bad and Strong/Weak oppositions are most important. This occurs through a more subtle refinement of these oppositions in the form of the *active/passive* and *selfless/mercenary* codings. The present study could not document significant changes in the ways femininity was constructed throughout the forty years of the sample. The consistent nature of femininity throughout the thirty-four books emanated in part from the very uniform narrative structure in the three periods, despite the existence of two narrative variations, the 'Contestation' and 'Reluctance' variants. With this overview in mind, I will first discuss the oppositional structure found in the sample and then move to the plot variations.

The Good/Bad and Strong/Weak Oppositions

Periods I (1942–59) and III (1980–82) present a weak and shy heroine residing in a family where the father is the final authority on all matters. This 'good girl' is a dutiful daughter and adheres to the previously discussed components of the code of *romance*. She is held up as an exemplar of 'proper' adolescent femininity. In distinct contrast to the 'good girl' is another female character which I have termed 'the other girl', modifying the category of 'the other woman' used by Mussell (1975) in her analysis of Gothic Romance novels. This girl is characterized in the novel as assertive with boys and knows how to handle them. She has beauty, poise, self-confidence

-434-

and knows it. She knows what she wants and how to go about realizing her desires. However, her actions are more often than not condemned in the novels. The 'other girl' is vital to developing the character of the 'good girl' through the operation of difference. Two novels, *Seventeenth Summer* (I: 1942) and *Princess Amy* (III: 1981), exemplify the precise operation of the oppositional structure in Periods I and III.

Angie Morrow of *Seventeenth Summer* is reserved and lacking in self-confidence. Her lack of knowledge of how to attract boys and interact with them lays the groundwork for her first love experience with Jack Duluth. Through observation of other girls and information supplied by her older sister Lorraine, Angie is conscious of the code of *romance* as it relates to overt attempts to secure Jack's attention. Several times, Angie directly addresses the reader, noting that 'you can't ask a boy, 'When will I see you again?' '. . . A girl just can't say that sort of thing to a boy'(I: 1942, p. 21). Angie's passivity is also evident in her interactions with Jack, which are limited to listening and responding to his actions. However, Angie is not at all content with her image as a quiet girl. She laments her inability to be talkative and considers herself boring. Although Angie laments her dullness, it is precisely her naiveté that wins Jack's love and is the quality extolled in the text. Angie is the example *par excellence* of the 'good girl'.

Another 'good girl' is Amy Painter of *Princess Amy* (III: 1981). Amy is sent to Mackinac Island to spend the summer with her Uncle and Aunt to acquire some 'polish'. Amy feels immediately out of place in the world of the wealthy but conceals her true feelings. Rather, she simply goes along with things. This is even the case when two boys, Pete Demarest and Guy Wetherington, compete for Amy's affection. Throughout her romances with Guy and Pete, Amy remains passive, allowing the boys to control the relationship. What finally forces Amy to act is Pete's ultimatum that he will not 'share' Amy with another boy. Amy's goodness is also demonstrated through her obliviousness to Guy's wealth. She cares only for Guy and not his money. By choosing the less affluent Pete, Amy confirms her selflessness and like Angie is extolled as a model of femininity because she seeks romance only for love. This unqualified commitment to romance solely for emotional fulfillment is one of several characteristics differentiating a 'good girl' like Angie Morrow or Amy Painter from her counterpart, the 'other girl'.

Three 'other girls', Jane Rady of *Seventeenth Summer* (I: 1942), Devon Merriott of *Wait for Marcy* (I. 1950), and Kentucky Jackson of *Practically Seventeen* (I· 1943), are presented as distinctly different from the 'good girls'. These 'other girls' cast aside persuasion and subtlety as means of influencing the course of romance. Jane vigorously pursues boys. Devon Merriott makes no emotional commitments, viewing romance as an arrangement providing

for companionship and as a means of further social enhancement. Kentucky Jackson and Jane Rady possess a high degree of status by virtue of previous romantic experiences and their outstanding beauty. Both girls subvert hegemonic power relations by 'calling the shots' in their romances. They ask boys for dates and collect strings of boyfriends, which causes 'good girls' to censure them. Finally, 'other girls' understand one of the hidden aspects of male and female relationships. They realize that romance is an exchange relationship in which males are primarily providers of entertainment and females in turn give support and various sexual favors. The 'good girl' is oblivious to these things; indeed she is elevated to this position precisely because she avoids the previous actions. 'Other girls' create a narrative excess which is held in check by the over-representation of the 'good girl'.

The novels of Period II (1963) continue to work through motifs of weakness and timidity, although heroines are stronger and more assertive than in any other period. Romance again is the experience that brings about sweeping changes in heroines. Heroines are propelled towards romance as a possibility of fulfilling emotional needs that their families are unable to provide. An example of this may be seen in Donnie Mueller (*Drop-Out*, 1963), who is initially presented as unhappy and overwhelmed by home problems. When she meets Mitch, she sees him as her emotional support. The presence of conflict over familial restrictions and pressures towards genital relationships within romance also facilitate the development of young women in novels such as *My Darling, My Hamburger, Camilla, Mr and Mrs Bo-Jo Jones, Ruby, Ludell and Willie,* and *Up in Seth's Room.*

There are few 'other girls' in Period II novels. This may be due in part of the fact that some of the heroines' actions in this period are similar to those of the 'other girls' in Period I. In Period II girls character is not marked by extremes of 'goodness' and 'badness', as was the case in the previous period. However, this change in the heroine's character from the meek and submissive is by no means unproblematic. As heroines themselves become more assertive in ways that only the 'other girls' from Period I demonstrated, this new-found assertiveness is difficult for parents and boyfriends to handle. Girls are grounded (*Camilla, Up in Seth's Room*), deemed untrustworthy *(Ruby, Drop-Out)* or unfeeling *(Mr and Mrs Bo Jo Jones).* Parents and boyfriends regard heroines as difficult, disobedient, and 'bitchy'. The conduct of this 'new' assertive heroine brings out the tensions in familial and romantic relationships and makes visible the relations of power and control underpinning them.

The congenial romantic relationships evident in Periods I and III are replaced by conflicts between boyfriends and girlfriends in Period II. It is male control over the relationship that girls' dispute. This takes the specific form of male control over girls' sexuality. Heroines' refusals to become

involved in genital relationships cause conflict with their boyfriends. Finn Rousseau and Seth Warnecki *(Up in Seth's Room)* experience tension over Seth's pressure towards a genital relationship, as do Liz Carstensen and Sean Collins *(My Darling, My Hamburger).* Heroines are caught in a bind which makes it extremely difficult to maintain a 'nice girl' image without risking the disfavor of someone. Definitions of sanctioned adolescent sexual behaviour (no genital relationships) are the larger context which help shape the parameters of these sexual struggles. Heroines must forego genitality to remain 'good girls' in the eys of parents and the larger society, and at the same time, retain the esteem of their boyfriends. The novels of this period demonstrate that involvement in romance is becoming increasingly problematic. Despite the tremendous disappointment girls experience in their romantic relationships, they continue in novel after novel to commit themselves to romance with the hope that the next romance will be forever.

The Contestation and Reluctance Narrative Variants

Although a majority of the heroines looked forward to romance, there were two narrative variants in which heroines were indifferent to romance. The 'Reluctance' variant centers around the heroine's hesitation to become romantically involved because romance is simply unimportant. The 'Contestation' variant features girls' conflicts in their romances as important experiences leading to womanhood. This variant is found in almost every novel of Period II. The Contestation variant also presents an alteration in the character of the heroine. Girls are no longer totally good or bad, as in the novels of Period I and III, but a mixture of both depending upon the nature of their behaviour and whether parents or boyfriends evaluate it. The following section builds upon the discussion of the heroine in Period II and should be read in light of the previous analysis.

Contestation variant

Two novels of Period II best illustrate the significance of the Contestation variant. From the outset, Maggie Tobin of *My Darling, My Hamburger* (II: 1969) appears to be lacking in confidence and the knowledge of how to attract boys. Later, romance and the conflicts emanating from it have worked in tandem to bring Maggie to the point where she is no longer shy and frightened. In *Ruby* (II: 1976), Ruby Cathy experiences a similar transformation in personality through the action of romance and familial conflict. The endings of both novels clearly indicate that the changes in both Maggie and Ruby are primarily for continued involvement in romance.

Reluctance variants

I Will Go Barefoot All Summer for You (II: 1973) and *Junior Miss* (I: 1942) nicely display the Reluctance variant. As the first novel opens, Jessie Preston is totally oblivious to romance. The arrival of a distant cousin, Toby Bright, brings about changes in Jessie. Jessie's tough behaviour gradually dissipates as her interactions with Toby increase. A turning point in Jessie's life occurs when she falls off her bike and Toby kisses her in an effort to comfort her. After her initial embarrassment disappears, Jessie fantasizes about a romantic future with Toby. The romance provides her with a sense of well-being and purposefulness. Judy Graves of *Junior Miss* is also oblivious to boys as potential boyfriends. Judy's mother expends considerable effort to teach Judy her version of feminine deportment, involving demureness and physical grace. All these efforts fail until Judy is invited to a dance at the home of one of her friends. The day of the dance, Judy immerses herself in a rigorous beauty routine. When her date Haskell Cummings arrives, Judy appears as a poised young woman. That this change has been the result of Judy's possible romance with Haskell is made abundantly clear.

The Reluctance and Contestation variants also demonstrate the power of romance as the organizing code of the sample. Although Judy Graves and Jessie Preston are strong young women before their romantic experiences, their virtues go largely unacknowledged until they have experienced romance. The Contestation variant introjects the notion that romance can serve as a crucible for self-development, especially when heroines are compelled to take a stand on various issues. There are limits on the heroine's power and authority: she is not to challenge the power relations in romance or in the family except where they concern fending off boys' sexual advances.

The Meaning of Womanhood in Adolescent Romance Novels

The examination of the narrative structure has demonstrated its essential stability. Even though two variants appeared in the sample, each of these was organized through the central motif of 'becoming a woman through romance'. The narrative structure in the form of the Strong/Weak and Good/Bad oppositions did not vary markedly over time and contained an assemblage of meanings that remained very consistent, despite the introduction of conflict in Period II. This narrative structure is linked to the code of *romance* through the novels' central motif. Together form and content produce meaning and, according to Gitlin (1982), ultimately reconcile

several sets of contradictions. They reconcile the fact that although romance can empower girls, there are limitations set on the exercise of that power. Even though romance has a sexual content, girls are not permitted to act on their sexual feelings.

While there are aspects of romance that elevate the individual, it is also an experience through which girls negotiate the parameters of their power and authority. Romance ultimately involves the construction of feminine identity in terms of others, with boys in the powerful position of giving girls' lives meaning. As Kate Vale's comment, quoted above, about 'getting along with men' indicates, what she and other heroines learn is that the ability to 'get along' is worked out within a structure that does not favor feminine power and initiative. Girls may cajole and persuade. When they try to formally control their romances, their boyfriends leave. Since romance is ultimately about power, by having so many romances dissolve in the wake of girls' bids for power, these novels make a strong statement about the irreconcilability of feminine power and satisfying relationships with males.

-437-

Historical Context and the Fictional Construction of Femininity

Any analysis of literary texts must take into account the fact that literature is produced and read within historical circumstances. Such a perspective does not imply that literature is a mere reflection of history. Rather, literature often articulates the tensions and contradictions within a society. The teen romance fiction analyzed in this article is no exception. These novels rearrange and recode certain larger social themes regarding women, romance, domesticity, sexuality, and power.

What one finds in the books published in Period I (1942–1959) is a version of gender relations that stresses the harmony between girls and boys with romance as the natural form of these relations. Period I books like *Going on Sixteen, Wait for Marcy, The Boy Next Door, Sorority Girl,* and *Blueberry Summer* demonstrate an overwhelming interest in those aspects of feminine experience pertaining to heart and hearth to the exclusion of anything else. *Wait for Marcy, Seventeenth Summer,* and *Junior Miss* abound with domestic references generated from girls' fantasizing about romance leading to marriage. There is no doubt in heroines' minds that their futures will be structured around marriage and children, just like their mothers'.

Domestic and marriage themes from romance fiction resonate with similar themes in American society of the 1940s and 1950s regarding the

promotion of homemaking as women's chief occupations, despite the presence of women working for pay (Rosen, 1973). During World War II millions of women entered the paid workforce in response to the need for workers. At the end of the war, they actively resisted employers' pressures to turn over their jobs to returning male veterans. More women entered the workforce in the 1950s in response to developing clerical and service sector work (Wertherheimer, 1977). The emphasis on domesticity in the novels can be interpreted as a way that fiction mediated the unresolved ambiguities of this era regarding women's place in society. The novels place women in the home and never in the workforce. The novels of the 1940s and 1950s are imbued with a confidence and certainty over the stability of gender relations that belies the actual historical context of the times. This confidence will be undermined by the events of the 1960s and 1970s, at least on the surface.

Many Period II (1963–1979) novels critically examine certain aspects of gender relations through the questioning and challenges of heroines such as Liz Cartensen *(My Darling, My Hamburger,* 1969), Chloe Fox and Val Hoffman (*Hey, Dollface,* 1978), Daphne Duprey (*Ruby,* 1976) Natalie (*Very Far Away From Anywhere Else,* 1976) and Finn Rousseau (*Up in Seth's Room,* 1979). Specifically, heroines are engaged in controversies with boyfriends and parents regarding sexuality, and in *Ruby* and *Hey Dollface* the idea of heterosexuality is challenged. The questioning of traditional female and male relationships in the novels of the 1960s and 1970s is also evident in American society of that era. During that time a feminist movement reemerged, targeting women's status as sex-objects as a focal point of feminine oppression (Freeman, 1977). Many women and girls abandoned models of romantic love and experimented with different forms of sexual expression and orientation.

Heroines' more active role in romance and questioning of heterosexuality is related to females' general dissatisfaction with traditional gender relations in American society at this time. While the feminist movement *per se* does not appear in the novels, its momentum and energy are apparent in heroines' struggles with boyfriends over romance and sexuality. However, as I later argue, these struggles do not decenter the dominant version of femininity that the novels offer.

When the novels of Period III (1980–82) are examined, one finds a hearkening back to notions of femininity developed in Period I as well as an absence of the gender issues posed in Period II novels. In Period III novels such as *P.S. I Love You, Princess Amy, California Girl* and *Seven Days to a Brand-New Me* there is gender harmony and girls use an informal system of persuasion and gentle suggestion to influence boys that is reminiscent of Period I novels. The books published in Period III, like those of Period I, focus girls' lives solely on romance and domestic concerns. Heroines Amy

Painter (*Princess Amy,* 1981), Maddy Kemper (*Seven Days to a Brand-New Me,* 1981) and Clara Conrad (*Cute is a Four-Letter Word,* 1980) think only of being popular, getting a boyfriend, and have no firm plans for future careers of waged work. A heroine like Jennie Webster (*California Girl,* 1981) is ready to throw over a future as a star athlete rather than be separated from her boyfriend. Adolescent girls' lack of concern with waged work has its parallel in the de-emphasis on adult women in the workforce. While sexual intercourse involving adolescents is much discussed in Period II novels, it appears in only one Period III novel, *I'll Always Remember You . . . Maybe* (1981). Here intercourse poses no difficulty for the heroine and occurs in a long-term relationship which appears to be unique and unlike other romances. Otherwise, sexuality is confined to the hugging and chaste kissing reminiscent of Period I novels.

When the historical context of the early 1980s is compared with that of the novels of this time, contradictions appear. The presence of only a few working mothers in Period III novels belies the growing numbers of two-paycheck families stemming from women's choices and the economic crisis of the early 1980s (Scott, 1984). A similar mismatch occurs between the social and narrative context when it comes to teenage girls' career/work aspirations. The domestic future that Period III heroines envision is not one that many young women in the early 1980s could hope to achieve as adults, given an economy in crisis and trends towards the necessity of women working for pay (Keeran, 1985). The ways the novels handle teenage sexuality is striking given the growing concern with adolescent relationships (Bell and Ziegler Wildflower, 1983; Goodman, 1983). Period III novels may be mediating several social perspectives on sexuality: sexuality is reserved for adulthood and teenage sexuality is unproblematic. The former links Period III novels with traditional gender sentiments and the latter ignores emerging feminist rethinking of the consequences of genital relationships for females (Vance, 1984).

Two threads within Period III novels merit more discussion. First, it would appear that there is a mismatch between narrative versions of femininity and those residing within the larger society. For example, the early 1980s saw a concern with more equitable relationships between women and men. Secondly, Period I and Period III novels have much in common. The 1940s–1950s contained countercurrents to dominant notions of domestic femininity in the form of women's growing discontent with full-time domesticity. These themes do not surface in Period I novels. Similarly, the years from 1980–1982 also presented a strong countercurrent to the gender tensions of the 1960s–1970s in the form of a growing conservative perspective on femininity. This conservatism has coalesced in America around the New Right. The New Right themes of anti-ERA, pro-life,

family-protection legislation, male breadwinners, female chastity and domesticity (Hunter, 1984) appears in Period III romance novels as an elevation of domesticity and a de-emphasis on sexuality and waged work. The domestic themes in Period III fiction represent the strong re-emergence of traditional views of femininity that have dominated all the books right from the beginning. Although the novels of the 1960s and 1970s come as close as any to acknowledging the tensions within traditional femininity, a majority of the novels collapse femininity into its more traditional version by the end of the story.

The feminine discourse in these teen romance novels illustrates some important points about popular fiction and its relationship to society. While the themes of various historical periods do often make their way into fiction, this is not always the case (Eagleton, 1978). The absence of the topic of women's struggles over waged work in Period I and III novels is illustrative of this observation. Another related point concerning the literature-society relation is apparent in Humm, Stigant and Widdowson's (1986) observation that literature has a dynamic of its own with a history and set of relations between authors, publishers, and audiences. This has special relevance to children's publishing, which has been historically characterized by conflicting perspectives regarding what constitutes appropriate content for young readers (Rose, 1984), so much so that books about sexuality such as *Mr and Mrs Bo-Jo Jones* and *My Darling, My Hamburger* have been the object of controversy. However, literature can be influenced by the sociohistorical context. A case in point is the vision of traditional femininity in Period III novels, which can be interpreted as a transformed version of new Right thinking on women. Swingewood (1975) proposes that the relationship between literature and society may be that of contradiction and mediation. That same vision of traditional femininity in Period III fiction contradicts the reality of women's waged work in the 1980s and how women's lives may have changed since the 1940s.

Adolescent Romance Novels: Romancing the Reader

Cultural products such as adolescent romance fiction present imaginative resolutions to gender relations and are productive of certain subject positions for readers. Walkerdine (1984) notes that fiction as a discursive form is constructed from an array of textual devices for engaging readers. This engagement is primarily on the level of identification with characters. These characters address readers as subjects, asking them to identify with their position in the text. Through this process of identification readers become subjects in discourse.

The novels offer female readers positions within heterosexuality

-438-

through an implied community of interest existing between the heroine and the reader.[4] Heroines such as Angie Morrow directly address the adolescent female reader and offer her a position of identification in fantasy as a girlfriend, as one who is romanced and shares the experience of being in love, of belonging to a boy. The reader is offered romance as the way of protecting feminine interests and managing male assertiveness. For example, a girl can summon up prohibitions surrounding genital relationships in an attempt to compel boyfriends to conform to traditional sexual codes. However, romance turns upon itself by tethering a girl's developing sexuality to romance, which establishes love and commitment to a single boy as a prerequisite to any expression of sexuality on her part. The latter point to the contradictory and fragmenting dimensions of the subject positions the novels hold out to girls.

Romance also provides the reader-as-girlfriend with a way of exploring patriarchal relations and finding a way to move within them. However, she is never offered ways of effectively challenging what is oppressive about female/male relationships. The reader witnesses challenges that momentarily disturb, but never fundamentally alter feminine positions within romance or change gender relations. For example, heroines' questioning of sexuality in romance is prevented from becoming a political issue through processes of personalization. These disputes over sexual power are redefined as matters of personal disagreement within the private romantic relationship. Displacement of social problems into the realm of the private is a powerful mode of containing tensions which are in actuality at the core of a society's organization. The analysis of these romance novels demonstrates how popular fiction can be a powerful mode of forestalling and rearranging social problems and issues so that they become personal nonpolitical matters. The latter has tremendous implications for women since, as this study has shown, the personal and the private are important in the production of dominant hegemonic gender relations.

Finally, the female reader is offered romance as the most important experience in shaping her femininity. In actuality, romance is but one of many experiences that might bear upon the construction of adolescent femininity. In most of the novels, romance is viewed as an inevitable experience, one that should happen to all girls at some time in their lives, while in actuality there is nothing inevitable about romance or any other social experience.

Conclusions

I have shown how popular fiction can play an active role in the formation of gender identities by offering female readers visions of what constitutes

femininity. Although I do not want to imply an easy correspondence between readers and texts, the studies of romantic fiction cited previously have concluded that romances speak as 'conservators of the social structure' (Radway, 1984, p. 73) and are vehicles for the containment of contradictions emanating from women's historic struggles to define themselves. While teen romances run counter to the realities of many women's and girls' actual lives, they nevertheless serve to maintain traditional views of what should constitute those lives. According to the novels, femininity consists of administering to the heart and tending the hearth. These traditional views represent a very selective rendering of the possibilities of feminine life experience.

There is one area that I have not yet addressed. This involves the relationship between readers and texts. My ethnography (Christian-Smith, 1987a) of a group of teenage girls who are heavy romance novel readers indicates that a range of readings of the novels exist. The girls' life experiences and their hopes and dreams were vital in establishing the meanings of the romances they read. Although most of the girls wished for a domestic femininity in the final analysis, the constitution of their femininity was fraught with tremendous conflict. Given the power of cultural products like romance novels in preparing girls for their entrance into heterosexual romance, it is necessary to engage girls in a recognition of the contradictions surrounding femininity, both in narrative texts and in their own lives. In so doing, steps are taken towards acknowledging the things that hold women and girls captive, but also those which facilitate feminine power and authority.

Notes

1 The term 'girls' refers to young women.
2 Lack of space prevents me from discussing the ways that class and racial/ethnic dynamics shape the feminine discourse in the novels. For a thorough discussion of this see Christian (1984a).
3 Although the code of *romance* shaped much of the feminine discourse in the novels, the codes of *sexuality* and *beautification* were also important. See Christian-Smith (1987b).
4 The use of the singular here and elsewhere does not imply that all readers are the same. I have used this form to emphasize the fact that the novels address readers as individual girls.

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Article

'The urge towards love is an urge towards (un)death': Romance, masochistic desire and postfeminism in the *Twilight* novels

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Abstract

Stephanie Meyer's enormously popular *Twilight* saga of teen vampire romance novels is commonly referred to as the young adult fiction equivalent of what the *Harry Potter* series was for children. Central to the series, which sells in the tens of millions globally, is an adolescent romantic relationship that, as I will show, is in many ways masochistic. Interrogating gendered subjectivity within the series, particularly in regard to its teenage narrator, Bella Swan, and her relationship with the hyper-idealized vampire hero, Edward Cullen, this article analyses the way the four narratives figure adolescent feminine desire as well as how they link eroticism and death. It also positions the series within broader feminist debates about postfeminism within popular culture, and explores how (and, with more difficulty, why) a masochistic relationship and an undead subjectivity for a teenage girl are seen as utopic sites of possibility in these narratives. If, as Nina Auerbach argues, each age produces the vampire it requires, then might Edward Cullen and his teen vampire bride suggest about the current, purportedly 'postfeminist', context and young women in particular?

Keywords

adolescence, desire, masochism, popular fiction, postfeminism, romance, vampires

Stephanie Meyer's enormously popular *Twilight* saga comprises four novels and, at the time of writing, film adaptations of the first two books. As well as in sheer sales, readerly investment in the saga is clear through myriad internet discussion groups and fan fiction

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rewritings. While further engagement with these extra-textual elements is certainly warranted, here I turn to the politically troubling aspects of the books themselves (especially in light of gender and sexual politics) as an initial yet crucial step in the process of coming to terms with the immense cultural reverberations of the *Twilight* series. Published between 2005 and 2008, the books – generic hybrids of romance, Gothic and the *Bildungsroman* – are predominantly narrated in the first-person by teen heroine, Bella Swan. Central to the series is an adolescent romantic relationship that appears in many ways masochistic. Focusing on gendered subjectivity within the series, and the core relationship between Bella and vampire Edward Cullen, this article analyses the way the novels figure adolescent desire as inherently dangerous, as well as how they link eroticism and death. It argues that Meyer's nostalgic return to the inscription of gendered dynamics that have been subject to decades of feminist critique adheres to the type of postfeminist cultural logics recently critiqued by Diane Negra (2009) and Angela McRobbie (2009). Through the romance at its centre, the narratives in many ways seek to re-establish gendered certainties, while some of what Negra (2009) sees as the 'signature attributes' of postfeminist popular culture (e.g. focus on the desire for an atemporal feminine self, valorization of matrimonial and maternal subjectivities, and emphasis on conspicuous consumption) mark the *Twilight* series. While contemporary radical feminist writers like Nalo Hopkinson and Jewelle Gomez have re-appropriated the figure of the vampire 'for their own radical ends' to critique 'restrictive, oppressive cultural regimes' (Wisker, 2002), Meyer's deployment – especially in terms of gender – is much less progressive.

In the *Twilight* narratives, pre-marital sex is rendered dangerous and the links between eroticism and death are made explicit; Bella seeks both sex and (un)death, conjoined desires which Edward works throughout to manage. In positing that eroticism symbolizes the annihilation of self, Georges Bataille argues: 'The urge towards love, pushed to its limit, is an urge toward death' (1986: 43). While Bataille (and following him, Jessica Benjamin) speaks metaphorically of the destabilization of the boundaries between self and Other evoked during moments of eroticism, from early in the series – dreaming of an eternity with her beloved – Bella literally begs for Edward to kill her or, more precisely, to sire her. Her desire for death, however, also represents her desire for self-transformation and for certain forms of capital such as an age-defying feminine body and a physical strength that eludes her in life. Although the act of becoming vampire is often figured as an act of rebellion (Senf, 1988: 143), and much has been made of the fact that Bella actively *chooses* to become one of the undead, this article explores how (and, with more difficulty, why) a masochistic relationship and an undead subjectivity for a teenage girl are seen as utopic sites of possibility in these narratives. It considers too how situating teen desire as (self-)harm attempts to impose a limit on young women's expressions of sexuality, particularly in light of discourses of risk that routinely frame public discussions of feminine adolescence (Harris, 2004). If, as Nina Auerbach argues, 'every age embraces the vampire it needs' (1995: 145) then what are we to assume Edward Cullen and his teen bride suggest about the current, purportedly postfeminist, socio-political context with regard to young women? As well as attending to such questions, this article locates the texts in a broader tradition of (Gothic) romance and sentimentalism, and considers the vampire as a mutable figure around whom tensions over power, sexuality and eroticism have always coalesced.

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The *Twilight* novels are what Ken Gelder would call 'vampire blockbusters' (1994: 124). As he argues, the figure of the vampire is culturally 'highly adaptable' (1994: 141), an outsider deployed to signal and respond to social anxieties and upheavals, and in this series it is appropriated as part of a deeply ideological engagement with questions around feminism, young women's agency and sexuality. Fundamentally romance novels trading on the insatiable desire for vampire narratives in contemporary Western popular culture (*Buffy*, *Angel*, *Moonlight*, *True Blood*, *Vampire Diaries, Vampire Academy*), the four books in the *Twilight* series centre on the insecure, physically inept Bella Swan and her romantic attachment to her dark yet deep, smart, rich, devoted (or rather obsessive) vampire, Edward Cullen. Disengaged from the world around her, having relocated to wintry Forks to live with her father, and as an alienated teenager on the periphery of a new school community, Bella accepts the existence of the world of vampires without question. Instead of combating vampires as television's most well-known teen slayer, Buffy Summers, had done (their initials and their penchant for undead boyfriends are their only commonalities), Bella Swan all too willingly becomes part of an idealized vampire community that replicates an upper-class patriarchal nuclear family. Troubling the moral bounds of human/inhuman, Bella's adopted family of vampires refrain from feeding on humans, hunting only wildlife and labelling themselves 'vegetarian'.[1] While no longer human, the Cullen vampires are nonetheless anthropomorphic; they replicate human kinship structures and seek to publicly 'perform' as human in all other respects, like attending high school. The romance at the centre of the series, however, can in many ways be characterized as masochistic.

Masochism, romance and desire

Broadly, following Freud (1924), masochism is often simplistically used to refer to those, predominantly women in his work, who find pain pleasurable (Tosone, 1998: 413). Such assumptions about women's inherently masochistic nature have been unpacked by Paula Caplan (1993), exposed as working to justify and naturalize women's subordination and oppression under patriarchy. And while neither sadism nor masochism can be seen as intrinsically masculine or feminine respectively, their gendering in such a fashion has persisted (Benjamin, 1990: 74–5). Though a highly contested term, what is most interesting – particularly in terms of how it can be seen to function in the *Twilight* narratives – is what masochism suggests about gendered subjectivity and intersubjectivity; Jessica Benjamin puts it this way: 'Masochism is a search for recognition of the self by an other who alone is powerful enough to bestow that recognition' (1990: 56).[2] Here she describes the ways in which women's subjectivity can be entirely dependent on the male Other; a gesture upon which the dominant hetero-patriarchal mythologies of romance, and Gothic romances of the 19th century in particular, so deeply rely. Bella's masochism, culminating in her literal desire for (un)death, is not however without its agentic dimensions, as I will suggest.

Masochism, in terms of the *Twilight* heroine, is operative on many, complementary levels: in the physical dangers and eroticized pain characterizing her relationship with Edward; in her acquiescence to his protectionism; in the way her identity comes to be defined solely through her interactions with him; and in her desire for death, to literalize

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the idea that they will be together 'forever'. Bella's masochistic desires and dependence on Edward for her physical and psychic stability help to ensure her subordination.[3] She is 'literally torn to shreds by the needs and desires of others' (Mann, 2009: 143) – and one 'Other' in particular.[4] While the narratives do link her desire for sex to (self-)harm, and although she is indeed physically damaged during sex, she is best described as a 'moral masochist'. In his study of moral masochism, Alan Parkin argues that its 'basic state' is 'enthralment' (a term routinely used to describe subjection to a vampire):

> This state has been described as one in which one person shows an unusual degree of dependence and submission, sometimes carried to the greatest extreme, toward another. In the relationship the dominant partner possesses some special characteristics which are held as part of the self-ideal, usually in the most primitive and grotesque form, of the submissive one. These characteristics are therefore sought after by him [sic] and may be magically attained in a *unio mystica* with the dominant partner. (1980: 307)

Parkin's analysis is apposite to the romantic relationship at the centre of the *Twilight* narratives, and Bella's attempts to deal with her subordinate positioning as an adolescent feminine desiring subject. As psychoanalysis has shown, the subject is constituted by a lack that desire works to reconcile and upon which ideologies of romance love pivot (Belsey, 1994: 23).

In literary terms, the *Twilight* novels employ the *Liebestod* motif, common in fictional depictions of romantic love, which encompasses the wish to die and, most commonly, be resurrected with one's beloved (also known as the 'love-death'). The series can therefore be linked to a broader cultural tradition of concatenating eros (love) and thanatos (death) (Binion, 1993; Gediman, 1995; Kramer, 1997; Krimmer and Raval, 2002). Likewise, the links between masochism and the Gothic in particular have an extensive history (Masse, 1992; Noble, 2000), with modern romance narratives replicating these structures. In 19th-century 'sentimental' literature, tropes of eroticized domination prevailed and the 'masochistic discourse of a female attraction to violence became a recognizable and acceptable feature of the 19th-century literary landscape' (Noble, 2000: 28). Moreover, the Byronic hero in particular has fuelled many of the pleasurable 'mass produced fantasies' addressed to women (Modleski, 1982; Radway, 1984). While certainly not condemning romances or their readers, I would suggest Meyer's reinscription of the dominant hero/passive heroine needs to be seen in terms of the re-animation of 'retro-sexist' ideas about gender seen to mark 'postfeminism' (Whelehan, 2000).[5] Key to the maintenance of heterosexuality as an institution, romance narratives have always been politically (and erotically) charged – as has the 'powerful archetype' of the vampire, whose most well-known literary antecedents date from the Victorian era and who is the 'source of both erotic anxiety and corrupt desire' (Gordon and Hollinger, 1997: 1). As a Gothic figure, the 19th-century vampire is more menacing than its contemporary 'domesticated' counterpart (Gelder, 1994; Gordon and Hollinger, 1997; Senf, 1988), a fact certainly borne out by the *Twilight* narratives wherein vampirism becomes – as an identity and lifestyle – an entirely desirable way of being in the world, especially for a teenage girl.

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Adolescence, embodiment and the precarious feminine self

As narrator, Bella's voice is a tentative one, indicative of her precarious subjectivity throughout. As Carmen D. Siering emphasizes, Meyers 'fails to give Bella much of an interior life'; she is a 'blank slate, with few thoughts or actions that don't centre on Edward' (2009: 51). Bella constitutes herself unremarkable in every way, but the self-deprecating tone of her voice and obvious low self-esteem are also evidence of a masochistic position (Tosone, 1998: 423). Edward, by contrast, is 'the most perfect person on the planet' (*Eclipse*, p. 35)[6] and 'my own personal miracle' (*Eclipse*, p. 17). Modern 'sympathetic' vampires quite literally become 'more attractive – in every sense of the word – attractive physically, morally, and intellectually' (Senf, 1988: 3). This is certainly the case in the *Twilight* novels, where the Cullen coven 'dazzle' all those around them because they are 'devastatingly, inhumanly beautiful' (*Twilight*, p. 17); Bella regularly compares them to models and movie stars (*Twilight*, pp. 17, 35, 37). The women, especially, are marked by an excessive beauty and style of which Bella is in awe and covets, despite her disavowal of traditional signifiers of femininity.

Though presumably attempting to capture teenage angst and anxiety, the narrator's insecurity and lack of self-esteem position her as a pitiful creature: 'I doubted if awkward, self-conscious, and inept added up to *desirable* in anyone's book' (*Eclipse*, p. 445, original emphasis). Textually, though, such a self-loathing narrative voice serves an important purpose: it works to establish a vulnerable subject for whom a masochistic relationship – and its end point: (un)death – is not only considered viable but desirable. From the first book, when he initially saves her from a runaway car, Bella comes to rely upon Edward entirely: 'It was always a bad day when Edward was away' (*Eclipse*, p. 94). The amount of times he rescues her implies her inability to exist in the most mundane way without his (patriarchal) guardianship; in addition to the threat posed by his own 'animal' urges, there are always other vampires seeking to kill Bella (James, Victoria, the Volutri). Edward thereby becomes her saviour, not only from the dangerous situations (into which he often places her), but from *herself* and her quotidian feminine teenage existence in small town USA.

As part of this emphasis on her immense lack of power, much narrative space is given to establishing Bella's discomfort in occupying an adolescent feminine body. Her incompetence simply being in the world is underscored throughout; she is profoundly clumsy, utterly useless in gym class, constantly injuring herself and, by implication, in need of her supernatural guardians. Edward's physical prowess, grace and ease of movement contrast patently with her own corporeal discomfort, representing a further means through which his 'protection' is legitimized. However, this exaggerated sense of her somatic limitations can also be seen as a product of how she is positioned as a teenage female body, hyper-visible and subject to the male gaze. As Seltzer (2008: 1) notes, Bella's 'overwhelming clumsiness, approximates adolescent bodily discomfort – the kind that comes from young women's realization that in a patriarchal society their bodies are now perceived as trouble incarnate.' Such a consciousness, for Iris Marion Young, works to impair women's motility and conceives of the feminine body 'as a fragile encumbrance, rather than the media for the enactment of our aims' (1980: 144). It is the weak female body and its associated vulnerability that is coded desirable in the

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Meyer-verse. Further, Bella's difficulty being in the world suggests a liminality that sees her easily aligned with Forks' other outsiders – the Cullen vampires, who, like teenagers, are seen in terms of risk and otherness: 'The vampire offers a way of inhabiting difference with pride, for embracing defiantly an identity that the world at large sees as "other"' (Williamson, 2005: 1). Teenagers, not yet adults but no longer children, and vampires, not yet dead but no longer alive, both occupy a socially interstitial space which is used as the grounds for their affinity in the *Twilight* novels.

In *Twilight*, Edward is the aloof, cold, dark hero of the 19th-century romances Meyers so clumsily references. The archetypal dangerous romantic hero, as well as the new morally superior vampire, he repeatedly urges her to stay away from him: 'It's wrong. It's not safe. I'm dangerous, Bella, please, grasp that' (*Twilight*, p. 166). However, in response to the mortal threat of being alone with him, Bella hyperbolically confesses: 'I would rather die than stay away from you' (*Twilight*, p. 240). She is prepared to suffer, then, to maintain this idealized relationship. Here, as is routine in *Liebestod* fantasies, death is preferable to the loss of the love object. Her self-loathing is deeply unsettling, as is her constantly expressed doubt as to her self-worth: 'Even after a half a year with him, I still couldn't believe my good fortune' (*New Moon*, p. 7) and 'He, for some unfathomable reason, wanted to be with me' (*New Moon*, p. 13). Bella feels entirely undeserving of his attention and the pleasures he may afford her, itself common for the masochist (Cooper, 2006: 114). As she explains: '"Well, look at me … I'm absolutely ordinary – well, except for the bad things like all the near-death experiences and being so clumsy that I'm almost disabled. And look at you." I waved my hand toward him and all his bewildering perfection' (*Twilight*, p. 184). The narrative well establishes the enormous sense of lack upon which all the heroine's actions seem predicated – including her pronounced desire for (un)death. Only through the gaze of Edward is she is rendered meaningful, itself not in the least an innovative trope in romance writing. Speaking of masochism in literature, Michelle Masse notes that 'every girl, and every Gothic heroine, learns that it is only in the mirror of his regard that she exists, only in the plenitude of his subjectivity that she is whole' (1992: 90). This is certainly the case with Bella, and her relationship with Edward is predicated upon her submission instead of mutuality (Benjamin, 1990: 62).

Bella is early prepared to sacrifice everything (including her life) to be with her lover; and, consistent with Gothic romance in particular, there is a dark side inf(l)ecting their relationship: 'Bella's willingness to sacrifice her physical safety, her education, and her family and social ties for Edward – and the well-meaning but stringent control he exerts over her – are reminiscent, as *some* readers have said, of abusive relationships' (Seltzer, 2008). With the vampire arguably the quintessential sadist, it is not surprising their relationship is marked by these dark undertones. Edward's predatory behaviour aligns with prominent cultural constructions of this figure: 'Vampires portray predation; they are images of dark and needy beings, preying on the weak' (Dougherty, 1998: 169). In this vein, examples of his controlling behaviour abound (see McClimans and Wisnewski, 2009) – he does not let her see her friends; he doesn't want her drive; he rarely leaves her alone, even furtively watching her sleep every night; he is almost psychopathically jealous when other boys express interest in her; she is effectively kidnapped by his sister

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to stop her from visiting rival suitor and werewolf, Jacob; and he disables her car for the same reason. In particular, Edward's proximity to her is claustrophobic; he leaves her only to hunt, constantly touching her in gestures not only of desire but of possession. He infantilizes Bella throughout, dismissing her opinions outright as those of a naïve teenager. Edward's protectionism is framed, not as obsessive and overbearing, but as endearing. Following one particular 'stalking' incident, where it is implied that, without his intervention, Bella would have been sexually assaulted, Edward confesses: 'It makes me … anxious … to be away from you' (*Twilight*, p. 164).

While Bella romanticizes (and eroticizes) the level of his 'commitment', that Edward is symbolically suffocating her is indicated by the many instances of her simply 'forgetting' to breathe when taking in his 'beauty'. He, as is the true love's wont, takes her breath away. Invoking auto-erotic asphyxiation, these breath-halting moments are figured as ecstasy for Bella. In one instance, she actually faints after he kisses her, confessing: 'I think I forgot to breathe' (279 *Twilight*, p. 279). However, although he fears literally crushing her in the act of love-making, he displays little awareness of how he psychically bears down on her on a daily basis. Prior to actually feeding on her, Edward is metaphorically parasitic; that is, he feeds on her emotions.[7] Furthermore, although he has the ability to read minds, performing a kind of psychic assault, Bella's is frustratingly closed to him. Unable to 'penetrate' her mind, Edward is rendered impotent; however, this gendered power imbalance is not as productive as it might seem. For instance, when it becomes apparent that her mind is inaccessible to him, she asks: 'My mind doesn't work right? I'm a freak?' (*Twilight*, p. 157). As always, Bella's sense of inadequacy governs her response and she is constituted as aberrant in this peculiar pairing.

When Edward suddenly departs Forks in *New Moon* after a paper-cut threatens a vampiric feeding frenzy, Bella is psychically destroyed; frequent references to her zombie-like state signify the erasure of an identity that was made meaningful only in its connection to him. The problem with such precarious identity formation, as much of *New Moon* makes patently clear, is what happens when the masculine Other is absent. Having been abandoned, she is forced to into a kind of aloneness that, for the masochist, 'means non-recognition and therefore non-existence' (Noble, 2000: 16). Signalling her inability to write herself into being after his departure, the book offers several unnumbered pages on which only the names of months are inscribed; there is then, quite literally, no narrative without him. Bella's desire to speak, and therefore to be, is lost with the loss of Edward. In this way, like the masochistic heroine of sentimental literature, 'using a man as her only bridge to social existence positions the adjectival woman in a precarious situation, vulnerable to psychic and social collapse if separated from the man whose presence makes her meaningful' (Noble, 2000: 32).[8] Following his departure, Bella finds placing herself in dangerous situations induces hallucinations of Edward's voice, prompting reckless acts – like a quasi-suicidal cliff dive – she knows will incur his wrath: 'It was only when he was disapproving like this that I could hear the true memory of his voice …' (*New Moon*, p. 358). Characteristic of masochistic self-punishment, only in her attempts to endanger herself does she regain her psychic connection to the Other (de Beauvoir, 1988 [1949]: 662).

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'Hard' masculinity and sexual repression

Although vampires are sometimes seen as queer subjects (Dyer, 1988), flagrantly transgressing gendered boundaries, Edward's portrayal conversely works to (re)stabilize hegemonic masculinity. In Bella's first-person narration, superlatives to describe her vampiric love interest are used to excess; in particular, Edward's 'beauty' (compared to her self-perceived lack of) is invoked in almost every scene shared between him and Bella. Examples include: 'His dazzling face was friendly, open, a slight smile on his flawless lips' (*Twilight*, p. 37); 'It was hard to believe that someone so beautiful could be real' (*Twilight*, p. 75); and 'a carving of Adonis perched on my faded quilt' (*Twilight*, p. 261). Juxtaposed throughout with this masculine beauty is his cold, hard, impenetrable exterior. The hardness, what is often described as the 'granite'-like quality of his body, functions as another unsubtle reminder of the way men's 'hardness' in its phallic form serves as a threat in Meyer's universe.

A thinly veined eroticization of danger marks most of their encounters. Edward's face often darkens as he becomes angry, frustrated or loses patience with Bella: 'he turned slowly to glare at me – his face was absurdly handsome – with piercing, hate-filled eyes. For an instant, I felt a thrill of genuine fear …' (*Twilight*, p. 23–4). Likewise, when Bella mistakenly doubts his sincerity: 'Anger glinted metallic in his black eyes' (*New Moon*, p. 513). Not insignificantly, these threatening 'black eyes' are also explicitly associated with barely sublimated desire. After Edward has 'fed' (apparently on a wild animal), his eyes become a light golden colour contrasting markedly with the dark irises that signify unsated desire; feeding these urges here represents the release of pent up sexual tension, a form of masturbation, after which he becomes 'safer' for Bella to be around: 'I took precautions, hunting, feeding more than usual before seeing you again' (*Twilight*, p. 238).

For the figure of the vampire, sexual hunger becomes conflated with literal hunger, and the threat of masculine sexuality (like Bella's own) permeates the narratives and further suggests their ideological investment in teen sexual abstinence. In the first book, however, Bella is subject to a vampiric kiss, a gesture that is 'obviously analogous to other forms of oral sex acts' (Dyer, 1988: 55). In a distinctly homoerotic scene, when Bella is bitten (and thereby penetrated and infected) by rogue vampire James, Edward sucks his venom from her. While saving her life, thus preventing her vampiric transformation, his actions can also be seen as motivated by his desire to prevent her pollution by another man/vampire; that is, sired by another symbolic father. He therefore seeks to control not only Bella's desire but the circumstances of her siring. In addition to its queer possibilities, as Edward ingests James' poison (implicitly semen, mingled with Bella's blood), this episode suggests how women come to function in a homosocial economy, predicated on their exchange between men (Irigaray, 1985), a point reinforced by the Edward–Bella–Jacob love triangle.

Contrasting with Edward's pronounced literal hardness, Bella's fragility – physical and psychical – is emphasized not just through her own narration, but also in the way she is positioned by him. Though her self-appointed guardian, he warns Bella of the dangers of lost self-control in a threatening tone suggestive of his own sadistic bent:

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> It's just that you are so soft, so fragile. I have to mind my actions every moment we are together so that I don't hurt you. I could kill you quite easily, Bella, simply by accident. You don't realize how incredibly *breakable* you are. (*Twilight*, p. 271, original emphasis)

Edward does want to kill Bella, something which becomes highly eroticized. The object of his desire (initially at least) is not Bella's body but her 'intoxicating' blood. Rather than her attractiveness being written on her body, its surface, the text uses this desire for her blood to signify a deeper, visceral connection; desiring her equals devouring her. His response to her scent (or his 'blood-lust') is described in erotically charged terms; and he compares it to an addiction to heroin (*Twilight*, p. 234–5). Edward's difficulty sublimating his own desire invokes an aggressive masculine sexuality, for which Bella is seen responsible; she routinely apologizes for her scent and promises to avoid doing anything to 'provoke' him, reinscribing the ideologically loaded notion that women should be responsible for (the effects of) men's desire. While Edward is shown to endanger Bella both as vampire and sex-deprived teenage boy, it is the threat of his desire that is figured as inherently problematic. Edward's management of these murderous, sexualized urges dominates the novels as it does other renderings of the modern sympathetic vampire, who 'is a creature troubled by its ontology … a being at odds with its vampiric body and the urges that this body generates' (Williamson, 2007: 1).

(Un)death as self-transformation

Although in the postfeminist rhetoric of choice, Bella does actively *choose* a relationship in which she is routinely positioned subordinately, this should not be cause for simple celebration.[9] That said, Bella's drive to relinquish her human existence becomes an act of resistance against Edward, who refuses, initially at least, to turn her. Some critics have focused on the masochist as an active (political) agent (Uebel, 2002), and Bella – contra most sympathetic vampires for whom it is an 'unwanted ontological status' (Williamson, 2005: 23) – eagerly desires vampiric conversion. And although overwhelmingly framed as a yearning to be eternally with Edward, Bella is also impatient to escape the exigencies of teenage life; becoming vampire represents unbecoming teenager and, more importantly, unbecoming teenage girl. It represents, therefore, 'the fulfilment of masochistic desires to be rid of one's ordinary self' (Baumeister, 1988: 43). Her desire to be transformed emerges as early as the series' first book, where at her high school prom she implores a reluctant Edward to turn her:

> His eyebrows rose. 'Is that what you dream about? Becoming a monster?'
>
> 'Not exactly' I said, frowning at his word choice. Monster, indeed. 'Mostly I dream about being with you forever.' (*Twilight*, p. 433).

In Bella's teenage romance narrative, Edward – as the undead – represents (the seduction of) communion in death. Likewise, Buffy tells vampiric paramour, Angel: 'When I kiss you, I want to die.' Here, the fantasy of loving until death leads to a fantasy of being loved *to* death (Binion, 1993: 46). While 'wanting to die' also evokes *la petite mort* – the so-called 'little death' of orgasm – where Freud likens the 'condition that follows

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complete sexual satisfaction to dying' (in Bristow, 1997: 122), more importantly it implies the destabilization of the boundaries between self and Other. This metaphorical desire for the annihilation of self is literalized in these scenarios; with partners who are (un)dead, both women see death utopically, signifying as it does eternal union with their immortal beloveds. Furthermore, for Bella, undeath comes to represent an alternative way of being that may serve to disrupt the traditional gendered power dynamics that structure her teen life and reconstitute the feminine body she has such difficulty inhabiting. In many senses, through her desire for vampiric transformation she does not simply want Edward she wants to *be* Edward, that is, to appropriate the phallus.

While her motivation for conversion appears to be to eternally preserve her romance, and to finally feel 'worthy' of Edward, there are a series of other (self-)justifications for her to become undead; that is, her motivation is not entirely libidinal. Most problematic is her desire to halt the ageing process and secure eternal youth. In a consumer culture where women's fear of ageing (symbolized by becoming invisible to the male gaze) is cultivated (McRobbie, 2009), Bella's deep-seated fear that she will be 'ancient, creased, and withered' while Edward will remain 'excruciatingly lovely and forever seventeen' (*New Moon*, pp. 5–6) has a particular resonance. As Negra suggests:

> Postfeminism suggests that symbolic forms of time mastery (particularly management of the ageing process) will provide the key to the reclamation of self … women in a postfeminist culture are constantly exhorted to internalize and act on a sense of temporal urgency. (2009: 47, 53)

Bella's impatience for conversion evidences her interpellation by these dominant ideologies surrounding normative femininity. In line with the ugly-duckling-turned-swan motif (an allusion also evident in the heroine's surname), following death Bella awakens renewed and beautified; 'a carving of a goddess' (*Breaking Dawn*, p. 403). Subjecting oneself to excruciating physical pain for psychic and personal fulfilment (i.e., apparently remedying the lack constitutive of subjectivity) is at the heart of contemporary makeover culture, as it is Bella's conversion (*Breaking Dawn*, p. 377). So even in the liminal state of undeath, women's appearance *matters* and indeed the defiance of ageing worth dying for.

Her desire to be transformed, therefore, represents in many senses a recognition of her lack of power both as a young woman under neoliberal patriarchal capitalism and within her relationship. In this vein, she uses a feminist-informed discourse to justify her plea for an undead subjectivity:

> 'I'll be the first to admit that I have no experience with relationships', I said. 'But it just seems logical … a man and a woman have to be somewhat equal … as in, one of them can't always be swooping in and saving the other one. They have to save each other *equally*.' (*Twilight*, p. 412, original emphasis)

Drawing upon popular cultural figures to signify the gendered power imbalance structuring her relationship, she continues: '"I can't always be Lois Lane," I insisted. "I want to be Superman, too"' (*Twilight*, p. 413). Becoming vampire, in some respects, permits this gender destabilization as she becomes able to protect *herself*, shifting from object to

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subject. In figuring vampiric conversion as a postfeminist choice, the narrative here explicitly acknowledges (its own investment in) Bella's positioning as victim in need of masculine protection.

Undeath for Bella, then, correlates with the transference of multiple, overlapping forms of capital – economic, cultural, sexual and physical. What Bella covets is not simply an eternity as a vampire but the power it conveys, including the physical strength and prowess she is seen to so sorely lack as a human. She chooses not just Edward, but an identity and a lifestyle that has been throughout glamorized, marked by consumer capitalism (complete with prestige cars, the details of which are painstakingly laid out for the reader) and unlimited cash-flow. As Negra argues, 'luxury consumption' is celebrated within postfeminism, where capitalism becomes 'salvation', signalling 'unapologetic class stratification in America' (2009: 118–19). Consistent with this logic, the *Twilight* saga is a tale of class mobility: 'The chief point of this story is that the couple *aren't* equals, that his love rescues her from herself by elevating her to a class she could not otherwise join' (Miller, 2008, original emphasis). The Cullen's privilege also relates to their normative whiteness which, rather than being rendered invisible as is common in popular culture, is exaggerated through their hyper-pale undead skin and which contrasts markedly to the doubly Othered Jacob, who is both an indigenous American *and* a werewolf (not to mention working-class). As in most romance fiction, Bella acquires myriad forms of power (and immortality) only through 'acquiring the hero' (Cohn, 1988: 5). While Bella is apparently able to 'choose' an identity associated with power, her agency is thwarted time and again in the novels, especially in terms of her sexual expression.

Desiring sex, desiring death: Bella and agency

The associations between sex and death have a long history; the vampire in particular, with its fatal bite signifying phallic penetration, works as a metaphor for (and indeed performs) this connection. Analogous to rape, the vampire's bite and attendant transmission of tainted fluid has been deployed in times of social upheaval to signify pollution, contamination and miscegenation (Auerbach, 1995; Gelder, 1994). The threat of (Bella's) death looms large in every erotically charged encounter in each narrative, but she is not simply the vampire's unwilling prey. In terms of the sire/sired dynamic, with siring as the ultimate sadomasochistic act, Bella actually willingly embraces transformation, thus setting her apart from other heroines in vampire fiction. While Edward articulates a fear of 'losing control' in a physical sense, and thereby damaging Bella, she is the active masochist seeking to '"safely" abandon herself' (Benjamin, 1990: 64). Moreover, the 'control, order, and boundary that the master provides are essential to the erotic experience of submission' (Benjamin, 1990: 64). However, his own fear of lost control is also a fear of Bella's sexuality and a masculine fear of the Other's threat to his fragile ego boundaries. That is, he fears he will *forget himself* – something which, conversely, Bella desires and which itself represents the disequilibrium and loss of self at the heart of eroticism-as-symbolic-death (Bataille, 1986: 31). Refusing to satisfy Bella's sexual desire, the control Edward maintains is more than simply physical; he paternalistically seeks to control her desire. Edward's commitment to abstinence constitutes Bella as the sexually rapacious partner in their otherwise fairly traditionally gender-binarized relationship. That said, she is rendered passive as she speaks of her deep yearning to be

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'polluted by his venom' (*Eclipse*, p. 324); his 'venom', or semen, is tellingly here abjectly figured as poison and she is the *done to* not the *doer*.

The inability of Edward and Bella to consummate their relationship echoes Buffy's dilemma: after intercourse, Angel loses his soul and in turn his respect for her; an obvious cautionary tale about the moral dangers of teenage sex. In contrast, the *Twilight* narratives invert the idea of feminine passivity and Bella's sexual desire is palpable – but it is also coded as dangerous, as teenage sexuality (especially of girls) often is. She persistently attempts to push the barriers erected by him on the grounds of her own protection: 'Edward had drawn many careful lines for our physical relationship, with the intent being to keep me alive' (*New Moon*, p. 16). Edward refuses to have sex with her until she is a vampire (i.e., when she is already dead); in response to her fervent pleas he remarks: 'Later, when you're less breakable' (*Eclipse*, p. 440).

In a gesture that challenges the idea of vampire as disruptor of social order (Auerbach, 1995; Dyer, 1988; Gelder, 1994), Edward explicitly forces her two desires – erotic connection with him and death – to become co-terminous through making the achievement of both reliant on her occupation of a subject position she finds entirely undesirable: wife. He will penetrate her, in both senses, only from the marriage bed. He effectively coerces Bella into an exogamous marriage in an effort to exert control over her becoming-vampire and over her very self (precarious though it is). The narrative therefore diffuses the threat Bella poses as an active sexual agent; maintains patriarchal hegemony; and evidences the 'hypermatrimonial turn' in postfeminist popular culture (Negra, 2009: 81). However, Bella's attitude to marriage is much more ambivalent than her would-be fiancé's; given her own parents' divorce she sees 'matrimony' as 'a dirty word' (*Eclipse*, p. 440). Her 'choice' or her strategic acquiescence is a way to achieve her goal (undeath), and although she ultimately agrees to marry him, Bella steadfastly refuses to invest in the white wedding fantasy organized by Alice (*Breaking Dawn*).

The morning after the marriage is consummated Edward's fears are realized – Bella has literally been battered by the act, with bruises signifying the brutality of intercourse. She awakens blissful, suggesting that the violence of their sexual encounter 'was not an unpleasant feeling' (*Breaking Dawn*, p. 88), while he – apparently the reluctant sadist – stares in horror at the damage (he has) inflicted on her body. Sex, the narrative implies, is potentially *damaging* – even within marriage, but Bella-as-masochist nevertheless figures this pain as ecstasy. Importantly, this consummation permits the final novel to embrace and celebrate the maternal. Barely 18, the heroine is both married and pregnant after her first traumatic (though pleasurable) experience of intercourse. Postfeminism, Negra argues, 'has forcefully renewed conservative social ideologies centring on the necessity of marriage for young women and glorification of pregnancy' (2009: 47), something to which the *Twilight* series adheres.

Bella's vampire spawn grows at a hyper-accelerated rate and threatens to annihilate its mother. While Edward and his doctor father encourage an abortion to save Bella's life, she vehemently refuses even as the foetus bruises her black and blue, rendering her pregnant body grotesque and monstrous. Deploying pro-life and 'maternal instinct' discourses, she suggests: 'I wanted him [the child] like I wanted air to breathe. Not a choice – a necessity' (*Breaking Dawn*, p. 132). This represents one of the few instances when she defies Edward; that Bella suddenly develops a strong will and tenacity while

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pregnant suggests a valorization of the maternal. Bella does sacrifice her human life, but ultimately the text recuperates her desire for death by linking it to childbirth. Through her sacrifice – being prepared to die in childbirth – her reward is immortality; having fulfilled the ultimate feminine duty, her life can expire. Mothering within the vampire community (or rather the Cullen family) is also valorized. For example, Rosalie's fierce protection of Bella (and the unborn Renesme) during her pregnancy is based on her own inability, and deep desire, to mother. Bella, unlike Rosalie, it is implied, can join the undead without having to sacrifice the ultimate gendered experience: childbirth and motherhood. Moreover, Esme Cullen, who is nurturing, loving and devoted to her 'adopted' family, is set in clear opposition to Bella's working-class mother, Renee, who is largely absent from the narratives.

Mirroring the birth Bella has just experienced, Edward embarks on his own form of *reproduction* as he both injects her with his venom and bites her. As her sire, his patriarchal and paternal authority over her is reaffirmed. As a 'newborn' vampire, she is physically more potent than Edward but her idolization and desire to lose herself in her now husband remain unaltered. From the within the 'safety' of both marriage and (un)death, her sexual desires are no longer curtailed.[10] Moreover, while the gendered dynamics post-transformation seem little altered, (un)death does have its advantages. Bella obtains superior physical strength (not to mention breath-taking beauty) and heightened sensory awareness, a not insignificant point given the narratives' extreme focus on her difficulty occupying her adolescent feminine body. As vampire, for the first time, she has corporeal control, describing her death as 'the true beginning of my life' (*Breaking Dawn*, p. 398). As the eponymous Carmilla in J. Sheridan Le Fanu's infamous lesbian vampire narrative had imagined immortality permitting a type of feminine fulfilment impossible in life, Bella's feminism – if it is that at all – can be described as 'post-mortem' (Williams, 1995: 193). Only in/through (un)death is she empowered. Not only is she able to run (something she could not previously do without literally falling over), her run resembles flight, the symbolism of which is obvious. In this way, like Carmilla, she is 'no longer contained by the boundaries of girlhood; she can fly in several senses of the word, moving in ways that are not humanly possible …' (Williams, 1995: 165). Nonetheless, her undead subjectivity – and her ultimate heroism – is inseparable, and indeed reliant upon, her maternal status. In the series' denouement, her psychic power post-transformation enables her to erect a thin membrane of protective tissue around all those fighting on her side against the ruling vampire coven, the Volturi. Reminiscent of the protective amniotic sac, Bella envelops all those she cares about and prevents the Volturi from advancing (*Breaking Dawn*, pp. 690–1); it is therefore as (wife and) Mother that Bella's value and power becomes finally apparent.

The vampire's postfeminism needs?

To return to my introductory quotation from Nina Auerbach – if 'every age embraces the vampire it needs' – why might consumers of popular fiction, and teenage girls in particular, 'need' a masculine vampiric figure parasitically feeding on a heroine whose anxieties, insecurities and self-doubt immobilize her to such an extent that the only (culturally sanctioned) choices she is able to make include marriage, motherhood and a masochistic relationship whose end point is (un)death? As Angela McRobbie argues in

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her critique of postfeminism, the Symbolic order, in light of the gender destabilizations made possible by feminism (in theory if not in actuality), needs new ways to 'resecure the terms of heterosexual desire' (2009: 62). In their attempts to do this, the *Twilight* narratives align with broader shifts towards postfeminism in popular culture, particularly in its mobilization of fantasies of atemporal selfhood and reliance upon limited models of female subjectivity that centre on the matrimonial and the maternal (Negra, 2009: 5). As the extra-textual network enveloping the books continues to grow, further work, including on whether readers are contesting what I have identified as the novels' political limitations, will help to unpack the broader cultural desires that the *Twilight* saga and the ever-growing cultural phenomenon it has sparked are fulfilling.

Notes

1 Moral ambiguities in regard to vampires resisting their 'natural' impulses and refusing to imbibe human blood are of course nothing new; such characters would be familiar to viewers of recent programmes such as *Angel* (the conflicted vampire with a soul) and the main character from *Moonlight*, who feed only on animal blood and position themselves between the human (light)/supernatural (dark) worlds. In addition to their recent popularity on the televisual landscape these so-called 'sympathetic' vampires, as Williamson (2005) comprehensively shows, have an extensive literary lineage.

2 For Benjamin:

> the intersubjective view, as distinguished from the intrapsychic, refers to what happens in the field of self and other. Whereas the intrasubjective perspective conceives of the person as a discrete unit with a complex internal structure, intersubjective theory describes capacities that emerge in the interaction between self and others. (1990: 20)

3 However, Edward too figures the potential loss of Bella as a loss of self and at one point explicitly identifies as a masochist (*Twilight*, p. 240), an assertion that is not diegetically sustained.

4 This relationship, and Bella's fundamental passivity, has been the subject of critique in mainstream media, where it has been described as 'an account of a textbook abusive relationship' (Baker, 2009; Lay, 2009: 111).

5 Hetero-patriarchal ideals of romance permeate the narrative, with the idea of the 'one' also strongly manifesting in the novels' La Push wolf community's idea of 'imprinting', in which women have no agency and are marked – often from birth – as the mate of a particular werewolf.

6 Quotations from the *Twilight* books are referenced by title.

7 These forms of psychic and symbolic violence against women are augmented in the narratives by more explicit forms of physical violence. For example, the werewolf pack's leader, 'Alpha' Sam Uley, has attacked his partner. The attack on Emily, which leaves her face horribly disfigured, is explained to Bella as an unfortunate 'loss of control'.

8 More problematically, the novel suggests her only way to regain this self is to transfer this investment to another man, albeit of the werewolf variety; her narrative begins again through Jacob.

9 This is precisely how Stephanie Meyer characterizes it on her webpage: http://www.stephenie-meyer.com/bd_faq.html

10 Although she had feared losing all that rendered her human – that she will (initially at least) only be obsessed with bloodlust and quenching her thirst – the novel works to emphasize that Bella's 'essential' human self has remained intact post-transformation. This includes through its portrayal of a vampiric mirror stage (*Breaking Dawn*, p. 405) – something which sets Bella

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apart from the other Cullen vampires, who conversely possess no reflection, and therefore, like most vampires, do 'not have the necessary condition for the possibility of becoming a subject' (Winnubst, 2003: 8).

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Memory, Monsters, and Lady Gaga

VICTOR P. CORONA

WITH THE 2008 RELEASE OF HER ALBUM *THE FAME*, LADY GAGA became the first recording artist in history to have at least four number one hits from a debut album.[1] Although *The Fame* and its 2009 expanded rerelease, *The Fame Monster*, earned positive critical reviews, Gaga's artistic reputation is also closely tied to an endless stream of avant-garde fashion worn in her music videos, performances, and public appearances. Proclaimed to be the "defining pop star" of 2009 by *Rolling Stone* (Hiatt, "Rise of Lady Gaga"), Gaga won two Grammy awards in 2010 and was nominated for six a year later. She is followed by over seven million people on Twitter and was 2010's second most Googled celebrity in the U.S. Gaga's success also led to an invitation to Queen Elizabeth's annual entertainment gala and a performance at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, where she wore the first hat designed by the architect Frank Gehry. Although her music and sartorial flare follow in the tradition of artists like David Bowie, Madonna, Michael Jackson, and Queen, Gaga has succeeded in creating a glam-pop aesthetic aptly described as "neon noir" (Weiner 2009), one that pursues a lasting presence in popular memory and celebrates a monstrous Otherness.

In order to evaluate Gaga's place in pop culture, this article explores the components of her distinct aesthetic, which can be described as a social imaginary (Castoriadis 1987) that upholds much of Warhol's Pop Art vision yet twists it to reflect contemporary anxieties. Her active quest to produce the memorable and celebrate the freakish highlights the degree to which pop spectacle has been affected by a period of unprecedented connectivity among consumers and cultural producers. The emphasis on creating the memorable reflects a new urgency for

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stars' differentiation in a period of "hypermodernity," an accelerated state of western capitalism characterized by "the culture of the fastest and the 'ever more': more profitability, more performance, more flexibility, more innovation" (Lipovetsky 35). From this perspective, postmodernity's progeny is a cultural landscape where any possible event of interest can be almost instantly tweeted, blogged, texted, uploaded on YouTube, displayed on social networking sites, and discussed on comment boards. The entertainment industries have reacted to this trend by recognizing that in a quickened state of cultural exchange, the diffusion and perception of a star's image are the most important building blocks of a career.

Gaga's pursuit of an enduring cultural presence responds to hypermodern pressures not by conjuring images of the sincere and earnest, as "girl-next-door" stars have traditionally done. Instead, her elaborate performances and sartorial experimentation are deployed to create visual impressions that are practically tailor-made for the age of viral marketing and generate expectations of ever grander spectacles. The urge to consciously make hypermodern memory in itself, however, does not fully capture Gaga's aesthetic and its popularity. She complements this strategy by attempting to explicitly link herself to categories of individual Otherness. By celebrating the "monster," the "freak," or the "misfit" in multiple expressions—not "fitting in" at school or being gay—she is able to build a sense of subcultural membership among fans while the catch-all liveliness of her music works to sustain mass appeal. On Ellen DeGeneres's talk show, the host commented on Gaga's uniqueness yet gently questioned the sincerity of her spectacle. She responded, "I didn't fit in in high school and I felt like a freak, so I like to create this atmosphere for my fans where they feel like they have a freak in me to hang out with and they don't feel alone" (air date, November 27, 2009). In other interviews, she described her 2009–11 "Monster Ball" concert tour in terms of "apocalypse" and "exorcism," while the album's songs were said to reflect the "demons" with which she has wrestled throughout her life.

In order to effectively contextualize such narratives of purgation and self-affirmation, it is useful to incorporate an understanding of what Castoriadis and others have defined as "imaginaries." Mandoki wrote that they are "known to be fictional and yet, like fiction in literature, theater, or movies, we lend ourselves as willing accomplices to the worlds they offer hoping they can somehow transform the real

through a utopic inversion" (602). It is precisely this kind of attachment of the fan to a star that the entertainment industry actively nurtures. Marshall referred to the industry as "an apparatus for the congealing of emotions and sentiments into recognizable sounds, images, and personalities that work to maintain the intensity of emotions" (167), essentially, the business of selling imaginaries. Acknowledging this willful and revenue-driven construction of consumer attachment does not diminish the power of celebrities and their spectacles. Rather, hypermodern methods of disseminating celebrity spectacle illustrate that artifice, if artful, can be even more compelling than the person behind the persona if it forcefully reflects the sullied truths of contemporary life.

Much of the literature on celebrity spectacle and American popular culture focuses on the Hollywood film industry, which nurtured stardom as a matter of branding strategy. A star system served as a means for the early studios to differentiate themselves once they understood that a studio brand by itself was an insufficient builder of customer loyalty (Gamson 1994). Marshall also showed that it is difficult to understand celebrity culture without meaningfully conceptualizing the mass audience made possible by printing, sound, and motion picture technologies—e.g., the production of sheet music—in addition to a certain democratic effervescence that these technologies helped to foster. As he noted, "The images of possibility provided by films, radio, and popular music represented an accessible form of consumption. The discourse that surrounded these celebrities provided the evidence of access to stardom" (9).

Dyer and others were correct to link celebrity success to the anxieties of the historical and social contexts in which fame is acquired. By framing Gaga's aesthetic appeal in relation to the broader cultural landscape, a connection can be made to the turbulences thrown up by a hypermodern mode of culture production, a "hyperculture" in which "entertainment is transformed from an occasional personal and group diversion to a way of life, occupying all the interstices between periods of work" (Bertman 123). With the rise of today's technologies, fans can listen to their favorite stars on digital music players, watch music videos on camera-enabled phones, and discuss the latest news and images of celebrity exploits on Web sites often run by other devotees. As Herwitz notes, "Increasingly today the forms of aesthetic appreciation cut across individual media, and are the product of many in particular

concert" (49), an observation not lost on pop stars eager to demonstrate the uniqueness of their identities.

The remainder of this article will examine the mass appeal and subcultural allure of the aesthetic crafted by Gaga and her "Haus of Gaga" creative team, which she modeled after Warhol's Factory and filled with close friends. Using previous theoretical work on celebrity, cultural commentary, and statements by the artist herself, the article will contextualize Gaga's fame in a period where the pace of cultural production redefines how a recording artist can establish a presence that lasts more than the proverbial fifteen minutes. Of course, the accelerated business cycles of creative industries in the postwar period have long caused concerns over the meaningfulness and originality possible in cultural production. Such pressures, however, may also generate new and innovative recombinations of aesthetic material in ways that may shock today's audiences but seem routinized in a few years. There are important cases where aesthetic recombinations of different performance modalities have led to new and enduring styles: "The rock performance style emerged out of the confluence of black performance style with the need to express the sincerity of personality and individuality of the performer/star" (Marshall 158). Therefore, it is possible that the kind of cultural bricolage with which Gaga is experimenting may ultimately open new and enduring terrains of theatricality in pop culture.

The Persistence of Memory?

The background of Lady Gaga, born Stefani Germanotta, has been reported in numerous interviews and a biography published in 2010 (Herbert 2010). Growing up on Manhattan's Upper West Side, she attended the elite Convent of the Sacred Heart on Fifth Avenue and later New York University's Tisch School of the Arts before leaving to pursue her career full-time. Despite having academic success, she has repeatedly stated that she felt isolated from other Sacred Heart students. Learning piano by the age of four, she wrote her first piano ballad as a teenager and later began playing at open-mic nights at clubs. While building her career in the Manhattan club scene, her voice reminded a New York producer of Queen's theatrical lead singer, Freddie Mercury, and bestowed upon her a name inspired by the band's

nostalgic 1984 song, "Radio Ga Ga." Aside from Queen, she has expressed her admiration for David Bowie, Boy George, Judy Garland, Michael Jackson, Grace Jones, Led Zeppelin, Madonna, Constantin Stanislavski, and Rainer Maria Rilke (his famous "must I write?" passage is tattooed on her left arm).

Perhaps few stage names in pop culture are as ironic as Lady Gaga's. "Radio Ga Ga" was a wistful lament of how radio was being displaced and made to appear antiquated by the novelty of television. By contrast, the fame of Lady Gaga and other contemporary pop stars has largely been sustained by technologies like Twitter, YouTube, and camera- and video-enabled phones with which fans can almost immediately capture and upload news and images of celebrity sightings. Etymologically, the expression "going gaga" has "dual meanings of baby talk and adoration" (Purves 147) as well as lunacy. In the case of today's pop stars, fans "go gaga" in part by compulsively using interactive technologies to connect to an artist's aura and each other. In order to capitalize on this trend, industry leaders work to combine their resources with the power of viral marketing and drive the vigor and speed with which celebrity culture is consumed. According to a *Wall Street Journal* analysis, Gaga "has made shrewd use of new digital platforms, while still leveraging the clout of a major label, an institution deemed obsolete by many proponents of DIY [do-it-yourself] culture" (Jurgensen 2010). Just as the television signaled the advent of the pop spectacle once larger audiences could *see* performances and not merely listen over grainy radio waves, the diffusion of digital media means that recording artists can tweet links to fan-made videos and make followers instantaneously aware of new images and promotional material.

Given that Gaga has released albums titled *The Fame* and *The Fame Monster*, it is not surprising that she is preoccupied with the performance of celebrity and the construction of a lasting artistic legacy. As she told *Rolling Stone*, "My true legacy will be the test of time, and whether I can sustain a space in pop culture and really make stuff that will have a genuine impact" (Hiatt, "Rise of Lady Gaga"). But Engel Lang and Lang draw a valuable distinction between *recognition* and *renown* in the building of artistic reputation. According to them, recognition reflects the respect of an artist's peers, while renown "is measurable by how well a person is known outside a specific art world and depends on the publicity that only critics and dealer promotion pro-

vide" (84). In terms of peer recognition, Gaga is reported to be friendly with artists like Cyndi Lauper, Madonna, and Marilyn Manson, although she is usually reluctant to describe her relationships with older artists. The more provocative elements of Gaga's avant-garde project are balanced by her collaborations with more conventional peers like Beyoncé. Gaga and her Haus advisers understand that in order to build renown, her image and music should have ties to other modes of aesthetic appreciation. At a benefit for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, she wore a hat made by Frank Gehry and performed on a piano painted by the artist Damien Hirst. At the event, she told the *New Yorker*, "The objective is to always be making something that belongs in a museum. Even what I'm wearing right now" (Goodyear 2009). A few months later, at Queen Elizabeth's annual Royal Variety show, Gaga was suspended from a swing and played a piano balanced on spindly dark legs that evoked the nightmarish landscapes of Salvador Dalí and Tim Burton. As she explained to the *London Times*, "I don't wanna be one song. I wanna be the next 25 years of pop music" (Barber 2009).

Gaga's attention to the constant articulation of her aesthetic, especially for fans in attendance at her concerts, should not be casually dismissed. Vannini, among others, rightfully champions Denzin's reshifting of the question of aesthetics to the actual moment of experience, that which is "found at the genesis of experience itself—the existential moment of interpretation of one's lifeworld" (48). Indeed, a central feature of Gaga's vision is her Warholian celebration of pop culture, which has been derided as low-brow kitsch created purely for the consumption of the undiscerning masses. By contrast, her official Web site biography states, "Pop culture is art. It doesn't make you cool to hate pop culture, so I embraced it and you hear it all over *The Fame*. But, it's a sharable fame. I want to invite you all to the party. I want people to feel a part of this lifestyle" (ladygaga.com). In elaborating this as one goal of her enterprise, Gaga's music seeks to bridge what theorists have understood as the Bourdieusian distinction between a subfield of art where the highest reaches of symbolic capital are controlled by a small avant-garde and one where "an aspirant, bohemian avant-garde claims to shun even symbolic capital" (Hesmondhalgh 215).

In this regard, Gaga has made repeated references to Andy Warhol, the Pop image-maker described by one philosopher as the "artist

laureate of the American soul" (Danto 131). Like Gaga, Warhol's body of work reflects a desire to tinker with the aesthetic power of the core symbols of American culture. While musing about how the White House would be decorated if he were elected President, Warhol wrote, "Can you see the Blue Room with Campbell's Soup Cans all over the walls? Because that's what Foreign Heads of State should see, Campbell's Soup Cans and Elizabeth Taylor and Marilyn Monroe. That's America" (15). Gaga's affinity for the enigmatic Pop artist can be read as an appreciation for an artistic vision that can both champion and twist the iconography of pop culture through a variety of media. As she told the *Guardian*, "I strive to be a female Warhol. I want to make films and music, do photography and paint one day, maybe. Make fashion. Make big museum art installations. I would be a bit more mixed-media than him probably—combining mixed media and imagery and doing more of a kind of a weird pop-art piece" (Barton 2009). The Warholian influence on Gaga's music can also be traced to her desire to firmly install pop music in the realm of fine art. She stated, "There's been a lot of damage done over the past 30 years with artists saying that pop music sucks. It's lowbrow, manufactured, fake, plastic. They say we need to go back to the 'real music,' so we've had to listen to some really depressing singer-songwriters and indie-rock bands" (Hobart 2008).

In order to pursue enduring reputations, other artists have also crafted flamboyant identities that pushed the boundaries of theatricality. Relevant cases might include the Beatles' Sgt. Pepper guise, Garth Brooks as Chris Gaines, Miley Cyrus as Hannah Montana, Beyoncé as Sasha Fierce, and David Bowie as Ziggy Stardust, although there is significant variation in the degree to which these personas have been incorporated into the performers' artistic repertoires. The important point to highlight here is that this kind of theatricality can be used as a challenge to established definitions of identity and expected forms of behavior. As Auslander noted, "Glam rock's central social innovation was to open a safe cultural space in which to experiment with versions of masculinity that clearly flouted social norms" (228). Theatrical alter-egos can also be seen as efforts to express an exaggerated version of what Adler and Adler referred to as the celebrity's "gloried self." This identity emerges as the result of a person being "the focus of intense interpersonal and media attention, leading to their achieving celebrity" (299). These authors, however, were primarily

concerned with exploring the detrimental side effects of such a self, including a growing disregard for the concerns of the precelebrity self, e.g., detachment from family, and the rise of an unstable "dualism" between the pre-celebrity self and the "gloried self" (306).

In her own displays of hypermodern theatricality, Gaga's fashion is a fundamental visual instrument in her quest to be seared into popular memory. For a May 2009 cover of *Rolling Stone*, Gaga wore an outfit made of plastic bubbles. A scene of the video for her "Bad Romance" single features Gaga strutting in massive, glittering green "armadillo heels" designed by the late Alexander McQueen, at whose October 2009 fashion show the song premiered. At the 2009 American Music Awards, she was fitted with an illuminated headdress, top, and heels made to resemble bones, while the 2010 Grammys opened with Gaga's duet with Elton John while both wore glittering vestments covered in ash. Elements of other dresses have included plush figures of Kermit the Frog and Hello Kitty. Other performances were conducted while wearing black, geometric shapes resembling bat wings, clear plastic crystals protruding from her shoulders and hips, and red lace with a blond hairpiece made to resemble a halo. The London-based milliner Philip Treacy has designed some of her more memorable headpieces, including hats in the form of a sparkling lobster and a black, leathery telephone.

The deployment of avant-garde fashion in the creation of a hypermodern star should not be easily overlooked. As Mandoki claimed, "It may be frivolous, superficial, semantically empty, trivial, and flimsy; it nonetheless materializes urban values of fantasy, originality, novelty, and creativity" (612). For Lipovetsky, hypermodern culture is the fullest expression of a "society of fashion" in which "the cult of the new is asserting itself as an everyday and widespread passion" (37). While most celebrities craft some sort of sartorial identity, Gaga is always clad in apparel usually seen only on Fashion Week runways. Such public displays confront the strictures of fashion binding on the rest of the population, the "vestimentary regimes [that] delineate the circumstances in which a style might be deployed, as in clarifying the situations in which different types of attire are appropriate or not . . ." (Corona and Godart 14). Gaga's aesthetic challenges the potency of such regimes and affirms the hypermodern imperative of individual self-expression that is evident throughout venues in Manhattan's club scene (Colman 2010).

In this devotion to fashion, there are echoes of Evita Perón, the wife of Argentina's controversial populist leader Juan Perón, and the tie between her maintenance of a loyal political base in the urban poor and working classes and the glamour of her persona. In postwar Argentina, "Her followers memorized the details of her every change of dress—the fittings, the designers, the gold lamé, the hats, mantillas, even a tiara—and never tired of the rainbow of images that spread over the media of the time and continued glowing in the huge full-colored photographs of magazines still dedicated, twenty-five years later, exclusively to her" (Taylor 76). It was perhaps fitting that the 1996 film adaptation of the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical should feature Madonna in the starring role. Indeed, the Queen of Pop regnant is said to have vigorously campaigned to play the role of a South American woman who rose from poverty and obscurity into the limelight of fame and power. Ironically, although Evita would come to be swathed in Cartier and Dior, her destitute followers were known as *descamisados*, "shirtless ones." Like Evita, both Madonna and Gaga understand the power of high fashion to sustain popular imaginaries, whether they be in the service of a pop star's legacy or the political agenda of populist reformers. As Mandoki noted, "Fashion opens up the curtains of social imaginaries to a stage where each and everyone is invited, like Cinderellas at the castle of Prince Charming, to the world of glamour and masquerade. It is all a matter of adequate attire" (600). Because apparel and appearance sustain the imaginaries tied to a star's aura, it is perhaps no coincidence that Evita, Madonna, and Gaga, like the inimitable icon Marilyn Monroe, are all brunettes-cum-blondes.

When the image of someone like Gaga becomes so closely associated with spectacle, the question of authenticity inevitably emerges. Vannini and Meyers have explored this problem in the cases of pop stars Avril Lavigne and Britney Spears, respectively. Vannini analyzes online consumer reviews and offers an excellent account of how the authenticity of "pop-punk" star Avril Lavigne was belied by her ability to play the guitar and the extent to which her entire artistic persona was "carefully managed by Arista as those of any other popular persona" (55). Along similar lines, Meyers examines the authenticity of "pop princess" Britney Spears and the obsessive interest in her failed marriage and child-rearing ability. Meyers noted, "The never-ending quest for the 'real' celebrity bestows upon her persona heightened cultural significance that is disseminated through all forms of celebrity media"

(896). The question of authenticity is rendered almost meaningless, however, given that the star's day-to-day life is thoroughly consumed by the mechanics of performing. Meyers concluded that "being Britney can never really be an ordinary experience. She is constantly followed by paparazzi, spends much of her life either preparing for or performing on stage, and rarely has a moment to herself away from her fans or her entourage" (902). Gaga has avoided the authenticity dilemma by affirming that she *is* the persona she inhabits on stage. Unlike other successful female singers like Beyoncé and Taylor Swift, her stage presence does not use any version of her birth name. In early 2009 she claimed, "The largest misconception is that Lady Gaga is a persona or a character. I'm not—even my mother calls me Gaga. I am 150,000 percent Lady Gaga every day" (Scaggs 2009).

The Monsters Within

Since her first album's release in 2008, Lady Gaga has enthusiastically played with the trope of monstrosity. Her rerelease of *The Fame* with new tracks, *The Fame Monster*, includes a song titled "Monster' that describes a male love interest with "evil eyes" who, she sings, "ate my heart and then he ate my brain." Her 2009–10 tour is called "The Monster Ball," a term that evokes the "monster's ball" tradition of English jailers in which they would celebrate on the night before a prisoner's execution. She consistently addresses her fans as "my little monsters," a term which they eagerly use among themselves. The word "monster" is thereby used to indict past relationships and fame and to celebrate the products of that fame, her fans. Monster becomes a metaphor for the maddening swirl of images, anxieties, and fads in hypermodern life. As Gaga explained to Ann Powers of the *Los Angeles Times*, "Celebrity life and media culture are probably the most overbearing pop-cultural conditions that we as young people have to deal with, because it forces us to judge ourselves. I guess what I am trying to do is take the monster and turn the monster into a fairy tale." Gaga offered additional explanation in an interview with *Rolling Stone*:

> Each one of these songs on my album represents a different demon that I've faced in myself, so the music is much more personal. I don't write about fame or money at all on this new record. So we talked about monsters and how, I believe, that innately we're all born with

> the monsters already inside of us—I guess in Christianity they call it original sin—the prospect that we will, at some point, sin in our lives, and we will, at some point, have to face our own demons, and they're already inside of us.
>
> (Hiatt, "Inside the Monster Ball")

One of the best examples of this narrative in Gaga's aesthetic is probably the video for the first *Fame Monster* single, "Bad Romance." The video was made by the film director Francis Lawrence, whose movies include *Constantine* (2005) and *I Am Legend* (2007), both of which feature ghoulish characters. The "Bad Romance" video is built around a story of sex slavery in which Gaga is sold to the Russian mafia but ultimately destroys the man who purchased her. Animals are used to lend a bestial flavor to the video, which includes a furless cat, a furless bat and a taxidermied rat used as hairpieces, mounted antelopes on the mafioso's bedroom walls, and a coat whose train ends in the head of the classic polar bearskin rug. The dance moves recall the clawed fingers of the dancing undead in Michael Jackson's "Thriller," while one set of costumes appears to be inspired by Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*. The lyrics make reference to the films *Psycho, Vertigo*, and *Rear Window*, directed by the master of cinematic macabre, Alfred Hitchcock. The video concludes with Gaga lying beside the charred skeleton of her buyer, her chest emitting the electric sparks that vanquished her captor.

In popular culture as a whole, the blending of the beautiful with the monstrous is a well-established motif. The contrast of beast and beauty is used to provoke a reckoning with prevailing ideals of appearance, tolerance, justice, and sexuality. As Ingebretsen argued, "Monsters show us what happens—to them, certainly, and possibly to us as well—when the always vulnerable line between civility and incivility fails. In the language of Aristotle and the ancients, monsters are *monere*, and *monstrare*, warnings and demonstrations—'signs and Portents'" (26). Rock stars like Alice Cooper, Ozzy Osbourne, Rob Zombie, and Marilyn Manson also built their careers through a keen sense of the power of the morbid spectacle to attract audiences and provoke media chatter about their albums. The popularity of the *Twilight* films and television shows like *The Vampire Diaries* and *True Blood* also highlights the renewed vigor of the monster motif in pop culture.

The image of the monster in memorable music videos has also been successfully deployed in the past. One of the most popular songs of all

time, Michael Jackson's 1983 "Thriller," had the star himself taking the forms of werewolf and zombie. Mercer has astutely captured how the "Thriller" video's depiction of monstrosity was inextricable from the overall development and perception of Michael Jackson's sexual identity (werewolf as hypersexual, zombie as antisexual). As Mercer noted, Jackson's transformation into a werewolf (albeit one with feline features) is triggered by his coy comment to the female love interest, "I'm not like other guys" (308). Experimentation in music video imagery alone will not garner commercial success, although it is certainly a powerful mode of expression: "Videos are often filled with surrealism; they represent avant-garde filmmaking that serves to associate the popular star with the style and romantic connotations of the innovative artist" (Marshall 163).

Gaga, however, puts a distinct take on the trope of monstrous Otherness. Weiner has described how "Gaga debuted already-defiled," in stark contrast to the purity ascribed to Britney Spears before the story of her virginity and its loss became mainstream news. If, as Dyer argued, successful stars touch upon certain "social resonances," then Gaga's lyrics and videos have successfully touched upon a hypermodern disenchantment and appetite for the raw that continues to be fed by entertainment formats like reality television. Gaga's first hit, "Just Dance," is essentially about being drunk at a club but remaining confident in a happy conclusion to a night of drunken stupor. Gaga's Grammy-nominated hit, "Poker Face," deals with her bisexuality and desiring a woman while she was with a boyfriend, while "LoveGame" raised eyebrows with her reference to a phallus as a "disco stick." The playfulness and earthiness of earlier pop stars is passed over in favor of a more realistic sense of youthful urban revelry. The song "Beautiful, Dirty, Rich" recalls her period of drug use as a struggling upstart in New York's club scene. Even her bubbliest video, for "Eh, Eh (Nothing Else I Can Say)," is an homage, via pastiche, to her Italian-American roots, complete with her sitting on a Vespa in front of "Guido's Meat Market" and serving spaghetti and meatballs to her husband.

Gaga's aesthetic vision is perhaps most vividly elaborated in her 2009–10 "Monster Ball" tour, which she calls a "truly artistic experience that is going to take the form of the greatest post-apocalyptic house party that you've ever been to" (Hiatt, "Inside the Monster Ball") and has been described by a Canadian theater critic as "at least twice as

entertaining and infinitely fresher than any stage musical written over the last decade" (Nestruck 2009). Relating the sold-out "Monster Ball" concerts to the success of the *Twilight* films, Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera*, and Michael Jackson's "Thriller," a *New York Times* theater review claims that Gaga's show turns "the conventions of pop stardom into a fully realized gothic musical that aims for the commercial sweet spot at the intersection of horror and romance" (Zinoman 2010).

A broader audience was exposed to Gaga's "neon noir" imaginary during a live performance of her song "Paparazzi" at the 2009 MTV Video Music Awards, where a Romanesque stage draped in pink and white was the site of a bloody simulation of her demise. In the video for the single, she is thrown from a balcony by a lover trying to ensure that paparazzi capture a photograph of their embrace. She somehow survives, fatally poisons the lover, and is arrested at the conclusion of the video. While the song itself deals with *being* a fan obsessed with a male rock star, the video features images of dead women that recall Hollywood's most famous murdered ingénue, the Black Dahlia. The story was continued in the nine-minute video for the 2010 "Telephone" single. In the video, Gaga is jailed in a "Prison for Bitches" until she is bailed out by Beyoncé. Together they poison a diner full of people and escape in the "Pussy Wagon" featured in Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill* film. Throughout the video, Gaga and Beyoncé are adorned with essential artifacts of Pop America: soda cans, leather jackets, American flags, cowboy hats, and, of course, a telephone.

Rather than subsume these dark displays into another brooding, moody celebrity demeanor, Gaga claimed that the Frida Kahlo-inspired "Paparazzi" performance on MTV was actually an attempt to preempt the tale of a tragic celebrity demise that has now become a fixture of pop lore, as in the deaths of Princess Diana, Judy Garland, Grace Kelly, and Marilyn Monroe. Gaga told *Elle*, "I feel that if I can show my demise artistically to the public, I can somehow cure my own legend. I can show you so you're not looking for it. I'm dying for you on domestic television—here's what it looks like, so no one has to wonder" (Purves 147). Using a performance of the song "Paparazzi" to comment on the insatiability of the public gaze is interesting given that photographers' images so often capture stars as they perform the most mundane of activities, like shopping for groceries or walking their dogs. The images captured by paparazzi therefore lie in a gray area that

rubs out the Durkheimian separation of the sacred (stars and their glamor) and the profane (the drab, everyday lives of the nonfamous). Casting aside this sacred/profane division, Gaga's vision may prove that the more important delineation in hypermodern pop culture is between the monstrous and the merely mundane.

One benefit of this branding strategy is the ability to solidify the degree to which Gaga can associate subcultural membership with her music and thereby activate enduring allegiances. As Marshall describes:

> The star's cultural power depended on a very close affinity with a specific and loyal audience. The star, then, was actively engaged in the construction and differentiation of audience groups, in terms of style and taste, and in authenticating their elevated position. The popular music star, more than other forms of celebrity, had to be a virtual member of his or her own audience in order to sustain his or her influence and authenticity, and the commitment of the fan (161).

The power of the "monster" motif lies in being able to attract other self-identifying outcasts to her music and aesthetic, an effort that Gaga hopes will ultimately empower them to express the "monster" within them. The possibility of self-empowerment via a celebration of one's Otherness is a powerful function of public and televised spectacles. For example, Smit praises the display of children afflicted with muscular dystrophy during the annual Jerry Lewis telethon, claiming that the "event actually offers power and agency" to the children themselves (688). In a comparable way, when interviewed by Barbara Walters as one of the "most fascinating people" of 2009, Gaga claimed that she hopes to "liberate" her fans from their fears so that they can "create their own space in the world" (air date, December 9, 2009).

Like other female pop stars, Lady Gaga marshals her femininity in her performances. An open bisexual, she vigorously defends the gay community and, despite explicitly gendering her stage name, has at times mischievously fed rumors that she is a hermaphrodite. The careers of other female pop stars demonstrate the challenge of negotiating this aspect of the celebrity identity. Judy Garland, for example, embodied three distinct identities that struck a cultural chord: "the all-American small town girl-next-door; the personification of showbiz good humour and bezazz; the neurotic woman" (Dyer, *A Star Is Born* 132). Garland thereby captured key elements of what Britney Spears,

Beyoncé, and Courtney Love each represent individually. An "alternative" rock star of the 1990s, Alanis Morissette colored her display of femininity with a seething rage aimed at former lovers and authority figures before undergoing an artistic transformation that yielded songs like "In Praise of the Vulnerable Man" and "Giggling Again for No Reason." More recently, Britney Spears cultivated a "girl-next-door" identity before a torrent of news about premarital sex, drug use, and irresponsible parenting largely deflated her rise. By contrast, Gaga's teasing lyrics, shocking outfits, and outrageous comments at concerts warp the kind of sexualized performance introduced by Madonna, who famously attracted attention by writing on the ground in a wedding dress and celebrating sadomasochism in the music video for the song "Erotica."

Yet despite Gaga's distinctive mark on pop music early in her career, she is not storming the gates of American cultural mores. She had a rather conventional, affluent upbringing in Manhattan in a two-parent household. Despite being an open bisexual, she told *Elle* that within ten years she hopes to be married with children (Purves 172). In contrast to celebrities who are estranged from parents, Gaga repeatedly talks about being close to her family and states that she wrote the song "Speechless" from *The Fame Monster* as a way to convince her father to undergo heart surgery. Her own career narrative proudly proclaims that her upward trajectory was respectful of the appropriate conventions en route to stardom: "I did this the way you are supposed to. I played every club in New York City and I bombed in every club and then killed it in every club and I found myself as an artist. I learned how to survive as an artist, get real, and how to fail and then figure out who I was as singer and performer. And, I worked hard" (ladygaga.com).

Conclusion

In September 2009, the author stood not far from the red carpet at the MTV Video Music Awards in Manhattan and spotted someone wearing a glittering gold mask and a wide-brimmed black hat. The figure slowly meandered past camera flashes and ascended a small stage to be interviewed, just a sidewalk away from the evening traffic flowing uptown on Sixth Avenue. Nearby, a young woman muttered, "That has

to be Lady Gaga—only she would wear something like that." The onlooker was correct. It then became evident that Gaga's escort for the evening was Kermit the Frog, whom she repeatedly kissed while being interviewed on MTV. Presumably, Gaga would have been pleased to hear the onlooker's statement. She would have likely taken it as evidence that she had successfully established an easily recognizable identity on a cultural landscape brimming with performers desperately trying to stand out.

In order to begin unpacking the meanings behind the aesthetic actively constructed by Gaga and her creative team, this article has argued that her unique spectacle says much about the hypermodern pace of cultural consumption and the heightened requirements for longevity on the public stage. As Engel Lang and Lang wrote, "Survival in the collective memory is closely tied to the survival of tangible objects that recall the deceased" (80), to which those living in the age of Google, Twitter, and YouTube would add video, photos, and tweets diffused via the BlackBerrys and iPhones always ready at the consumer's side. It remains to be seen, however, if Gaga can continue to surpass the quality of "intimate strangers" (Schickel 1985) that inevitably characterizes the celebrity–fan encounter, based as it is on a "fundamental asymmetry of knowledge" (Ferris 28). Also, Gaga is not without her vehement critics, who see only empty spectacle and pompous airs without any substantive content. Wondering what the late Claude Levi-Strauss would have said about Gaga, a *Newsweek* music critic wrote, "The problem with Gaga is that she refuses to add any concrete value, while also wanting us to think she has something to say" (Colter Walls 57). Although she has publicly acknowledged the criticism that she is only a pretentious attention grabber, Gaga projects confidence that her "little monsters" are meaningfully connecting with her aesthetic and are now "spreading the book of Gaga around the world" (Barber 2009).

As early as 1998, scholars began lamenting the rise of a "hyperculture" that today Gaga best represents, whether or not she also criticizes elements of that culture. Bertman, for example, bemoaned the idea that "each successive invitation to superficiality and transience becomes a further distraction, keeping us from pursuing the quest for deeper and more enduring truths" (47). Given that, for him, hypercultural devices included pagers and microwaves, one can only imagine how egregious he would find music-playing, email-enabled camera

phones and the connectivity they provide. Today, it appears that even the recession will not slow the "culture of the fastest." A sociocultural context inundated by information only emphasizes the urgency with which stars seek to activate and sustain mass interest and fan loyalty for reasons other than visits to drug clinics (Lindsay Lohan), adoption litigation (Madonna), unseemly sex scandals (Tiger Woods), "wardrobe malfunctions" (Janet Jackson), or a sudden, suspicious demise (Michael Jackson). Bertman and other critics might instead find solace in the idea that the dizzying pace of hypermodern culture may ultimately augment the effervescence enabled by celebrities, the power to provide "some sense of community—common idols, if not common ideals" (Schickel 275).

As the first hypermodern pop music star, Lady Gaga's brand of celebrity emerges during a period beleaguered by recession and war, a time that yearns for the occasional glimpse of the sublime. The advent of hypermodernity has only heightened the persistent longing for the spectacle of stardom as a ready escape from the tedium of everyday life. With organized religion in decline throughout much of the west, celebrity culture has become a means of social integration in a context where "the public secretly longs for that rare charismatic figure whose auratic values are not reduced but magnified. The desire for someone around whom to make a cult gets greater and greater" (Herwitz 134). To sustain such devotion, however, a captivating voice, an ingénue's smile, and dizzying dance moves may no longer be enough. A hypermodern cult seeks a grander pose, a more thorough means of dazzling the spectator and holding her attention via an array of images and media. It is this role that Lady Gaga seeks to fill. The "Manifesto of Little Monsters" pronounced at her concerts declares, "It is in the theory of perception that we have established our bond. Or, the lie, I should say, for which we kill. We are nothing without our image. Without our projection. Without the spiritual hologram of who we perceive ourselves to be, or to become rather, in the future."

Note

1 The Jackson Five's first four singles, also hits, were spread across multiple albums

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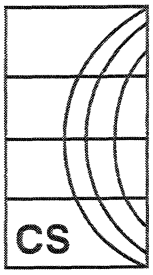
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Japanese Teens as Producers of Street Fashion

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abstract: This study is a macro-sociological analysis of the social organization of Japanese street fashion and a micro-interactionist analysis of teen consumers who form various subcultures. These subcultures directly and indirectly dictate fashion trends. The present study shows the interdependence in the production process of fashion between institutions within the industries and the Japanese teens. Street fashion in the fashionable districts of Tokyo, such as Harajuku and Shibuya, is independent of any mainstream fashion system and goes beyond the conventional model of fashion business with different marketing strategies and occupational categories. This article shows that fashion is no longer controlled or guided by professionally trained designers but by the teens who have become the producers of fashion.

keywords: fashion ✦ Japanese ✦ street ✦ subculture

Introduction

Japanese fashion has inspired many fashion professionals in the West, starting with Kenzo Takada's appearance in Paris in 1970 followed by Issey Miyake in 1973, Hanae Mori in 1977, Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo of Comme des Garçons in 1981. Japan is gradually becoming a country that is a genuine force in the field of fashion. Today's Japanese fashion contributes both to the aesthetics of fashion as well as to how business is made in this industry. The traditional western view of Japanese style, such as boringly suited salesmen and their demurely dressed wives, is turned upside down when we see the range of styles worn by the young people on the street of Tokyo (Polhemus, 1996: 12).

Japanese street fashion does not come from the famous professional Japanese designers, but is led by high school girls who have become extremely influential in controlling fashion trends. These fashion-conscious, or fashion-obsessed, youngsters indirectly and directly dictate this type of Japanese fashion. It is not an exaggeration to say that they are

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the agents of fashion, who take part in the production and dissemination of fashion. Japanese street fashion emerges out of the social networks among different institutions of fashion as well as various street subcultures, each of which is identified with a unique and original look. These teens rely on a distinctive appearance to proclaim their symbolic, subcultural identity. This identity is not political or ideological; it is simply innovative fashion that determines their group affiliation.

While many fashionable Japanese consumers simply imitate western styles, the teens have led the way in a creative mixing and matching of contrasting eclectic styles that has been extensively copied in the West (Polhemus, 1996: 12). Similarly, many apparel manufacturers and retailers from neighboring Asian countries, such as Korea and Taiwan, visit Tokyo in search of new ideas, and that is why knockoffs are found throughout Asia. A buyer from Hong Kong explained: 'Telling a teen customer that an item is popular in Japan is a big selling point in Hong Kong. That's why it's important for us to know what is going on in Tokyo. I'm here every three months to catch up with the latest trends.'

The most recent fashion phenomenon in Japan goes beyond the conventional model of fashion business. Over the past 10 years, a separate system of fashion with a new business model has been created in Japan in order to commercialize street fashion and boost the market. In this new model, occupational categories within various institutions of fashion are blurry, and the model also supports the trickle-up/bubble-up or trickle-across theory of fashion that Herbert Blumer proposed in 1969.

I use Diana Crane's theoretical as well as analytical framework of the postmodern culture of fashion, in which the emphasis is placed on consumer fashion rather than class fashion postulated by the classic writers such as Georg Simmel (1957), Herbert Spencer (1966), and Thorstein Veblen (1957). According to Crane (2000), the consumption of cultural goods, such as fashionable clothing, performs an increasingly important role in the construction of personal identity, and the variety of lifestyles available today liberates the individuals, especially the youngsters, from tradition and enables them to make choices that create a meaningful self-identity. Like Crane, Fred Davis (1992) also points out the ambivalent nature of identity and fashion.

This article attempts to show the interdependence in the production of fashion between various institutions of fashion within the industries and the Japanese teens. I first discuss the social and economic background of Japan that explains the emergence of the *Kogal* phenomenon and the *CosPlay* movement. Then I investigate the teens' role as the producers of fashion in two major districts in Tokyo, Shibuya and Harajuku, that led to the formation of a new business model and a system that is independent of the mainstream fashion system with specific marketing and diffusion strategies.

-481-
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Methodology

This study is a macro-sociological analysis of the social organization of fashion, street fashion in particular, and a micro-interactionist analysis of teens who form and belong to various subcultures. The relationship between the social structure of street fashion and the individuals involved can be observed.

Subcultures can best be studied by an ethnographic method, as a researcher can get close to the empirical social world and dig deep into it through face-to-face communication and interaction with the research subjects. I combined direct observation, both participant and non-participant, with structured and semi-structured interviews to become familiar with this world.

I take a symbolic interactionist approach to understand the communication process between the teenagers as it is an inductive approach to the understanding of human behavior, in which explanations are induced from data. As Herbert Blumer (1969) explained, the scientific approach of symbolic interactionism starts with a problem regarding the empirical world, and it seeks to clarify the problem by examining that empirical world. It does not begin with a set of hypotheses but looks at the processes by which individuals define the world from the inside and at the same time identify their world of objects.

My research data come primarily from an ethnographic study in Shibuya and Harajuku, two of the most fashionable districts in Tokyo, where street culture or subculture is found and from where the latest street fashion originates. Shibuya 109 Department Store is the symbol of Shibuya where the latest street fashion items are found, while Harajuku is famous for its back streets, known as Ura-Hara, with small boutiques selling exclusive items in limited quantities. During January 2005, I visited these two places every Sunday to get to know mainly teenage girls, and between June and August 2005, interviewed them formally and informally. I carried out 21 interviews with manufacturers, retailers, designers and salesgirls, who are involved in commercializing, marketing and distributing Japanese street fashion.

Social and Economic Backdrops of Japanese Street Culture

Before I begin to discuss street fashion and subcultures in Tokyo, I explain the social and economic situations behind this phenomenon as fashion is always connected to and is never independent of its social, cultural and economic surroundings.

After the tremendous economic prosperity of the 1980s, Japan's economic

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bubble burst, and the country has since experienced their worst and longest economic recession. Japanese society is famously cohesive and conformist, but as John Nathan (2004) argues, this may be cracking under the strain of economic stagnation. Fathers are being laid off for the first time; mothers who used to be full-time homemakers, now have to look for part-time jobs to supplement their household income; children find no hope in the Japan of the future, and violence in schools has risen dramatically. Since 1998, teens aged between 14 and 19 have been involved in 50 percent of all arrest for felonies, including murder (Nathan, 2004). There is a widespread feeling of disillusionment, alienation, uncertainty or anger that has spread throughout the society, among both adults and children. The traditional family, social and economic systems have gradually become weaker.

The Japanese value system, especially that of the teens, is changing. The previous generation's traditional Japanese beliefs, such as selfless devotion to their employers, respect for seniors and perseverance, are losing their force (Ijiri, 1990). An intentional shift away from old ideology and ways of life is evident in today's Japan. Fashion expresses the prevailing ideology of society, and these teens see the assertion of individual identity as more important and meaningful than that of group identity, which used to be the key concept in Japanese culture. Such attitudes are reflected in their norm-breaking and outrageous, yet commercially successful, attention-grabbing styles. Dick Hebdige (1988: 35) accurately pointed out that subcultures are formed in the space between surveillance and the evasion of surveillance; they translate the fact of being under scrutiny into the pleasure of being watched.

Therefore, it may seem ironic, but it is under these social and economic conditions that Japanese street fashion became increasingly creative and innovative, as if the teens wanted to challenge and redefine the existing notion of what is fashionable and aesthetic. They went against the grain of the normative standard of fashion. The teens are in search of their identity and a community where they feel that they are accepted.

Female-Dominated Japanese Subcultures

While Hebdige (1988: 27) explained that girls have been relegated to a position of secondary interest within both sociological accounts of subculture and photographic studies of urban youth, and though they still show masculine bias, it is the girls who play a major role in Japanese subcultures.

Japanese girls are always shopping, and they spend a great deal of their capital on clothes and makeup. Fashion is of the utmost importance for them because they want to stand out and be noticed. Some also wish to rebel against the formal and traditional ways. They tend to hang out in

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large groups around train stations chatting. These teens are sometimes treated as deviants by the rest of Japanese society. By hanging out with peers who dress in the same style they can bond with each other.

The Kogal *Phenomenon since 1995*

Japan's distinctive street fashion began to creep up in the mid-1990s in urban Japan by young teenage girls known as *Kogal*.[1] They are known for wearing short plaid skirts that look like their own school uniforms and knee-high white socks, and they occasionally use a lot of makeup and artificial suntans. Their effects and influence extended far beyond a particular subculture. This group consequently redefined sartorial and sexual norms and was generally associated with a minority of social dropouts.

For the majority of the teens, their life centres round the Shibuya train station. This group unintentionally created a subculture. The first street subculture that appeared in the 1990s and that helped fuel the industry is known as *Ganguro* (literally means 'black face'). A common sight on the streets of Tokyo at the time was groups of young girls between the ages of 15 and 18 with long dyed-brown or bleached-blond hair, tanned skin, heavy makeup, brightly coloured miniskirts or short pants that flare out at the bottom, and high platform boots. A designer who used to be *Ganguro* said: 'I was a hardcore *Ganguro* when I was in high school. I had to be. Otherwise, I wouldn't be accepted by other kids. I would be totally out of place if I looked normal. We all want to fit in when we are teenagers.'

Ganguro led to *Amazoness*, which was more extreme than *Ganguro*, but according to some industry professionals, it was probably too extreme to last long. Instead, in the late 1990s, *Yamamba* (the term comes from Japanese mythology and refers to a mountain witch) as another fashion trend and a subculture emerged to replace the *Ganguro* look. More recently, *Yamamba* evolved into *Mamba*, which is already beginning to fade. There are multiple interactions occurring simultaneously on the streets of Tokyo, and the subcultures and their specific appearances have branched out in so many different sub-subcultures that it is almost impossible to track down all the existing groups.

Street Fashion as Symbolic Group Identity

The distinctive looks function as a visible group identity for the teens and become shared symbols of membership affiliation. A symbol is the vehicle by which humans communicate their ideas, intentions, purposes and thoughts, i.e. their mental lives, to one another. The teens are almost uniformly aware of all of their communication, which utilizes symbols that vary in the degree to which meanings are shared and intended. Therefore, these styles are functional and meaningful only within the specific territory of Harajuku and Shibuya among particular groups of people.

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Figure 1

I approached one of the girls in Shibuya and asked her: 'Are you a *Mamba*?' She replied to me: 'No, I'm a *Celemba*.' I asked the difference between a *Mamba* and a *Celemba*. *Celemba* is a combination of a celebrity look and a *Mamba*. The *Celembas* tend to wear expensive brands while the *Mambas* do not. The *Mambas* use white eyeshadow around the eyes but the *Celembas* use silver instead. As for fashion, the *Celembas* look more mature and sophisticated and always have a scarf or a shawl around their neck. There is another group called *Lomamba*, that is a *Mamba* with a *Lolita* touch, and the label they wear must be *LizLisa*. Furthermore, *Cocomba* is someone who covers herself with the brand *Cocolulu* sold in Shibuya (Figure 1). One girl said: 'There are so many girls who are only partially *Mamba*, and they are not authentic *Mambas*.' Authenticity appears to be important, and only the insiders can tell the difference between what is real and what is not.

Teens' Role as Producers of Fashion in Shibuya and Harajuku

When a fashion trend hits Japan, it spreads very fast and becomes universal, and almost everyone will be wearing it. This is a phenomenon

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that is unique to the homogeneous Japanese society and rarely found in other societies.

One of the first trends that the teens started was probably the loose white socks that became the rage among the high school girls in 1993. These are long, white pairs of loose, baggy knee socks deliberately pushed down to the shin like leg warmers. Many teens have their own style of wearing the loose socks. They know how high the top part of the socks should be to achieve the right amount of wrinkle on the legs. Some like the socks to be as long as a yard. By 1996, there were as many as 35 different types of loose socks sold in stores. A girl who just graduated from high school said: 'These loose socks look stylish. They make your legs look longer. If you didn't have them, it was really embarrassing.'

Therefore, the loose socks have been a necessary item for junior and high school girls. The trend is not as strong as it once was in Tokyo, but it is still popular in the suburbs and smaller towns. The product was not marketed by fashion professionals but the teens themselves. This is when the fashion industry began to realize the marketing potential of the teens, and the trends that they promote to their friends are independent of and go against the grain of the mainstream fashion.

Salesgirls as Designers and Merchandisers in Shibuya 109

Shibuya 109 (pronounced as Shibuya Ichi-Maru-Kyu or Shibuya Maru-Kyu) Department Store is the symbol of Shibuya district and Japanese girls' culture and is known as the mecca of street fashion. There is a collection of stores that cater to Japanese teens, and more than a hundred stores are located on 10 different floors. They sell new, hip and inexpensive clothes, accessories and jewelry. This is where the most fashionable salesgirls work.

To work as a salesperson in a boutique is not a high-paid job, and many are also hired as part-time workers. Its position in the occupational ranking is rather low as it requires neither license nor special qualifications. A salesperson is someone at the cash register who puts merchandise in a shopping bag. She is usually not that well educated and does not come from a wealthy family. However, this notion is completely reversed, especially among the teens, in some spheres of today's Japan. One of the girls who was shopping in Shibuya explains how difficult it is to get one of these positions: 'It's really difficult to work in the Shibuya 109 building as a salesgirl, you know. It's competitive to get that position. You should go to the store every Saturday and Sunday and become friends with the salesgirls. Then when there is a position available, they might call you if you have the right look. But the waiting list is really long.'

In many of the stores in the 109 Department Store, the salesgirls are so influential in setting the new trends that the teens would buy the exact

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same outfit that the salesgirl is wearing. They are no longer merely selling clothes but contribute to the buying of merchandise and designing for the store labels. They have first-hand knowledge of the kind of tastes the teens have and what garments and accessories they are looking for. They have acquired this knowledge because of their direct day-to-day contact with the teen consumers. The salesgirls themselves become icons, known as *karisuma tenin*, literally translated as charismatic salesgirls. They have created their own website and give advice to their followers about how to coordinate the latest items. A salesgirl who once worked in the 109 store said: 'In our store, there was a monthly theme, and we salesgirls would dress according to the theme. Many customers would purchase the items that I used to wear. They believed that I was the fashion leader so as long as they dressed like me, they would be considered fashionable. That made me feel really good.'

In the November 1999 issue of *Popteen*, one of the major Japanese street fashion magazines, a survey was conducted with 500 teens in Shibuya, and they were asked who their role models for fashion were. No celebrities ranked in the top five. The list included amateur high school models who appeared in street fashion magazines and salesgirls in the 109 Department Store, who became famous in their own right. There is a consensus among the teens that to find out what the current trend is, they need to go to Shibuya. The 109 Department Store itself has become a brand. On weekends, the store is packed with the teens dressed in a Shibuya look.

Teen Consumers as Designers

Those who come to shop also play a crucial role in the production of fashion trends. One of the salesgirls explained why becoming friends with her teen customers is important: 'I can get a lot of information through chit-chat with these girls. I learn what kind of color combination they like or they don't like. They tell me if the skirt is too short or too long. The pant legs are too wide or too narrow. If they say something is *kawaii*, that usually sells.' The teens' opinions and voices are reflected directly in their merchandise selection.

Many young designers who have started their own teen-targeted labels used to be the followers of street fashion themselves. They represent the young teenagers and attract cult-like followers. For instance, Takao Yamashita, a designer for the label Beauty Beast, who was not trained in fashion but is one of the most popular street designers, said: 'Making clothes is not enough. You need to imagine who will be wearing your clothes and how they will be worn. We, designers, need to create a lifestyle that comes with the label. We make clothes to communicate with our consumers.'

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In the late 1990s many teens came to believe that anyone can be a designer, without training, and many without any formal fashion degrees became commercially successful. The definition of a designer as an occupation has changed.

Artists-Turned-Designers in Harajuku and Ura-Harajuku (Ura-Hara)

It was in the 1980s that Harajuku became famous because of street performers and entertainers that appeared near the station on Sundays, and Takeshita Street near the station became lined with fashionable stores for teens. The most recent hot spot is Ura-Hara (short for Ura-Harajuku, which literally means the back streets of Harajuku). There are small boutiques and stores run by young artists, and this area is known as the gateway to the mainstream Japanese fashion industry. The culture of Ura-Hara is still very marginal and has an underground atmosphere, separate from the mainstream scene. In this underground world, information about new products is spread through word of mouth. Unlike the mainstream fashion districts in Tokyo, such as Ginza or Omotesando, there were no particular strategies to invest in and develop the small area of Harajuku.

The fashion business of Ura-Hara consists of so-called select shops[2] that sell minor brands designed by semi-professional designers, who may have just graduated from fashion schools, and artists, such as graphic and textile designers. There are also a number of collaborative projects between brands, stores and artists.

According to marketing expert Kensuke Kojima (2002), some of the unique characteristics of the fashion business in Ura-Hara are: (1) there is no organizational structure to the business that they operate, such as setting seasonal/annual budgets or promotional strategies; (2) they consider manufacturing or the actual making process extremely important, and much time is invested in planning and merchandising, and these items are sold in small quantities; and (3) they are not worried about the mainstream trends and are content as long as their own unique styles are accepted within their own community and are sensitive to the trends within their own subculture. They are involved in creative aesthetic work that demands innovation and adaptation to current fashion trends (Aspers, this issue, pp. 745–63); making profit is not their ultimate goal.

Ura-Hara street fashion grew out of friends' social network, and they managed to commercialize products that they truly like and that they think are cool and cute. Many of the creators and store owners are not designers but, for example, former DJs, singers, stylists, editors and bikers. Hiroshi Fujiwara, a former DJ, produces street-wear labels, and the teens worship him. Fujiwara explains that a designer is not someone who knows the technical terms of garment construction: 'Ten years ago,

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nobody thought about making their own clothes . . . But you don't need a fashion background to make T-shirts. I would work with designers and say: "I want a zipper here", and they would say, "You can't have a zipper here", and we would have big fights' (Mead, 2002: 56). What they create is not completely new, but they put additional elements to create something of their own. This is the basic philosophy found in Ura-Hara fashion.

Gothic Lolitas *on Bridge near Harajuku Station*

Another trend or movement that has fueled Japanese street fashion is the *CosPlay* movement, short for 'Costume Play', in which people dress as characters from the Japanese *manga* comics, or the Japanese animated films known as *anime*. The purpose of this trend is merely to have fun and entertain oneself and others by dressing up as one's favorite character. Besides dressing up for public events such as *anime* conventions, they walk around town wearing costumes. *CosPlay* of rock bands is also very popular and whole events devoted to it take place before concerts, and they hang around on the bridge near Harajuku Station with the *Gothic Lolitas,* another subcultural group.

The *Gothic Lolita* is one of the most popular costumes found in the Harajuku area since the later 1990s (Figure 2), and it is part of the Lolita subculture. This style can be seen as a counter-reaction to the *Ganguro* style and others that evolved out of it. It is a fashion style popular among those who think *Mamba, Yamamba* or *Ganguro* is too outrageous. It is usually worn by girls, and the image is that of a Victorian doll. *Gothic Lolita* appears to be an exaggerated form of femininity, with pale skin, neat hair, knee- or mid-thigh-length Victorian dresses, pinafores, bloomers, stockings and shoes or boots.

Its substyles include *Elegant Gothic Lolita* with a monochromatic palette, *Classical* or *Country Gothic Lolita* with pastel colors and *Punk Gothic Lolita* with punk fashion elements such as leather, zippers and chains. Other *Lolitas* include, *Ama-Loli* with a basic *Lolita* look using mostly white. If pink is used, it is called *Pink-Loli.* When two girls wear exactly the same *Lolita* style, it is called *Futago-Loli,* which means *Twin Lolitas.*

The *Lolita* followers have created a website community (Holson, 2005). There are rules as to what kind of topics can be posted on the Internet so that they can maintain their subcultural identity of the site. There are discussions on *Gothic Lolita* brands, on *Gothic Lolita* handmade items, and people ask for advice on how to put together a *Gothic Lolita* look. They also share images from different *Gothic Lolita* brands, and auction, sell and buy *Gothic Lolita* items. The enthusiasts create and use their own language and abbreviations that outsiders cannot comprehend, such as *LoliBra,* which means a *Lolita* brand, or a *Cardi,* which means a cardigan.

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Figure 2

An industry observer explained: 'This is a style that has been developing out of the *CosPlay* movement in the streets of Japan for the last 10 years or so. The look has evolved and is slowly beginning to take root in other countries around the world. *Gothic Lolita* is a combination of the applied version of styles from the Victorian era and modern Gothic looks.'

A New Business Model: De-Professionalization of Occupational Categories

Wearing the latest style was the privilege of the rich until the mid-19th century in Europe, and it was they who initiated fashion. Applying Irving Goffman's (1959) idea of the social setting being divided into front and back stages, it can be said that there was a clear distinction between the front stage where fashion was exposed and the back stage where the clothes were being manufactured for the rich. Once the clothes appeared on the front stage, they were converted into 'fashion'. Thus, the producers of fashion and the producers of clothing were separate. There was a clear division of labor, and the occupational categories were tightly controlled. Even after fashion became an institutionalized system[3] in Paris in 1868 (Kawamura, 2004a), the division of labor was fixed. Fashion was then produced by designers and couturiers. The power relationship between the designer and the consumer was reversed when the designer began to

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initiate the latest style. The professionalization of occupational categories in fashion had been intact in the mainstream fashion world. However, in the new model of fashion that is represented by the actors I study, such categories are insignificant.

Japanese street fashion provides the industries with a new model of fashion that blurs and defies occupational classifications in fashion. This fashion is no longer produced by well-trained designers who know how to drape, make patterns and instruct sewing procedures. Anyone with great ideas is in the position to produce and disseminate fashion. This new model allows the teens to be designers, merchandisers, salespeople, stylists and models among many others. They are the gate-keepers, as well as the agents, of street fashion.

Marketing and Diffusion Strategies

Kawaii *as a Marketing Tool*

According to Sharon Kinsella (1995), young women were the main generators of the cute culture in Japan. From the consumption of cute goods and services and the wearing of cute clothes, to the faking of childish behavior and innocent looks, young women were far more actively involved in cute culture than men. Cute culture permeates Japanese teen society, and it started as a youth culture among teenagers, especially young women. It was not founded by business (Kinsella, 1995), but the industries took advantage of and made good use of girls' fondness for cute products as a marketing strategy.

As I roam around the Shibuya 109 Department Store packed with teens, on every floor, I hear them screaming *'kawaii'* at the top of their lungs. This term *kawaii* is often translated as 'cute' in English. However, this is more than just an adjective. If retailers and manufacturers can materialize *kawaii* into fashion items, their brand will be successful. The street fashion business in Japan boils down to this one word, *kawaii*. It is the word they repeat like a mantra. One of the girls shopping with her friends in Shibuya explained: '*Kawaii* is a state of mind and a lifestyle. My whole life is about being *kawaii*. I'm always thinking about how I can make myself even more *kawaii*.'[4]

Japan's teen fashion industry revolves entirely around what the girls in Tokyo say is *kawaii*, which also implies what is hot and cool and must be at the basis of any fashionable products. What is *kawaii* or not can only be determined by the teens themselves. A middle-aged guy who owns and runs a clothing company or a store has no idea what is *kawaii* and what will be commercially successful. What is defined as *kawaii* is a mystery to many. One of the store owners said: 'Even the teens probably cannot define what *kawaii* is. It's a feeling. When they see something that

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is *kawaii*, there is an immediate reaction. They intuitively know that it's *kawaii*. That's why we need to have their input as a designer or as a salesperson.'

Since fashionable clothing, especially in women's wear and even more so in street fashion, depends upon rapid changes in style, calculations as to what to buy are fraught with risk (Entwistle, this issue, pp. 704–24). Companies cannot afford to lose any profit in this extremely competitive market. Thus, hiring teens as salesgirls, stylists, designers and marketers is one of the surest ways to boost profits. For instance, they know the exact shade of pink that the teens like, the exact length of a T-shirt that is in fashion or how low they like to wear their jeans.

Teen-targeted labels also recruit designers from a pool of famous and popular salesgirls working in the Shibuya 109. A former salesgirl said: 'I used to work there and once the magazine people took my picture, and I appeared in the magazine, and then I was approached by a fashion company to work as a designer for them.' According to her, the company sales increased by 180 percent after she was hired as a designer. Like the former DJ, Fujiwara in Ura-Hara, most of them are not formally trained in fashion design (Mead, 2002), but they know what *kawaii* is and, hence, what will sell. Being young and knowing what is *kawaii* gives them an edge over others. The salesgirl explained: 'I sometimes go to thrift shops in New York or Los Angeles and buy things that are *kawaii* as samples and bring them back. I might change the color, size or minor details so that they would meet the taste of the Japanese teens.'

Traditionally, company designers sketch, make presentation boards, choose fabrics, make samples and instruct the production process. But this procedure may no longer be effective. The companies need the teens' ideas for their businesses to survive. A manager at the most popular shoe store explained: 'I listen to what my salesgirls and customers say and take their advice seriously. I would change the designs or even the merchandise display according to their taste. Whatever they say usually works.'

Scarcity, Originality and Speed

One of the girls in Ura-Hara said: 'Sometimes my friends have something really cute. I might ask them where they bought it, but I would never buy the same thing. I want to look for cute things myself. I would never imitate.'

In one of the most popular stores in the Harajuku district, major Japanese designer labels such as Yohji Yamamoto and Comme des Garçons have little popularity. The Japanese teens consider the internationally famous Japanese designers as too widely known. They get pleasure out of discovering marginal underground designers and worship their labels as their own. Scarcity and originality are what make the street

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labels appealing to them. These brands are not sold in the US or Europe and they focus only on the domestic market. They want to wear clothes that hardly anyone else wears, but at the same time that everyone will recognize as exclusive. Thus, many street designers and stores often sell only a limited number of garments.

However, Japanese street fashion is slowly spreading outside Japan and is becoming a global business. Young Japanese street designers, such as Jun Takahashi of Undercover, Keita Maruyama and Shinichiro Arakawa, who represent the voices of street culture, and who have teen worshippers, now participate in the biannual Paris fashion collections, since that is where the annual cycle of fashion is anchored (Skov, 1996, 2005). It is also the fashion shows of the different seasons that international fashion magazines devote their pages to (Moeran, this issue, pp. 725–44). One of Jun Takahashi's followers said: 'I liked him better when not many people knew him. Now he's too popular so I don't want to wear his clothes. Now I'm looking for a new exciting designer.'

Alex Wagner, a former managing editor of *Tokion*, a Tokyo-based fashion and art magazine, says 'Japanese culture is very ritualistic. They get hung up on one thing and then it becomes this feverish race to get as many of those things as possible' (quoted in Ogunnaike, 2004). For some, following a particular brand has a religious implication.

Speed is also another important characteristic of Japanese street fashion, especially in the 109 store where merchandise changes very fast. Unlike the mainstream fashion industry, they provide the teens with new products every two to three weeks so that they find something new every time they shop. This is why the clothes are set at a reasonable price. Each item is roughly within the price range of US$30–50, inexpensive enough for the girls to buy with their own pocket money that they earn by working part-time jobs. 'Newness' has always been the essence of fashion, and shopping is the major form of entertainment among the teens.

Diffusion

Diffusion theories of fashion seek to explain how fashion is spread through interpersonal communication and institutional networks, and it can be assumed that fashion is not ambiguous or unpredictable. In the aristocratic society of 17th- and 18th-century Europe, the fashion leaders were members of royalty, while in democratic societies, politicians' wives, such Jackie Kennedy, or celebrities, like Madonna or Britney Spears, have become the leaders of fashion.

As Crane (2000: 13) explains, most of today's fashion is consumer driven, and market trends originate in many types of social groups, including adolescent urban subcultures, and consequently, fashion

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emanates from many sources and diffuses in various ways to different publics. Fashion has become diverse and thus very much fragmented.

Moreover, the teens' tastes are very fickle. No one can accurately predict how long the trends will last. Tokyo girls are soon copied by those in the countryside, and then they start looking for newer and a more *kawaii* look. A store owner explained: 'Some brands in 109 retain high sales even after their popularity declines in Tokyo. This is because girls from outside Tokyo come to Shibuya and buy up all the brands that have already lost popularity among Tokyo girls.'

With technology and the Internet, it is not difficult to diffuse fashion worldwide. The teens create websites promoting, chatting and exchanging information about their favorite fashion. It is not surprising that some of the Japanese street styles have migrated to the streets of New York City. In addition to *manga* animation, sushi and other cultural objects, Japan is now an exporter of the latest street fashion and is setting new fashion tastes.

Teen Readers as Magazine Models

Any fashion, once it is created, has to be spread. The salesgirls can easily spot the latest trends on the streets of Tokyo, but they cannot reach the countryside or spread throughout Japan or overseas without fashion magazines, which are the dissemination media. These magazines influence not only the Japanese teens but also how the rest of girls in Asia dress.

Before the street fashion phenomenon that started in the mid-1990s, the fashion trends were mostly dictated by the major fashion magazines, but they no longer have complete dominance over the consumers. With street fashion came a new type of fashion magazine. A number of Japanese street fashion magazines, such as *SOS*, *Tokyo Style News*, *Cawaii*, *Fine and Egg*, were almost simultaneously lauched in 1995. Instead of having professional fashion models pose in famous designer brand clothes, the street fashion magazines feature high school students and teens on the streets.

The professional labor that used to require some formal training is being replaced by untrained but fashionable amateurs. They are the ones who create street fashion. As Crane (2000) pointed out, in postmodern cultures, there is a shift from class fashion to consumer fashion. The consumers or the readers are now playing the role of the producers and disseminators of fashion and thus, the boundary between production and consumption of fashion is breaking down.

The mass media contribute in collapsing the boundary between the social organization of fashion professionals who are the insiders and non-professionals who are the outsiders, by allowing the non-professional viewers to take a look at and participate in the professional world of fashion.

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A teen described how she appeared in a magazine: 'I visited the editorial office at *Egg*. Then they called me later and asked me if I wanted to model in the magazine. Then *Cawaii* called me. It's a thrill to see your picture in the magazines. I think everyone wants to be in it. That's why street fashion is getting more and more exaggerated so that they would stand out and get their pictures taken.'

As indicated earlier, some teen models have become well-known because of the frequency of their appearances in the magazines, and they are hired by the popular retail stores as salesgirls. One of the store managers in the 109 Department Store said: 'We now aggressively hire teenage models who appear in the street fashion magazines as our salesgirls. It's one way to attract the teens because they visit our store to talk to them and get to know them.'

Conclusion

Sociological discussions of fashion look at the macro-structural analysis of the social organization of fashion and also the micro-interactionist analysis of the individuals, such as designers, publicists, journalists and editors, involved in the production of fashion. This is different from the production of clothing, dress or costume (Kawamura, 2004b). Sociologists also investigate the interaction and interdependence between the organization and the individuals in the world of fashion (Crane, 1997a, 1997b, 2000). Therefore, sociologists of fashion pay less attention to a semiotic analysis of the details of clothing that costume historians might engage in. Instead, sociology focuses on the social, cultural or subcultural context in which a particular fashion phenomenon is produced, diffused, maintained and gradually fades away.

By using Japanese street subculture as a case study, we can understand the group affiliation of the teens who walk around the streets of Tokyo. Fashion in postmodern times emerges out of youth culture and is then commercialized by the industry to reach a wider audience to spread it as 'fashion'. There is a strong social connection and a sense of belonging among those youngsters who dress themselves in unique and original outfits, some of which may be outrageous, radical and extraordinary. As Howard Becker (1982) remarked, art is a collective activity, and so is fashion. Fashion is also a collective activity that arises out of particular social relationships among the members of a subculture. Within every subculture, there are common values, attitudes and norms that bind them together, and they are frequently expressed visually through their distinctive clothes, makeup, accessories and jewelry, which are used as their symbolic identity. Fashion today cannot solely be dictated by professional designers. The junior and high school students who represent Japanese

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street culture and fashion have the power to influence other teens. They not only produce and diffuse fashion but also market and guide the industry professionals about coming trends. This finding may also apply to other creative industries. Particular styles imply which and what level of social groups they are involved in. The teen consumers I have studied, who are at the same time the producers, have a substantial impact on the production and dissemination of fashion. This means that there is a complementary relationship between the consumption and production of fashion.

Notes

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1. The term *Kogal* is often associated with the term *Enjo-Kosai*, which translates literally as 'assisted dating'. Teen girls meet with older men for sex in exchange for expensive designer label gifts or money to finance their shopping spree.
2. Select shops are small boutiques where shop owners' tastes in selecting, mixing and remixing merchandise are highly valued by customers.
3. In the modern system of fashion, there are networks of institutions, companies, journalists, designers and many other fashion professionals. See Kawamura (2004b).
4. According to a random selection survey of 110 people, of which 89 answers were returned, conducted by Kinsella in 1992, 71 percent of the young people between 18 and 30 years of age either liked or loved *kawaii*-looking people, and almost 56 percent either liked or loved *kawaii* attitudes and behavior (Kinsella, 1995).

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China on the Catwalk: Between Economic Success and Nationalist Anxiety*

Antonia Finnane

ABSTRACT In the post-Mao era China competed successfully for a place in the international trade in textiles and apparel, but its economic success has not been matched by recognition of Chinese fashion design on the world stage. One reason for this lies in the obstacles posed by the existing hierarchy of fashion capitals, which has proved notoriously difficult to subvert. Shanghai may mean fashion in China, but unlike Paris, it does not mean that to the world at large. Yet the Chinese fashion industry is also bedevilled by problems of its own. A high degree of national self-consciousness on the world stage is evident in international fashion shows featuring rather predictable pastiches of Chinese culture. It may be the case that state-sponsored nationalism militates against both a more interesting approach to cultural heritage on the part of designers and a more receptive climate for Chinese fashion on international catwalks.

In 2002, Pierre Cardin was questioned about who was likely to lead the international fashion scene in the 21st century. He responded with heartening words for Chinese fashion designers. "I am sure Chinese fashion will become very strong," he said. "I know so much talent in China, maybe it will become one of the leading countries in the world for couture." He concluded, however, on a cautious note: "fashion is not about nationalities, it's just talent."[1]

The latter observation begs questions about the semiotics of international fashion, and particularly about the signifying power of place names. Designs emanating from Paris, New York, London, Milan and Tokyo come with tags announcing their credentials. The cities lend their cultural cachet to both established and emerging designers. This is especially true of Paris, a place so closely identified with fashion as to have become a by-word for it. In contrast, the fashion industry in China barely registers in world consciousness. Western reports on fashion in China routinely sound a note of surprise and discovery, as though Chinese people were still to be seen wearing Mao suits. "Fashion craze sweeps through a new China," announced the *International Herald Tribune* early in 2003, and "Chinese buy into the beauty myth," trumpeted Melbourne's *The Age* a year later.[2] A quarter of a century after the beginning of the reform era, it would appear, China is still "new."

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1. Reuters, in *Renmin ribao* (*People's Daily*), 20 May 2002. http://fpeng.peopledaily.com.cn/200205/20/eng20020520_96074.shtml. Accessed 7 August 2003.

2. *International Herald Tribune*, 8 March 2003; *The Age*, 14 February 2004.

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This newness is nothing very new. "New" Chinas had been appearing on the horizon since the turn of the 20th century, and a fashion industry was apparent in Shanghai at least by the 1920s. It was characterized by mechanized textile production, advertising through billboards and newspapers, the proliferation of pictorial magazines, the emergence of the graphic artist as fashion designer, promotion of retail outlets, competition between local and foreign products, and fashion parades. It is possible to speak of "fashions" in China before this time, but in the 1920s activities surrounding the production and consumption of clothing became systemically linked to the point where a fashion industry can be said to exist.[3]

Given the repeated media reports that people in contemporary China are "discovering" fashion, it is important to recognize this early history. Like the film industry, the fashion industry in early 20th-century China followed closely on developments in the West and was shaped by international and cross-cultural communications, which were maintained to some degree through the early decades of the PRC. While the vestimentary régime in the new "New China" was overtly quite sober, fashions appearing on the margins showed a sensitivity to world as well as to local time.[4] Moreover, China's very large textile industry continued through the Maoist decades to be responsive to a world market, and higher education in the graphic and industrial arts, which supplied personnel to the industry, was (except for the years immediately following the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution) probably stronger than during the Republic.

The fashion industry of the late 20th century did not, then, grow from an acorn, but rather from a neglected sapling. And despite changed world circumstances, in the post-Mao era there was a repetition of features characteristic of the earlier era and of fashion industries every-

3. An integrated discussion of these various developments has yet to appear. On local products see Karl Gerth, *China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003); on advertising, Sherman Cochran, "Transnational origins of advertising in early twentieth-century China," in Sherman Cochran (ed.), *Inventing Nanjing Road: Commercial Culture in Shanghai, 1900–1945* (Ithaca: Cornell East Asia Series 103), pp. 37–58, and also Ellen Johnston Laing, "Visual evidence for the evolution of 'politically correct' dress for women in early twentieth century Shanghai," *Nan nü*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2003), pp. 68–112. On department stores, see Wellington K. K. Chan, "Selling goods and promoting a new commercial culture: the four premier department stores on Nanjing Road, 1917–1937," in Cochran, *Inventing Nanjing Road*, pp. 1–36.

4. See Tina Mai Chen, "Dressing for the Party: clothing, citizenship and gender-formation in Mao's China," *Fashion Theory*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (2001), pp. 333–360; Antonia Finnane, "Yu Feng and the 1950s dress reform campaign: global hegemony and local agency in the art of fashion," in Yu Chien Ming (ed.), *Wu sheng zhi sheng: jindai Zhongguo funü yu wenhua, 1650–1950* (*Silent Voices: Women and Modern Chinese Culture, 1650–1950*) (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2003), Vol. II, pp. 235–268. Maris Gillette, "What's in a dress? Brides in the Hui quarter of Xi-an," in Deborah Davis (ed.), *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 80–106. Hung-yok Ip "Fashioning appearances: feminine beauty in Chinese communist revolutionary culture," *Modern China*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (July 2003), pp. 329–361.

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where. First, designers and models made an appearance – amateur and part-time in the earlier era, professionalized in the later.[5] Secondly, fashion consciousness was and continues to be created by a lively print culture, which to no small degree constituted the world of fashion. Thirdly, fashion was promoted through exhibitions of Chinese textiles aimed at maximizing consumption of Chinese products for the good of the national economy.[6] Fourthly, fashion consciousness was then and is now organized spatially, centred at particular nodes within a national and global network of cities which has changed little since the 1920s. Shanghai in particular was known as the city that "cared only about clothes, not about people," an aspect of its reputation that has not greatly changed. Finally, engagement with world fashion in the Nanjing Decade involved intense national anxieties, which are evident again today.

This said, the fashion industry in contemporary China is distinguished by a world economic context in which the land of floods and famine has become a powerhouse, consuming and producing more each year, not least in the domain of textiles and clothing. This has created a domestic environment favourable to economic success in clothing manufacture. The past quarter of a century has seen a remarkably rapid and surprisingly uncontroversial transformation of popular clothing culture in the world's largest country.

At the heart of China's fashion industry, however, is a sustained tension between satisfaction at economic success in penetrating world markets and nationalist anxiety over failure to win world acclaim for Chinese fashion designs. The short history of Chinese fashion in the post-Mao era reveals a lively local context for diversification of the national wardrobe along lines strongly informed by global trends; but in high fashion there is an acute national self-consciousness. On the international catwalk, Chinese designers recognize that they have to bring something distinctive to clothing if they are to make their mark, and they look to their aesthetic legacy for inspiration. In this, as in some other respects, Japan provides both a model and a benchmark. Japanese designer Issey Miyake had established such a place in the fashion world by 1988 that it could be asked whether he was not "the world's greatest clothes designer."[7] China, despite extraordinary success in penetrating the

5. The earliest identifiable fashion designers in China were graphic artists, often cartoonists, such as Ye Qianyu (b. 1907) and Zhang Guangyu, who provided fashion sketches for magazines and newspapers published during the Nanjing Decade (1928–1937); Ellen Johnston Laing, *Selling Happiness: Calendar Posters and Visual Culture in early Twentieth-Century Shanghai* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), p. 189. A second cohort of designers, led by Yu Feng (b. 1916) emerged briefly in the 1950s, during the short-lived dress reform campaign of 1955–56; Finnane, "Yu Feng and the 1950s dress reform campaign."

6. See further below on exhibitions in reform-era China. On the same phenomenon in the Republican era, see Gerth, *China Made*.

7. Georgina Howell, *Sultans of Style: Thirty Years of Fashion and Passion 1960–90* (London: Ebury Press, 1990), pp. 48–52.

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world markets in textile and ready-to-wear apparel, is obsessed with its failure yet to have produced an Issey.[8]

Designing and Modelling Chinese Fashion

Fashion was one of many areas in which the opening of a dialogue between China and the rest of the world occurred in the late 1970s. Fox Butterfield, China-watching from Hong Kong in late 1978, wrote that "skirts and dresses [were] reappearing recently on Chinese women for the first time in a decade."[9] The cheongsam (*qipao*) was in evidence again, and a Japanese businessman reported having seen women with permed hair, wearing mini-skirts.[10] In the same year, the "Four Modernizations" were proclaimed, establishing the economic context within which the diversification of the Chinese wardrobe was to proceed apace.

The broad contours of the evolving fashion scene in post-Mao China have been described by Xiaoping Li.[11] In brief, after a short period of mainly modification of existing styles and revival of styles of the 1950s (the frock or *bulaji*) or even the 1940s (the *qipao*), closer interaction between China and the West (or Japan) led to the gradual internationalization of Chinese dress, and the "gradual centralization," too, of "Western high fashion."[12] For women, the major change was the legitimation of skirts. By the late 1980s black leather mini-skirts were frequently to be seen, "short till they could be no shorter."[13] Among men, the suit was popularized by Party leaders: when the members of the Politburo appeared at a press conference in 1983, they were all dressed in suits.[14] In 1984, the Beijing Department Store in Wangfujing was selling around 3,330 suits daily.[15] By the end of the decade, millions of men around the country must have been learning how to knot a tie.

The transformation of clothing in the 1980s took place in a society that was repositioning itself in relationship both to the outside world and to its own past, as shown in literature, music, painting and film. Compared to

8. See Lise Skov's excellent discussion of this problem in its Hong Kong manifestation, in Lise Skov, "Fashion-nation: a Japanese globalization experience and a Hong Kong dilemma," in Sandra Niessen, Ann Marie Leshkowich and Carlo Jones (eds.), *Re-Orienting Fashion: The Globalization of Asian Dress* (Oxford: Berg, 2003), pp. 215–242.

9. In 1974 Jiang Qing had promoted a new "national costume" for women: a frock with pleated skirt and wide-lapel bodice, inspired by classical costumes of the Tang-Song era. The frock was worn under duress by girls and women who fell into the domain of cultural activities, including the 1974 Asian Games in Tehran. Antonia Finnane, "In search of the Jiang Qing dress: some preliminary findings," *Fashion Theory*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2005), pp. 1–20.

10. *New York Times* supplementary material, 16 September 1978, p. 82. *New York Times* was not actually published between August and November 1978 because of a printers' strike. The paper kept all the reports sent in at that time and made them available on microfilm in sequence with the regular issues.

11. Xiaoping Li, "Fashioning the body in post-Mao China," in Anne Brydon and Sandra Niessen (eds.), *Consuming Fashion: Adorning the Transnational Body* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 1998), pp. 71–89.

12. *Ibid.* p. 79.

13. *Zhongguo qingnian* (*Chinese Youth*), No. 1055 (1999/23), special issue, *Bainian shishang* (*Fashions of a Century*), p. 58.

14. *Zhongguo qingnian*, p. 58.

15. *Beijing Review*, No. 43 (22 October 1984), p. 11.

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these clearly defined domains of culture, the vestimentary realm was much larger and also rather amorphous. In general, the daily dress of people in China in the 1980s can be said to have shown both a determination to break with the immediate past and, increasingly, a desire to be up-to-date by international standards. Nevertheless, people were constrained by limited spending power and a market flooded with highly standardized garments, so they wore what was available, affordable and conventional, even as conventions were changing with increasing rapidity.

Discrete sectors of the textile and garment industry, however, intruded into the conventionally recognized domains of culture. The flourishing rag trade produced new – in the PRC at least – educational institutions, reading matter and public spectacles, or in other words, fashion institutes, fashion magazines and fashion shows. These provided forums for fashion's engagement with issues of history, identity and culture that were being raised in the arts at large. In the fashion world, the creative artist was the fashion designer, who emerged from the dim offices and factories of the Maoist era to take up one of the more challenging but also more glamorous roles in the reform era economy. The designer's first charge was to produce a new wardrobe for the masses of China, but in a very short time this gave way to the positively Olympian task of establishing China's credentials in the surreal world of international fashion. In this context, Chinese culture in relationship to the past and to the world became an issue as pronounced in fashion as it was in, for example, the films of the Fifth Generation.

Among the 1980s designers, three different generations can be identified, and they brought to their designs different sorts of historical experience. The first, best represented by Li Keyu (b. 1929, Shanghai), was educated in the pre-Liberation period. Members of the third, represented by Liu Yang (b. 1964, Beijing) and Ma Ling (b. 1968, Yunnan), were young enough to have avoided the worst of the Cultural Revolution. The middle generation accounted for the greatest number of designers, all children of Mao's China. The experience of Chen Hongxia, born in Guangzhou in 1957, was not untypical of her generation although slightly unusual among fashion designers. Graduating from middle school in 1973, she spent the next eight years working in the Guangdong Tractor Factory before successfully applying for entry into the Central Academy of Industrial Fine Arts in 1981.[16]

While fashion design was a new area of enterprise to most designers active in the 1980s, the Mao years proved to have provided some foundations for their work. Mass clothing production in the first quarter-century of the People's Republic required few design initiatives, but costume for the stage did demand historical knowledge, imagination and design skills. A number of designers had worked in drama and ballet,

16. Bao Mingxin, Jiang Zhiwei and Cheng Rong (eds.), *Zhongguo mingshi shizhuang jianshang cidian* (*Dictionary of Famous Chinese Fashion Connoisseurs*) (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaotong daxue chubanshe, 1993), passim.

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and they turned their skills to good account in the new cultural context of 1980s consumerism. Jiang Jinrui (b. 1950, Beijing), employed in the 1960s in the Beijing New Arts Drama and Dance Clothing Company, was producing award-winning designs in the 1980s.[17] Li Keyu, who in the 1990s was designing clothes unimaginable in her own youth, had originally made her name as a costume designer for revolutionary drama and opera, including the epochal *Red Detachment of Women*.[18]

The training of fashion designers in the early post-Mao years was possible within the established educational complex, which was diversified relatively easily in the face of demands for professionalization of clothing design. A number of the middle generation of designers passed into the fashion industry through the Central Academy of Industrial Fine Arts. In the 1980s, specialization in the field of fashion design in educational institutes became possible. The Central Academy itself established a fashion design department in the early 1980s. In 1988, Chen Hongxia was invited to help in the establishment of a department of design in Guangzhou University.[19] In 1989, Liu Xiaogang became Shanghai's first doctoral student in the area of fashion design.[20] The premium placed on educational qualifications in China was apparent throughout the design industry. A designer such as Jiang Yinmei (b. 1946, Shanghai), who after finishing high school in 1965 was sent off to the Shanghai No. 1 Clothing Factory and never sat another exam, appears to be quite unusual. Jiang made her name while the reform-era fashion industry was in its infancy, winning awards for designs submitted to a Shanghai municipal fashion design competition in 1984.[21]

It is notable that the 1980s designers were mostly women. As the career potential in designing and the importance of fashion in world culture became apparent, male designers increased in number. By 1998 between 6,000 and 7,000 people were registered as professional or amateur designers across China. Men accounted for most of the top names that year although some new female talents – notably the highly-regarded Wu Haiyan from the Chinese Academy of Fine Arts in Hangzhou – had made an appearance.[22] Interviewed in 2004, Guangzhou designer Zhou Guoping noted that girls far outnumbered boys among students at Guangzhou University's fashion school, but that the male students were among the most successful.[23] Questioned on this point, a young woman lecturer in the fashion department of Shanghai's Donghua

17. *Ibid.* p. 221.
18. *Ibid.* p. 118.
19. *Ibid.* p. 164.
20. *Ibid.* p. 86.
21. *Ibid.* pp. 227–28.
22. Kou Zhengling, "Joining top fashion trends: China's clothing industry marches towards the 21st century," *Beijing Review*, No. 3 (19–25 January 1998), p. 18. Prominent male designers mentioned were Zhang Zhaode, Wang Xinyuan, Liu Yang and Du He, all well known already in 1993 (see under individual names in Bao Mingxin *et al.*, *Dictionary of Famous Chinese*). A feature article on Wu Haiyan was published in *China Pictorial*, January 2001.
23. Interview, Guangzhou University School of Textiles and Garments (Guangzhou daxue fangzhi fuzhuang xueyuan), 12 July 2004.

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University suggested that men's greater success was because they were more creative. Her own designer of choice, however, was Wu Haiyan.[24] It is probably the case that talented male students receive greater attention than their female classmates, especially in a world where the male fashion designer has such cachet.

As Xiaoping Li points out, there was a "battle over styles" during the 1980s that "was closely related to the issue of national identity."[25] In general, however, Western styles dominated the oeuvre of Chinese fashion designers in the first quarter-century of the reform era. Their role in the market economy was after all to provide smart clothing for the re-emerging bourgeoisie of China and to supply foreign markets with unexceptional, off-the-peg garments. It was in fashion competitions, both at home and abroad, that the Chinese cultural heritage was brought into play. First prize in the Second Chinese Fashion Culture show, held in 1985, went to Liu Ping's ankle-length *qipao*, unconventionally split at the front rather than at the sides and provocatively adorned with a large bow just below the crotch.[26]

Liu Ping's design typified the response of designers to the particular aesthetic demands of formal wear, the most obvious realm in these years for experimentation with "high fashion." From 1979 onwards, the *qipao* provided a repository of elements that Chinese designers have freely raided to produce their various ranges of formal wear. In a glossy publication of a style common in the late 1990s but still unusual at the end of the 1980s, designer Ma Ling provided imaginative designs of evening wear inspired by Tang dynasty costume and – again – the 1930s *qipao*. Glossing her own oeuvre, she wrote: "The glorious history of Chinese clothing culture, the richness of traditional handicraft work – especially embroidery and brocade work – all excite vocal interest in the international fashion world. Chinese fashion must compete in ingenuity and beauty on the world stage."[27]

In time, even the Cultural Revolution was historicized in fashion, but without displacing the *qipao*. Feng Ling, born in 1965, turned from painting to clothes design in the late 1990s. She combined elements of the Mao suit and army uniforms with the *qipao*, using silks and satins to create a sartorial pastiche of references to the Chinese past. Interviewed in 2005, she described her designs in terms commonly used by Chinese couturiers. "My clothes are very 'China,' yet at the same time very modern," she said, "so they can give others a very persuasive hint about today's China ... This clothing is very local, special, and Chinese."[28] Like most designers, Feng Ling faces the problem that her compatriots by and large do not want to wear such clothes: 70 per cent of her customers are

24. Interview, Shanghai Library, 16 July 2004.
25. Xiaoping Li, "Fashioning the body in post-Mao China," p. 78.
26. *Shizhuang* (*Fashion*), No. 3 (1985), p. 17.
27. Ma Ling, *Ma Ling shizhuang* (*Ma Ling Fashions*) (Beijing: Ma Ling shizhuang fuzhi youxian gongsi, 1993), p. 77.
28. Priscilla Jiao, "Something old, something new," *That's China* (April 2005), p. 46. http://www.thatschina.net/20054-p46.htm, accessed 20 April 2005.

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foreigners. Nevertheless, designers are in tune with Chinese consumers when they return again and again to the *qipao* for inspiration. The quintessential Republican-era garment, it has enjoyed a surge of popularity in recent years and clearly signifies Chineseness more than any other garment from the past.

To advertise their very "China" yet very modern clothes, designers needed Chinese models. Professional modelling was unknown before the 1980s. Assembling for their first class in November 1981, the girl students at China's first school for models were too shy even to remove their jackets because the woollen jumpers they wore underneath would reveal the shape of their bodies. The director had to debrief them. Pierre Cardin, instrumental in the establishment of the school, was present at their first fashion show and stormed his way through the dressing room, which featured a curtain separating male and female models. He pulled the curtain down.[29] This might be regarded as a seminal moment in the transformation of gender relations in China, involving the subordination of conventional ethics of sexual relations to the demands of one of the world's great consumer industries.

Modelling meant both advertising Chinese beauty and attending anew to the question of "what is beautiful in a Chinese woman."[30] In 1984, 18-year-old Deng Ying was an employee in a textile factory, like both her parents. She may have been inspired by the 1983 fashion exhibition in Beijing to apply for admission to the modelling group recently established by the Beijing Textile & Fashion Public Service Centre. Her height – 1.7 metres – must have encouraged her to think that she was an appropriate candidate. She became a favourite model of Beijing designer Li Yanping (b. 1950), who used her to showcase fashionable *qipao* designs.[31]

A decade later, Deng Ying would have been too short to follow such a career. The New Silk Road Modelling Company, established in 1992, featured its 34 top models in a 2001 picture book. The two senior members of the group, each with ten years modelling experience, were both 1.81 metres tall. The shortest models were 1.75 metres and the remainder all 1.77 or above.[32] Correspondingly, the 20 models of the Shanghai Fashion Company, with an average age of 20 years, had an average height of 1.77 metres.[33] Among regional origins of the New Silk Road models, the northern provinces were predominant – Heilongjiang,

29. Xu Wenyuan, *Secai, nülang, wo de meng: shizhuang motuoer zhi lu* (*Colour, Young Women, My Dream: The Fashion Model's Path*) (Zhongguo gongren chubanshe, 1991), pp. 27–28.

30. See Wolfram Eberhard's classic essay, "What is beautiful in a Chinese woman?" in Eberhard, *Moral and Social Values of the Chinese: Selected Essays* (Taipei: Chengwen Publishing Co., 1971), pp. 271–304.

31. *China Reconstructs* (October 1987), p. 15. On Li Yanping, see Bao Mingxin *et al.*, *Dictionary of Famous Chinese*, pp. 126–29.

32. Data from China Pictorial Publications & New Silk Road Models, Co. Ltd (eds.), *Zhongguo xin silu mingmo xiezhen* (*Portraits of China's New Silk Road Models*) (Beijing: Zhongguo huabao chubanshe, 2001).

33. http://www.shanghai-fahion-co.com/biao-yan-dui.htm, accessed 6 October 2003.

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Xinjiang, Hebei. Only one model was from south of the Chang (Yangtze) valley.

To height requirements were added certain demands for physiognomy: big eyes, full mouths, prominent facial profiles. Within these guidelines, some variety was required to cover the various sorts of modelling tasks. Among the New Silk Route models, Wang Aiping had a "typically eastern face" and was useful for historical costume displays, while Meng Huan had a "foreign" air. Zhu Tong was celebrated as the only model in the company with single-fold eyelids, a distinctly unfashionable feature that she shared with half the population.[34] However, in general, the models all looked very similar and a group photograph shows that the elements considered essential to Chinese beauty are those set by American pop culture. Chinese were baffled when Lu Yan, with single-fold eyelids and a broad nose, was head-hunted by French modelling agents.[35] The French, of course, were looking for something different, exotic, even primitivist. Chinese designers were quite capable of exploiting difference in their marketing of high fashion, but had yet to reach this stage of self-Orientalism.

Designers and models together inevitably contributed to the conditions within which a certain body type was valorised through the modelling industry. Competing in the international arena, designers produced clothes compatible with international fashion trends – exaggerated and overblown at graphic design stage, thrown into relief on the page by stick-like representations of the human form. Such designs were realizable on the catwalk only on the improbable bodies of exceptionally tall, thin women. This meant revising ideals for a Chinese body that had earlier been established, with marginal differences, during the Republican era.[36] These ideals could now be attained by cosmetic surgery on eyes, noses, navels and finally even legs, stretched millimetre by millimetre to add height to young women dissatisfied with their natural stature. In 2004, an innovative beauty quest in China was held to find the nation's most beautiful surgically modified product.

In the 1980s, Chinese models benefited from the great interest abroad in anything coming out of China. The *Fashion* Magazine Modelling Group was invited to Paris by Pierre Cardin in 1985, and attracted a storm of attention when they rode down the Champs-Élysées in an open-topped car carrying the Chinese flag.[37] Two years later the China fashion scene seemed to have arrived when 19-year-old Peng Li, from the Beijing Modelling Troupe, won an international modelling competition in Naples.[38] But such international successes were rare. After the Tiananmen Incident in 1989 China excited little international interest for some time. It became a very tough environment for both designers and

34. China Pictorial Publications & New Silk Road Models, Co. Ltd (eds.), *China New Silk Road Models*, pp. 23, 47, 55.
35. http://www.china.org.cn/english/NM-e/40994.htm, accessed 20 September 2004.
36. See Eberhard, "What is beautiful in a Chinese woman?" pp. 271–304.
37. *Shizhuang*, No. 23 (1985/4), p. 15
38. *Shizhuang*, No. 35 (1988/4), p. 12.

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models, where being Chinese had little cachet and names were more easily made at home than abroad.

Fashion Magazines

The uneven struggle between global fashion trends and self-consciously Chinese designs is nowhere better illustrated than in fashion magazines, which from the start gave generous space to designs from abroad and now, after a quarter of a century, are devoted largely to advertising the big international fashion names. The first issue of the first fashion magazine to have been published in many years appeared in 1979, and was soon followed by others. Published first quarterly, then bimonthly, then monthly, costing around 0.5 RMB in 1979 and 1.2 RMB ten years later, these magazines were important conduits of knowledge in an industry struggling to establish itself. They supplied "how to" advice, and introduced readers to current international trends.

For all the actual changes in what people in China wore, a visitor could well have blinked and missed the Chinese fashion scene in the 1980s, especially if the visit was made in the cooler months and to the inland rather than the coastal cities. Looking through magazines, however, would have produced quite a different impression, for they created the imagined fashionable community. Let us "think for a moment of the magazine as a machine that makes Fashion,"[39] although in a simpler way than Barthes famously attempted. Magazines presented a fashionable world much more developed, comprehensible and satisfying than the actual world of fashion. They showed and even explained the seasonal and yearly shifts in style that were fundamental to Fashion, but so hard to detect from the chaotic sartorial spectacle on any Chinese city street. In a very explicit way they structured the nation and the world in terms of fashion, anchoring the new consumer values in a familiar value system that had the nation at its heart.

The fashion magazine of the reform era appeared in bookshops without too much attention. In 1979, *China's Women*, the flagship magazine of the Women's Federation, looked much as it had in the 1960s, before publication was suspended during the Cultural Revolution. The "Four Modernizations" were absorbed seamlessly into a world of workers, peasants and soldiers, each contributing to the new national project through revolutionary will and sheer hard work. The peasant girl gathering the crops wore checked shirt and headscarf; the student turned woodcutter wore Mao jacket and fur cap.[40] In 1981, the first issue of *Modern Dress* (*Xiandai fuzhuang*) informed readers that "girls love dresses," an opinion illustrated with photographs of demure young

39. Roland Barthes (trans. Matthew War and Richard Howard), *The Fashion System* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), p. 51.

40. "Wei sihua zuo gongxian" ("Making a contribution to the Four Modernizations"), *Zhongguo funü*, No. 250 (1979/6), inside back cover.

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women wearing frocks in bright colours with puffed sleeves and frills, or lace trim.

The early fashion magazines were mostly produced by textile and garment manufacturing or trade companies along with higher educational institutions and research groups related to the arts of clothing production. With four to six issues a year, they typically contained a centre spread of colour illustrations of new styles with attention both to local designs and international fashion. The latter appeared outlandish beside the former in the early 1980s but the design gap began to close as the decade wore on and Chinese designers became more adventurous. The Chinese edition of a Japanese fashion magazine was launched in Beijing in 1985, with photographs and patterns entirely from Japanese contributors,[41] and the first issue of a Franco-Chinese co-production, *Elle*, appeared in Shanghai in 1988. These provided a benchmark for international standards in Chinese fashion publishing that Hong Kong fashion magazines had otherwise set (see Table 1).

Apart from the colour spread, 1980s magazines featured a wide range of articles on various aspects of an industry in the process of renovation: textile technology, export standard requirements, Chinese historical

Table 1: **Some Early Reform Era Fashion Magazines, by Year of First Issue**

Year	*Publication*	*Publisher*
1979	*Shizhuang* (*Fashion*)	China Silk Import and Export Co., Beijing
1981	*Xiandai fuzhuang* (*Modern Dress*)	Beijing Municipal Clothing Research Society and Light Industry Publishing Co.
1982	*Liuxing se* (*Fashion Colour*)	China Fashion Colour Society
1984	*Zhongguo fuzhuang* (*China Garments*)	China Clothing Design Research Centre
1985	*Denglimei shizhuang* (Chinese edition)	China Fashion Magazine company and Kamakura Bookshop (Japan)
1986	*Shanghai fushi* (*Shanghai Style*)	Shanghai Muncipal Dress Study Society and Shanghai Science and Technology Publishing Co.
1988	*Shijie shizhuang zhi yuan* (*Elle*)	Shanghai Translation Publishing Co. and Daniel Filipachi Publishing Co.
1990	*Shanghai shizhuang bao* (*Shanghai Fashion Times*)	Shanghai Clothing Co.

Source:
Various magazines; Bao Mingxin, Jiang Zhiwei and Cheng Rong (eds.), *Zhongguo mingshi shizhuang jianshang cidian* (*Dictionary of Famous Chinese*) (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaotong daxue chubanshe, 1993).

41. *Shizhuang*, No. 20 (1985/1), p. 2

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clothing culture, and nation-wide innovations in the production and marketing of textiles and clothing. An article on the "Red Capital" (Hongdu) clothing store in Beijing early established an unexceptionable model for standards in the retail sector, announcing new styles, quality and customer service as its three points of attention.[42] A photo sequence showed how to iron cloth cut for the manufacture of tailored trousers.[43] An advertisement featured the latest in Japanese sewing machine technology.[44]

Introducing the industry to foreign fashion trends and the structure of the international fashion industry was among the significant services fashion magazines performed. Presented with six different photographs of men in 1985 Parisian fashions, readers of *Fashion* were asked to "spot the difference" between the various combinations of coat, trousers, shirt and tie – a lesson in identifying the detail so important in fashion trends.[45] In the same issue, an article on designing for the clothing export market identified the elements necessary for success, including fashion models, trade exhibitions and fashion shows. This article identified the Soviet Union as an appropriate target for Chinese exports, because the fashion lag between west and east Europe would allow Chinese designers to pick up last year's Western fashions and reduplicate them for the Russian market.[46]

How to design and cut garments that were fitted to the figure was paramount among lessons to be learned by clothing producers, from women making garments for the family to employees of the major clothing manufacturers. The first issue of *Modern Dress* published anatomical sketches of the female human form, showing both skeletal and muscular structure, and provided detailed graphs showing measurements for clothes sizes for both men and women.[47] Patterns with detailed measurements and cutting instructions were a standard feature of all fashion magazines, and were still to be found in the more lavish and expensive publications of the mid-1990s. As the door to international trade opened more widely, Chinese consumers were introduced via fashion magazines to Western paper patterns, especially McCall's.

An innovation in fashion publishing was the launch in 1994 of *China Popular Brand Fashion* magazine (*Zhongguo mingpai shizhuang*). This was a Beijing product, edited by the Chinese Historical Clothing Research Association in conjunction with the newly formed "Chinese Popular Brands Fashion" editorial group. Eight "famous brands" were featured, including the locally successful Aidekang, founded in 1989 with German investment, and Tianma, known for its shirts. The aim of the magazine was to establish brand recognition for Chinese products.[48] This

42. *Shizhuang*, No. 6 (1981/Autumn), p. 6
43. *Ibid.* p. 54
44. *Ibid.* p. 56
45. *Shizhuang*, No. 20 (1985/1), pp. 16–17.
46. *Ibid.* p. 4.
47. *Xiandai fuzhuang* (*Modern Clothing*), No. 1 (September 1981), pp. 8–9.
48. *Zhongguo mingpai shizhuang* (*Chinese Popular Brand Fashion*), No. 1 (September 1994), p. 2.

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initiative would appear to be connected with the experience of the head of the Luoman group – also featured in the magazine – when he tried to market modestly priced suits in Paris in 1994. The importance of brand names dawned on him when he failed to attract customers. In 1996, two years after the first issue of the "famous brands" magazine, a similarly named organization was founded, with the same stated aims.[49]

It should be noted that the "famous brands" campaign was conducted in the arena of global fashions. The fashion companies involved were producing suits, shirts, skirts and blouses, and leisure-wear, well-cut from quality fabrics, but overall entirely conventional. The early 1980s magazines had tentatively offered some distinctively Chinese garments. That the "famous brand" companies showed no interest in such experiments was a comment on their realistic understanding of consumer demands, but at the same time showed that they could not bring much to their labels that was new. While price advantage and local know-how would secure them a place in the Chinese market and even permit exports, their brand names were destined to remain in the shadow of the great international fashion labels.

These labels were then proliferating through the top end of the Chinese market, and being promoted in major fashion magazines that were gradually becoming more and more like their foreign counterparts in design and content. By the mid-1990s colour spreads, while continuing to show a regional alertness to Japanese and Korean fashions evident in the 1980s, were dominated by designs from the big European fashion houses such as Versace, Armani, YSL. Street fashion (*jietou shizhuang*) made an appearance in fashion features in 1995–96.[50] The distinction between the colour spread and the more cheaply produced black-and-white pages on coarser paper began to disappear around this time, and full gloss magazines became the norm. The internet started to became a major purveyor of Chinese fashions. Patterns occupied less and less space in popular magazines, finally disappearing from the major titles.

The relationship between what was depicted in the magazines and what people actually wore did not become noticeably closer. In 1996, when the proliferation of glossy fashion magazines and the growing number of specialist clothing shops in big cities might suggest to the casual observer plenty of choice for the consumer, a survey of 200 middle school students by *Zhongguo fuzhuang* found that teenagers were almost universally dissatisfied with the clothing available to them. The magazine summed up their attitude in the words: "We're growing up; we don't want to wear children's clothes and we don't want to wear adults' clothes either. What can we wear apart from school uniform?"[51] The magazine had some useful advice for designers: if the customer was "emperor," as alleged in

49. Claire Roberts, *Evolution and Revolution: Chinese Dress 1700s–1900s* (Sydney: Powerhouse Museum, 1997), p. 99

50. *Shizhuang*, No. 66 (1996/3), pp. 44–47. This issue published the sixth in a series of illustrated articles on street fashion.

51. Gu Qiu, "Shejishi, qing zoujin "shangdi" ("Designers, please draw closer to the 'emperor' "), *Zhongguo fuzhuang* (*China Garments*), No. 1 (1997), p. 32.

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the common saying, designers would do well not to maintain their distance. But the magazine itself, of course, could maintain this distance, and probably even depended on it for its readers, who through its pages could move beyond the parochial, mundane world of real made-in-China clothing to engage in a glamorous global culture.

Sites of Fashion: The Spatial Hierarchy

One of the major achievements of fashion magazines, and of fashion publishing more generally in China, was to produce a spatial understanding of fashion that explained its significance in terms of established urban hierarchies, local and international. In the 1980s, three cities were identified as the recognizable nodes of China's fashion industry. These were Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou, all of which combined strong regional roles with national significance as places where China had long conducted negotiations and exchanges with the non-Chinese world. To the extent that they have competed with each other for local and international prominence in fashion, they can be viewed as using fashion to give regional expression to their claims as sites of national culture. But in world fashion, where city names are more important that country names, they have also become the focus of hopes for Chinese fashion fame.

Shanghai's dominance in textile production and established cultural capital has stood it in good stead in the fashion industry. Even in the mid-1970s, it was "a must" for visitors to Shanghai "to buy paper patterns to give to relatives and friends back home."[52] In 1981, "new items, new styles [were] constantly forthcoming" and even the winter wardrobe, in which variety was restricted, featured new styles in new materials.[53] Beijing in that year had nothing to offer by way of comparison, but in the longer term was able to compete because of its capacity to mount exhibitions, develop training institutes, produce literature and supply consumers. It had its own distinctive appeal as the national capital, a city of antiquity and the natural centre of northern culture.

Guangzhou was the strongest performer in the 1980s. It benefited from early reform-era policies that encouraged the development of clothing manufacture in its vicinity, and it had the advantage of being close to Hong Kong, from which it learnt about style as well as about doing business. It became known throughout China as a place where people dressed well, commanding respect even from Shanghainese. Zhang Zhaoda (Mark Cheung), who emerged as one of China's foremost designers in the 1990s, typified the Guangzhou historical experience: he owed his early interest in clothing culture to magazines sent to him by relatives abroad.[54]

52. Yang Yuan (exec. ed.), *Zhongguo fushi bainian shishang* (French title: *Costumes chinois: Modes depuis 100 ans*) (Huerhot: Yuanfang chubanshe, 2003), p. 17

53. Ming Hao, "Shanghai fuzhuang shichang xunli," ("Calling in at the Shanghai clothes market"), *Xiandai fuzhuang*, No. 1 (September 1981), p. 19.

54. *Ibid.* p. 152.

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The fashions emanating from these three cities came to be differentiated along regional lines, in time-honoured fashion. The *jingpai* (Beijing) presented a relatively serious image, the *haipai* (Shanghai) a lively, and the *suipai* (Guangzhou) a romantic one.[55] Discussions of the fashion industry have commonly revolved around one or another city, or involved a comparison of them. In Beijing in the late 1980s fashion-conscious buyers shopped at "privately run free-market stalls and individual stores" which purchased garments from all over China. Bright young things in the suburbs were beginning to produce their own fashion designs, contracting local factories to produce the garments for the market.[56] In Shanghai, the tailor long continued to be a dominant figure, to the point where tailored and ready-to-wear garments became a recognized mark of differentiation between Shanghai and Guangzhou. In Guangzhou, or more broadly Guangdong, clothing was factory-made, and the locals were held to have a free and easy approach to what they wore. In Shanghai, people were "relatively picky and considered," consulted the fashion magazines, wanted this changed and that altered, and from a long process of decision-making would emerge in garments "both fashionable and individual."[57]

Around these nodes a certain idea of fashion was constructed, to be disseminated throughout urban China via the communication routes that carried fashion magazines, textiles, T-shirts, jeans and parkas from major metropoles to small market towns. A Beijing fashion commentator wrote in 1987 that the gap between clothing trends between cities and rural areas used to be ten years, and was now five; and between large and middle-ranking cities had been around five years, but now was only one.[58] In the 1990s, numerous other Chinese cities became involved in the fashion industry as local governments across the country promoted garment manufacture, industry training, trade exhibitions and fashion shows; but they did little to disturb the existing spatial imagination of fashion. Summarizing summer trends in 2004, the industry magazine *View* featured Shenzhen boutiques in its pictorial "window-shopping" section, but its analysis of major metropolitan fashions focused on Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.[59]

The spatial understanding of Chinese fashion has been constructed in parallel with the observed urban hierarchy in international fashion. Ambitions for China's success in world fashion are expressed in terms of the placement of a Chinese city in the top rank of fashionable cities. It 1996, it was a matter of great satisfaction in China that Beijing should be

55. Wang Li, 'Woguoren dangjin fushi (duan xiang)" ("Contemporary clothing among our compatriots: brief reflections"), *Shizhuang*, No. 29 (1987/2), p. 34.

56. Wen Tianshen, "New fashion trends," *China Reconstructs*, Vol. 36, No. 10 (October 1987), p. 67.

57. Yao Zaisheng, "Guangdong de shizhuangchang he Shanghai de caifengpu" ("Guangdong's fashion factories and Shanghai's tailor shops"), *Xiandai fuzhuang*, No. 83, (1996/6), p. 20.

58. Wang Li, "Contemporary clothing among our compatriots," p. 34.

59. *Liuxing qushi* (*Fashion Trends*), No. 98 (Summer 2004), pp. 219–221. (The English title given on the cover of the magazine is: *View: International Fashion and Fabrics*.)

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included with fashion capitals Paris, New York and Tokyo as one of four cities to host an exhibition of works by young fashion designers from across the world. This was an indication that "China's capital, China's symbol and representative," was on the way to being "a centre of world fashion."[60] In the same year, the second Shanghai International Fashion Expo (or International Fashion Culture Festival) was launched with the mission statement: "We will realize the dream someday, the dream of making Shanghai one of the most important centres of fashion in the world."[61] Eight years later this hope was reiterated in *View*, where Shanghai was described as China's fashion future, on its way to being the world's sixth fashion city after – presumably – Paris, London, New York, Milan and Tokyo.[62]

Of the international fashion cities, Paris and Tokyo loom largest in the Chinese view, Paris because it epitomizes the idea of Fashion, Tokyo because it best represents what China would like to achieve. In 1982, just as something looking like fashion was beginning to appear in China, 12 Japanese designers created a sensation in Paris and placed Japanese fashion in the vanguard of international style.[63] The significance of fashion in the international pecking order dawned on industry participants in the 1980s, not least because Japan – then at peak economic performance – had made its mark in Paris. In 1987 one fashion commentator wrote with wistful optimism: "In the 1980s, Japanese designers greatly influenced world fashion with designs based on traditional Japanese dress. Perhaps in the 1990s or thereabouts, it will be the turn of Chinese designers."[64] In the same year, another commentator reported on the achievements of a designer from the East in the French fashion world. This was Takada Kenzo, the first Japanese designer to make an imprint in Paris.

Japan was an inspiration to China but also a challenge, exciting admiration and resentment in not quite equal portions. In an interview with the International Herald Tribune, Han Feng, born in Hangzhou and now based in New York, criticized Japanese fashions of the 1980s for being "somewhat cold and intellectual," and for being more about the designer than about the people who wore them. Her own aim was "to serve career women, to help them be creative and elegant." This distinction between her project and that of her famous Japanese peers illustrates perfectly Japan's significance in the construction of Chinese identity and the definition of Chinese goals. In the same interview, Han Feng stated firmly: "This is the Chinese century. From now on, the Chinese influence is going to be important in everything."[65] How to convert this

60. *Zhongguo fuzhuang* (*China Garments*), No. 48 (1996/5), p. 12.
61. http://www.shme.com/96sifcf/96sifsf.htm, accessed 3 September 2003.
62. *Liuxing qushi* (*Fashion Trends*), p. 220.
63. See Yuniwa Kawamura, *The Japanese Revolution in Paris Fashion: Dress, Culture, Body* (Oxford: Berg, 2004).
64. Wen Tianshen, "New fashion trends," p. 68.
65. Daisann McLane, "China's new fashion whispers 'Asia'," *International Herald Tribune*, 14 September 2004.

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incontrovertible fact into world acknowledgement of Chinese fashion is a question that vexes the industry in China.

History and Fashion on the Catwalk

From an early stage of the reborn fashion enterprise, China's fashion future was seen as lying in a successful blend of contemporary international trends with specific Chinese historical and cultural characteristics.[66] The fashion show, with its inherent theatricality, has provided the ideal venue for displaying Chinese culture (almost definitively historical) in various vestimentary forms, sometimes literally through the use of historical costume. To balance the often competing demands of cultural performance and design exhibition has proved difficult. In 1981, the safari suits paraded before Western observers in Beijing were presented by models striking poses from Beijing Opera, specifically in order to place a Chinese stamp on the show but probably with rather comical effect.[67] Although fashion in China has come a long way since 1981, this sort of literal appropriation of culture for the catwalk remains a feature of any Chinese fashion extravaganza.

Fashion shows in China developed in the context of trade exhibitions. From modest beginnings in the 1980s these rapidly increased in number during the 1990s. A 1998 schedule of fairs and exhibitions shows the dates of first exhibition, indicating a growing number of events aimed at the marketing of Chinese textiles and fashion: two in 1993 and 1994, three in 1995, four in 1996 (see Table 2). The exhibitions also grew in scale. The Shanghai International Fashion Expo, launched with great fanfare in 1995, was still a modest affair in 1996. Advertising drew attention to interested regional participants, such as Australia and Japan, and to a few international designers: Oscar de la Renta, Olivier Lapidus, Gerard Pipart. At the 2003 Expo, featuring designs by Givenchy, Vivienne Tam and Vivienne Westwood among others, the exhibition area was nearly double that of 1998, and the number of exhibitors had grown from 370 to 674.[68] By this time, China had become the world's largest manufacturer of clothing and raw textile materials. The steady expansion of exhibitions and trade fairs, serving a rapidly expanding domestic market and accompanied by growing international engagement, was to be expected.

Most of the exhibitions were prosaic in content, directed at maximizing domestic and foreign sales. Fashion shows were a feature of some, but a fashion show might be a very modest affair not at all conducive to making Chinese fashion famous. The Second China Clothing and Textiles Expo held in Sydney in 2002 provides a good illustration. It was

66. Chen Fumei, "Shizhuang biaoyan de qiantu" ("The future of fashion shows"), *Xiandai fuzhuang*, No. 17 (1985/4), p. 9.

67. Tie Ying, "First national fashion show," *China Reconstructs*, Vol. 32, No. 10 (October 1983), pp. 4–5.

68. *Shanghai Star*, 27 March 2003, http:/Nwww.chinadaily.com.cn/star/2003/0327/fa13–1.html, accessed 3 September 2003.

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Table 2: **Schedule of Exhibitions and Trade Fairs Related to the Textile and Garment Industries in China, 1998**

Name of Exhibition	*Display*	*Venue*	*First held*
Dalian International Garment Fair	Clothing, fabrics, wool, leather goods, accessories	Dalian	1989
Shanghai International Clothing Machinery Exhibition	Sewing, knitting, cutting machines etc.	Shanghai	1990
China International Clothing & Accessories Fair	Garments, fabrics, accessories	Beijing	1993
Shenyang National Textile and Clothing Trade Fair	[not stated]	Shenyang	1993
China International Nonwoven Technology, Textiles and Machinery Exhibition	Nonwovens, technology textiles and machinery, chemical, equipment, etc.	Beijing	1994
Shanghai International Fabrics and Fashion Accessories Exhibition	Fabrics and fashion accessories	Shanghai	1994
Shanghai International Fashion Expo	Formal wear, evening wear, bridal gowns, casual wear, children's wear, fabrics, accessories	Shanghai	1995
China International Trade Fair for Garment Fabrics, Home Textiles and Accessories	Garment fabrics, home textiles, carpets, home textile equipment	Shanghai	1995
China (Shenzhen) International Clothes Fair	[not stated]	Shenzhen	1995
Hangzhou Silk Trade Fair	Pure silk underwear, ready-made clothes, garment fabrics	Shenyang	1996
Dalian International Women's Beauty Commodities Fair	Women's accessories, sanitary and health care articles, bedding, arts and crafts	Dalian	1996
Dalian International Garment Fair (Autumn/Winter)	Autumn and winter fashions, cashmere and woollen goods, eiderdowns, footwear, hats	Dalian	1996
China International Lingerie and Beachwear Trade Fair	Lingerie and beachwear	Shanghai	1996
China International Clothing and Accessories Fair (Autumn/Winter)	Garments, fabrics, accessories	Beijing	1997
Dalian Silk Fair	Silk apparel and fabrics, silk machinery	Dalian	1997
China Jewellery, Handicraft and Silk Trade Fair	[not stated]	Tianjin	1998?

Source:
www.chinavista.com/business/fairs/textile.

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organized by the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Textiles, an umbrella organization founded in 1998 and boasting "more than 4,600 enterprise members across China by 2002."[69] The expo's glossy brochure showed off Chinese textiles and designs to advantage, with an emphasis on silk garments from export companies in Sichuan, Shanghai and Guangzhou, but the actual exhibition was directed at solidifying the place China had already achieved as a supplier of functional garments and fabrics to the lower end of the global market. The text of the exhibition brochure made this interest obvious. Under the heading "Hot fashion attractions from China," an introduction to the expo noted that "China has ranked first in the world in the export of textiles and clothing continuously for the past seven years. In 2001, the trade turnover in import and export of textiles and clothing in China exceeded US$70.7 billion, with US$54.2 billion in exports and US$16.5 billion in imports."

Eighty-four companies exhibited products ranging from pretty cashmere sweaters made in Inner Mongolia and garish Tweety Bird towels produced in Anhui to sober suits from Hubei. Fashion parades were held on each of the expo's four days. Girl-next-door Australian models walked the catwalk in Chinese-made garments that by and large looked indistinguishable from any designed elsewhere in the world. Watched by an audience largely of Chinese origin, the parade encapsulated the contradictions attendant on Chinese aspirations to place a distinctive mark on global fashion.

In striking contrast to this sort of trade exhibition is the national costume parade, aimed at giving exposure variously to Chinese "traditional" clothing culture, Chinese textiles, and incidentally to the developing modelling industry. The six main fashion shows mounted by the New Silk Route Modelling Company in Berlin in 2001 focused on historical costume. Models mounted striking parades of "dignified" Han, "luxurious" Tang, "delicate" Song, "bold" Yuan, "bright" Ming and "elegantly gorgeous" Qing costume. A Xinhua reporter in Berlin thanked the organizer excitedly with the words: "You condensed our Chinese history and culture into a single fashion show. I felt proud to be Chinese."[70] Similar shows had earlier been organized in Paris and New York in 1998, under the rubric "China Millennium." They have a strategic place in the overall strategy of the Chinese fashion industry, which sees its future as lying in the successful combination of contemporary international fashion trends with uniquely Chinese cultural elements.

The highly self-conscious and uncritical historicism of such extravaganzas can be detected in the work of individual designers. Lu Yue, recognized as one of China's top ten designers in 1997, designs a full

69. China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Textiles (Zhongguo fangzhipin jinchukou shanghui), Beijing 2002. Information brochure distributed at the Second China Clothing and Textiles Expo 2002, held at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour, 27–30 November 2002.

70. Xin Silu, *Zhongguo fuzhuang zoujin Bolin* (English title: *China Fashion Show in Berlin*), *Zhongguo zhi yi*, No. 85 (2001/12), pp. 70–74.

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range of modern clothing, from men's formal suits to women's leisure-wear. Like most of China's top designers, she has had little exposure overseas, but in 1999 and 2000 she showed her "Festival Day" collection in Paris and New York, each time in the context of larger Chinese cultural events. Part of the collection was built around the theme of the "red lantern," made famous in the West by Zhang Yimou's film *Raise the Red Lantern* (1992). Heroine-chic models carrying red paper lanterns, wearing long coats or tunics with loose trousers or very short skirts, all made of red satin, trimmed with fur and embroidered with medallions or chrysanthemums, must have made an impressive sight on the catwalk.[71] This was a predictable assembly of elements that must have left the rapturous audience in its comfort zone. Colours and materials satisfied established expectations of China, and wayward hairstyles did little to disrupt the impression of an updated *Dream of Red Mansions*.

The compulsion to celebrate China's glorious historical culture constitutes a problem at the heart of Chinese fashion design. The fact that the industry has not quite succeeded in dovetailing past and present suggests that designers have not yet developed an authoritative, or at least a very interesting, view of their own history. But the politics of international fashion also militate against a ready reception of their specifically Chinese designs. Speaking at a fashion conference in 1999, Hong Kong designer William Tang expressed bewilderment that his *qipao*-inspired designs on the Paris catwalk in the early 1990s failed to make an impression. With similar designs a couple of years later, he pointed out, French designers made fashion headlines around the world, inspiring a proliferation of *qipaos* and Chinese jackets in mainstream clothing outlets in the West.[72]

Tang's experience suggests that another obstacle faced by Chinese designers is that they are seen as Chinese, and that reception of their collections is formed by impressions of contemporary Chinese clothing culture in general, if not also of China as an authoritarian state that dictates the limits of individualism and creativity. In October 2003, as part of the "Year of China" in France, the China Association of Fashion Designers mounted a show displaying the work of six of China's top fashion designers. The designs were of flimsy, unremarkable, breast-revealing garments such as grace catwalks world-wide in the early 21st century. They could of course be described in terms commonly used to designate such garments: playful, contemporary, understated, whimsical. But the response in France was restrained. Jacques Lévy, director-general of Lanvin, confessed himself an admirer of Chinese creativity in many domains, "but not yet in fashion." The Franco-Swedish designer Marcel Marongiu, head of his own fashion house, commented that Chinese fashion was still at the stage of "basic ready-to-wear." Didier Grumbach,

71. Jiang Ye (ed.), *Zhongguo fuzhuang sheji: Lu Yue* (*Chinese Clothing Design: Lu Yue*) (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 2004), preface, n.p.n.

72. William Tang, keynote address at the ConsumAsian conference on Fashion in Asia, University of Hong Kong, 23–27 March 1999.

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president of the French Fashion Federation, shook his head (one imagines), saying: "It will take a long time before there are any Chinese labels [worth considering]. That takes a long, long time to develop."[73]

Such views are by and large shared by Chinese fashion designers themselves. In May 2002, Suzhou designer Shi Lin wrote an article assessing the present state and future prospects of Chinese fashion in the context of entry into the WTO. Born in 1942, graduating in 1960 from the Central Academy of Industrial Fine Arts, Shi Lin survived the anti-fashion years of the Cultural Revolution to emerge in her 40s as one of China's most promising designers. In 1988 she won a scholarship to study in Japan under the famous designer Kimijima Ichiro.[74] As a front-line participant in the vestimentary revolution of the 1980s, she was manifestly disappointed at the state of China's fashion industry in the early 21st century.

China's dominance in the production of clothing, she wrote, was not in dispute, but was directed mainly at providing run-of-the-mill garments for the daily wear of China's millions. Many clothing companies in China did not have a design section at all. They just bought up hot items from Shenzhen and sold them inland under their own labels, or picked the garments apart to provide the patterns for their own manufacture. Chinese designers had above all to abandon individual dreams of a dizzy ascent to the pinnacle of the fashion world in favour of the hard work of apprenticeship, beginning with "one needle and thread," like Emanuel Ungaro, who spent six years making men's trousers in the House of Balenciaga, acquiring "a fullness of knowledge and experience unattainable from books, to lay the solid foundations for his subsequent success."[75] "Without design, there can be no innovation," she pointed out, "and without innovative undertakings, there is no future." With entry into the WTO, China was facing an ever greater influx of foreign designs: "only by seizing our know-how can we avoid being sunk."[76]

This sense of anxiety and urgency is widely felt through the business world. Nearly a year after China's entry into the WTO, business journalist Chen Shuojian addressed such fears in an article that pointed to the difficulty of assessing exactly what a "national" brand was in the complicated world of multinationals. His purpose was to dispel fears of a "conspiracy" to obliterate Chinese brands and to inspire confidence in an international system that after all had no way of stopping the continual emergence of new Chinese enterprises.[77] In the realm of clothes

73. "La mode chinoise prend son envol" ("Chinese fashion takes off") (5 March 2003), on *France3.fr: un site du groupe France Télévisions Interactive*, http://cultureetloisirs.france3.fr/mode/podiumsdailleurs/103017-fr.php, accessed 3 September 2003

74. Bao Mingxin *et al.*, *Dictionary of Famous Chinese*, p. 50

75. Emanuel Ungaro, b. 1933, founded his own couture house in Paris in 1965.

76. Shi Lin, "Zhongguo shejishi haixu nuli" ("China's designers still have to work hard"), *Zhongguo fangzhi daxue xuebao* (*Journal of China Textile University*), 9 May 2002, http://www.efu.com.cn/info/technique/2002–5–10/8412.htm, accessed 3 September 2003.

77. Chen Shuojian, "Pinpai bu tan guoji" ("With brands – don't talk nationality"), *Da jing mao* (*Foreign Business Monthly*), No. 176 (November 2002), pp. 72–74.

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production and fashion design, this analysis seems sound. As the economy grows and the capacity for discretionary spending increases, local designers – including boutique designers – must continue to proliferate.

Chen's realist analysis, however, will not satisfy the collective desire for brand-name recognition, a problem not limited to the fashion world. By the turn of the millennium, after 20 years of almost uninterrupted growth, China had palpably failed to realize its goal of equalling Japan's success in establishing globally powerful companies. In 2003, Japan had 88 companies listed in Fortune Global 500 while China had 11. Analysing the reasons for this failure, Peter Nolan pointed to the intense competition within the world capitalist system in the period that China was opening up. Among the factors favourable to its future success, Nolan identified China's "intense sense of its special place in world history,"[78] presumably on the grounds that patriotism might inspire the sort of efforts in business that in sport won China second place in the Athens Olympics.

In fashion the reverse may well apply. In April 2005, tensions between China and Japan over the content of Japanese history textbooks and the apparently related issue of the future composition of the United Nations' Security Council demonstrated the party state's ability to manipulate popular historical consciousness to its own ends. A more critical or ironic attitude towards their own history and culture than displayed by the Chinese government may be necessary before Chinese designers are able to produce collections capable of impressing the international fashion industry. Naturally, such an attitude cannot be fostered in schools of design alone.

78. Peter Nolan, *China and the Global Economy: National Champions, Industrial Policy and the Big Business Revolution* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001), p. 155.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
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WEEK 11

13 The Body in Popular Culture

Meredith Jones

- Bodies are shaped and created by culture.
- 'Makeover culture' is a significant part of popular culture and is clearly expressed by cosmetic surgery.
- Feminist theory, along with Foucault's ideas of 'biopower' and 'techniques of the self', are useful theoretical tools with which to analyse the body and popular culture.
- In postmodernism, the presentation, transformation and maintenance of the body are connected to the formation of identity.
- In popular culture, bodies are commodities used to gain status. Body parts can also be consumables, able to be purchased via practices like gym-work or cosmetic surgery.
- Images in popular culture glorify and highlight some kinds of bodies (for example, the young, able-bodied and beautiful) while ignoring or condemning others.
- The 'posthuman' body is often located in the future or in science fiction, but it is argued in this chapter that we are all posthuman already.
- Corpses and the 'living-dead' (such as vampires) are enjoying a renaissance in popular culture; despite their otherness they are subject to the same imperatives of beauty and youth as other represented bodies.
- The meanings of body modifications vary according to place and time, as do ideas of what is 'beautiful' and what is normal or abnormal.

Introduction

The human body is more than biological: it is also shaped and defined by cultural practices. Even babies are not neutral but are partly created by cultural factors like medicine (for example, pre-natal care and caesarean section) or social mores (such as pink for girls and blue for boys). This chapter focuses on how the body is a part of popular culture, and on how popular culture and the body are mutually creative. Throughout, I use examples from analyses of

cosmetic surgery in order to illuminate more general points about the body in popular culture.

Cosmetic surgery has an ancient history but in the last few decades has undergone a massive boom (Gilman 1999; Haiken 1997; Jones 2008). We now see cosmetic surgery everywhere, whether we are explicitly aware of it or not. Cosmetic surgery is intimately connected to practices such as gym-work and dieting as well as to the media, fashion and celebrity (Blum 2003: 145–87). It is apparent on the faces and bodies of almost all film and television actors and is increasingly deployed by politicians and other celebrities. Indeed, if you are in the public eye it is now notable if you have *not* had cosmetic surgery (for example, Diane Keaton, Jamie Lee Curtis and Dame Judi Dench are all known for eschewing it). In other work, I have suggested that cosmetic surgery is part of 'makeover culture' (see Jones 2008). The idea of makeover is found in many of popular culture's discourses where it is applied to a range of body and lifestyle practices. My broad argument is that makeover culture is a state where *becoming* is more desirable than *being*. A makeover paradigm valorises the *process of development* rather than the idea of completion. I argue that good citizens of makeover culture must be seen to be constantly altering and improving themselves. Very often in popular culture this process is demonstrated on the body.

Popular culture is not a strict category and can be defined in a number of ways. It is often understood as that which nearly everyone has access to: it surrounds us in an everyday context (Sellnow 2010: 2) and includes media such as television, magazines, film and advertising, as well as leisure or self-improvement activities such as gaming, going to the gym, eating 'fast' food, dancing, clubbing and dieting. Popular culture is also often understood as so-called 'low' culture as opposed to 'high' culture. However, such terms are value-laden and supported by elite groupings; such differentiations are neither helpful nor adequate (see Anne Cranny-Francis 1994: 5–9). Cultural theorist Simon During (2005: 193) offers a more useful definition of popular culture: '[s]ince, in most of its forms, popular culture is committed to immediate pleasure, it wraps its seriousness in entertainment. However powerful and insightful it might be, its first requirement is — generally speaking — to be consumable now.'

There has been a steady rise in depictions of bodies in popular culture over the last few decades and, alongside this, a solid scholarly interest in the body has emerged. Academics are increasingly writing about the body in relation to technology, media, entertainment, labour and the emotions. Many theoretical traditions and innovations have contributed to this move, with perhaps the most important being feminist theory, which examines sex, gender and sexuality and centralises the body in debates about identity and experience. Feminists such as Simone de Beauvoir (1989), Judith Butler (1990), Germaine Greer (1970), Elizabeth Grosz (1994) and Donna Haraway (1991) have worked to show how the female body has been represented, suppressed, worked upon, seen as 'other' and marginalised. It was Simone de Beauvoir who wrote the famous line '[o]ne is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' (1989: 267), by which she meant that mere biology cannot account for the position that women hold in society: that they are also created according to gendered norms and social and cultural influences. While these authors mainly write about women in so-called 'Western' societies, many of their most important insights — such as the examination of social institutions and practices, including but not limited to the law, the labour force, medicine and the family — can usefully be applied to all women.

Interacting with feminism, works by French philosophers such as Pierre Bourdieu (2001), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987) and Luce Iragaray (1993) have influenced the growth of interest in the body. The most important of these is Michel Foucault, whose writings about disciplinary power, medicine and sexuality are hugely influential (for an excellent essay on Foucault and feminism, see Bordo 1999). Foucault argues that power is not just imposed from above (by the strong upon the weak) but is rather a dispersed force that operates on many levels (Foucault 1975, 1977, 1986a, 1986b, 1986c, 1988). He shows that we often take for granted relations between bodies and culture, but that close examination will always reveal that they are entwined in myriad complex power relations.

Foucault developed the idea of 'biopower', which Danaher et al. (2000: 64) describe as 'technologies that were developed at the same time as, and out of, the human sciences, and which were used for analysing, controlling, regulating and defining the human body and its behaviour'. The term biopower can cover instruments of control and regulation as diverse as census collections, vaccinations and road traffic rules; in popular culture it can be used to understand the regulation of bodies via such 'tools' as fashion, beauty, entertainment and leisure. In his later work, Foucault demonstrated that we discipline *ourselves* using what he called 'techniques of the self' (1988) and suggested that we undertake this self-discipline not only in order to conform or to be considered beautiful or 'normal' (for a detailed discussion of how we define 'normal', see Canguilhem 1989), but indeed in order to be happy. Foucault (1988: 18) therefore argues that in all societies exist

> ... techniques which permit individuals to effect, by their own means, a certain number of operations on their own bodies, on their own souls, on their own thoughts, on their own conduct, and this is a manner so as to transform themselves, modify themselves, and to attain a certain state of perfection, of happiness, of purity, of supernatural power, and so on.

196
chap13

In terms of the body and popular culture we could argue, using 'Foucauldian' terms, that practices like dieting, gym-work and being fashionable are examples of biopower *and* examples of techniques of the self: through them we are controlled and categorised, but we also choose to use them to gain power and to experience enjoyment as the owners of 'successful' or better-presented bodies. The texts and discourses through which those techniques are 'sold' to us (such as magazines, television programmes, and advertisements) are also examples of power at work on our bodies, and are often derided as such. However, when analysing and considering how these texts work it is also important to keep in mind During's definition of popular culture — that it is primarily *enjoyable*. It is this interlocking of power and desire (or suppression and enjoyment) that is at the heart of many Foucauldian analyses of popular culture. Cultural studies scholar Anne Cranny-Francis (1994: 75) writes that:

> ... popular culture is about formulating questions, about the kind of society we have, and the kind of society we might want, about the discursive configurations in which we all, as individual members of that society, are enmeshed and must negotiate, in the constant (re)production of ourselves as subjects.

When thinking about popular culture and bodies, I suggest that it is useful to follow During, Foucault and Cranny-Francis in order to see how we might be 'producing' our own bodies. On our screens, in our daily lifestyle practices and in printed media we witness struggles to define which bodies belong and which do not, which bodies are 'correct' or ideal and which are considered abnormal or 'other'. Thus, questions of inclusion and exclusion, discrimination, sexuality, class and ethnicity are crucial to our analysis of popular culture and the body.

The postmodern body

Many philosophers and social theorists have considered the body in the context of postmodernism. Postmodernism is both a set of theories and a range of cultural aesthetics such as fragmentation, the importance of surface and appearance, simulation, playfulness, collage, digitalisation and an abundance of information (see Jameson 1991). If we apply postmodern concepts to the body in popular culture we see that the body is constantly broken into a series of body-parts (think for example of how people focus on building up their 'six-packs') where its surfaces and appearance are highlighted rather than its capabilities or feelings. Alongside this fragmentation there is a corresponding reconstruction of the body through fashion, cosmetics and body modification.

Figure 13.1 below, taken on a London tube station platform in 2010, demonstrates postmodern themes. On the right is an advertisement for the reality television show *Seven Days*, where diverse residents of the London suburb of Notting Hill have their lives documented for a week (Studio Lambert 2010). The poster is a collage of many different faces: there is no one solid body or identity here, rather the message is one of fragmentation and amalgamation with a focus on surface and appearance. On the left is an advertisement for Max Factor that features a collection of make-up, each container of eye-shadow or lip-gloss blown up to human-sized proportions. Without a human model, the make-up and its packaging stand in for the body. The message here is not simply that blush will pinken cheeks but that a coherent identity can be manufactured with the right appearance-enhancing products. In line with this I suggest that cosmetic surgery bodies are inherently postmodern. They are fragmented: individual body parts are focused on, one at a time; people seeking cosmetic surgery rarely choose a whole body type but rather define the kind of lips, cheeks, or breasts they want. And yet cosmetic surgery is often sold as a way to help people feel psychologically 'whole' or 'complete' (Jones 2008: 50–55). Thus it metaphorically breaks the body into pieces before reassembling it into a 'better' — or more acceptable — whole.

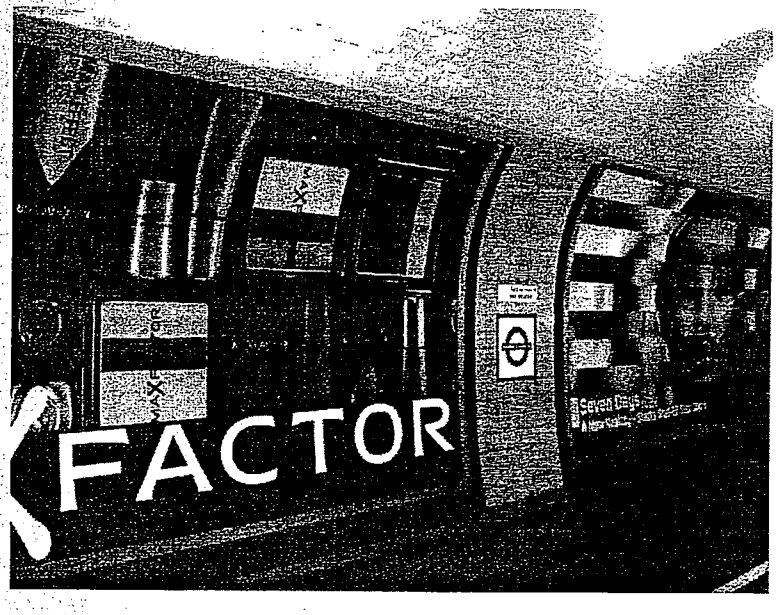


Figure 13.1 The postmodern body: fragmentated and reconstructed

There is a strong strand in postmodernism that argues identity can be manufactured or self-invented. This is intimately connected with the presentation of the body and the ways that we shape, decorate and position it. Fashion theorist Joanna Finkelstein writes that popular culture 'functions as a toolkit for shaping identity' (2007: 12). Madonna is the exemplar of a

postmodern persona: she has played with many identities in her long career, but always via her body's appearance and performance. Lady Gaga, following in Madonna's footsteps, tweeted to her fans about her debut album: '*Monsters* have 6 Grammy Nominations + Billboard Award "Artist of the Year." Thank you for fighting for artistic freedom + *self-invention*' (Lady Gaga 2010), thus acknowledging the ongoing construction of her persona via appearance and performance.

Identity, consumption and fashion

Much discourse in popular culture — especially in advertising — suggests that we are always lacking and in need of some sort of makeover, be it a new car or a freshly smoothed face (see Jones 2008: 13–14). A classic example is the long-running L'Oréal slogan 'Because we're worth it' (http://www.loreal.com). The slogan endorses individual value while simultaneously implying that personal worth cannot be properly realised without the purchase of certain products.

Consumption is a dominant part of contemporary life. We now purchase goods in abundance, not for their practical uses but rather for what they say about our lifestyles and for the qualities that we believe they will endow us with; for example, sexiness, desirability and sophistication (Miller 1987). In this schema the body is not only a marker of status via accoutrements like clothing and transport devices, but also via its own appearance through which it demonstrates that it has been attended to by professionals such as dentists, personal trainers, stylists, hairdressers, beauty therapists and even cosmetic surgeons. Thus the body becomes a canvas on which wealth can be displayed, and upon which a lack of capital (namely being poor) becomes obvious.

The importance of body improvement (not just maintenance) is of central concern in a culture that has a heightened idealisation of youthful and beautiful bodies (see Orbach 2009; Wolf 2002). Hardly anyone actively cultivates an image that is old, decrepit and ugly (of course we need to remember that the definition of these states is entirely culturally relative). Fit, healthy, beautiful and youthful bodies hold more value than others; in this case then, the body itself becomes a commodity, something that can be 'traded' and used to gain status (Baudrillard 1998; Featherstone 1982; Shilling 1993).

The cosmetic surgery body is a very clear commodity. It is one of the most obvious purchasable bodies in popular culture, with surgeons' websites advertising prices for alteration of various body parts, and credit companies and banks even offering special loans for cosmetic surgery (see http://www.cosmeticsurgery.ozquote.net). While bodies that have been altered with cosmetic surgery emphasise the importance of surface that postmodern culture values, reality television shows like *Extreme Makeover* (2002), *The Swan* (2004) and *Bridalplasty* (2010) promise that, through a change in appearance, the entire self will be transformed. Popular culture in this instance teaches us that the body is far more than a vehicle for self-expression; it is a means by which to transform identity (Giddens 1991: 81).

Fashion is a set of practices linking consumerism, identity and popular culture. Fashion is no longer reserved for the very rich who can afford bespoke shoes and haute couture. Cheap manufacturing in China and other developing nations means that new clothes are affordable every season (or even every week). In popular culture the clothed body has become a vital part of identity, self-expression, belonging, social class and status (McNeil et al. 2009). The rise of fashion blogs like Scott Schuman's *The Sartorialist* (2005) make mini-celebrities out of fashionably dressed people on the street — this is interesting because these presentations are of both digital bodies (see digital section below) and fashionable bodies. In a Foucauldian sense, fashion is a form of disciplinary power: in order to be fashionable we must adjust our bodies with diet and exercise, work to keep up to date via magazines and other forms of pedagogy, and, most importantly, earn and spend money. The fashionable body must be both commodity and consumer in order to be valid.

Fashion and cosmetic surgery are also closely linked to each other. Not only do many models and actors — the people we see in media wearing über-fashions — undergo cosmetic surgery, but cosmetic surgery itself has its own fashions, with certain 'looks' dropping out of favour as new ones are introduced and adopted. The increase in use of 'non-surgical' procedures such as fillers and Botox has allowed cosmetic surgery to move more clearly into the realm of fashion (which, by definition, undergoes constant change) because they are cheaper than surgery and their effects are temporary — thus, the results they create can be changed from year to year (see Jones, forthcoming(a)).

The body in images

Popular culture is infused with mass-produced images — in film, television, digital spaces, urban spaces and print — so much so that Jean-Louis Comolli has described modern life as 'a sort of frenzy of the visible' (1980: 122). Much of our information, especially our entertainment, is now conveyed through glossy, high-quality pictures. We tend to forget that this was not always the case; globalisation and digitalisation have infinitely sped up the production and dissemination of images in the last two decades.

The bodies that appear in popular culture's mass of images are overwhelmingly young and slim (they are also more often than not white, although this is

gradually changing with the rise of black megastars like Beyoncé and P. Diddy (Sean Combs)). Bodies in popular culture are also usually coded as heterosexual and middle class. Male bodies tend to be visibly muscular, while female bodies are slender. It is rare to see androgynous, aged, homosexual, disabled or overweight bodies — a fact that Lady Gaga acknowledged when she sarcastically replied to a question about her weight loss, 'pop stars should not eat' (Grigoriadis 2010). When 'other' or non-mainstream bodies do happen to be represented, it is usually in contexts that highlight their differences, even when they play heroic parts. The reality television programme *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* (2003) where a team of gay men teach straight men how to live more fashionable lives, or the action film *Red* (2010), where a group of ageing hit-men (and women) go back to work, are good examples. Non-slim bodies, especially if they are female, are rarely presented as anything other than deviations that need to be disciplined, although there are some notable exceptions such as the neo-punk singer Beth Ditto who refuses to be put into such categories (see Clements 2009). So it is important to consider the slim, young bodies that dominate images in popular culture as being significant for what they are *not* as well as for what they are.

French theorist Jean Baudrillard (1995) takes the discussion of images in popular culture one step further. He argues that contemporary life is now a series of simulations (copies or imitations) and *simulacra* (what we are left with when there have been so many 'copies of copies' made that we lose sense of any original). He insists that in our media-saturated world there is nothing 'authentic' any more and that what we think of as 'real' has been transformed. For example, we might feel that our experiences are not wholly realised until they are photographed and posted on Facebook, or we might feel that we are more familiar with the psyches of television characters than with people we actually know. Cosmetic surgery bodies can also be theorised as simulations of a kind (for example, aiming to have Angelina Jolie's lips or Jennifer Aniston's cheeks is a desire to actually *be* a simulation).

In terms of images, cosmetic surgery, like many other contemporary processes or activities, has its own visual language in popular culture. It is usually shown in the visual frame of before/after, which shows no process and makes transformation seem to have happened by magic. Reality television shows like *Extreme Makeover* (2002) have changed this a little through their focus on actual surgery. Although hardly graphic and always maintaining a gloss on what are essentially rather gruesome operations, these programmes have opened up the space *between* before and after. Thus we see how one of popular culture's visual languages is evolving (Jones 2008: 16–18).

Bodies in popular images are increasingly 'Photoshopped'. Photoshop is computer software used to edit images — it allows images to be cropped or extended and, in terms of the body, is often used to make skin tone more even and figures slimmer. Many people reading a glossy magazine or looking at a billboard would now *expect* that Photoshop has been used. 'Body-image' — the 'mental image of the body as it appears to others' (Featherstone 2010: 193) — is said to be affected by mass media images: a commonly accepted cultural belief is that we see faces and bodies that have been 'perfected' in Photoshop, then compare our own bodies and faces, and feel inadequate as a result (Featherstone 2010). Media are often blamed for disseminating images of bodies that are unattainable, supposedly provoking a range of personal and psychological problems, such as eating disorders (Bordo 1997). However, I suggest that our relationship with images is far more complex than such a direct correlation implies; most people who have been brought up surrounded by mass-produced images have developed sophisticated forms of visual literacy that allow them to differentiate 'media-bodies' from the bodies that they actually live in (see Jones, forthcoming(b)).

The healthy body

Campaigns targeting prevention of heart disease, cancer and diabetes, the plethora of advertisements for vitamins, ready-packed 'healthy' foods and exercise or weight-loss programmes, along with reality television programmes such as *You Are What you Eat* (2004) and *The Biggest Loser* (2006) are significant in popular culture. Their messages are pedagogical, meaning that they aim to teach us how to achieve and maintain healthier bodies; in a Foucauldian sense they encourage us to be self-controlled via certain techniques of the self. The overarching lesson they impart is that health is a personal responsibility. We are each accountable for having regular check-ups, for not smoking, for exercising and for eating properly, while people who choose not to do so are marked as abnormal, burdening society, and possibly in need of radical intervention. Environmental and social impacts on the body such as pollution, the effects of poverty, or even individual biological variations are rarely considered in such contexts.

As far as healthy bodies go, cosmetic surgery would seem at first glance to have nothing to do with this part of popular culture as it involves surgery and general anaesthetic, both of which can have serious side effects. However, we often see health and beauty being conflated in popular culture: the (false) notion that beautiful people are healthier is put forward by gym advertisements that feature attractive — rather than merely fit — models and by the overwhelming belief that slimness equals healthiness. Further, cosmetic surgery is often sold as a means by which to gain *mental* health, by 'revealing the real you' or improving self-confidence (Blum 2003; Fraser 2003; Jones 2008).

Posthuman and digital bodies

The 'posthuman' body is usually depicted in popular culture as a 'body of the future', merging the organic with technologies like robotics, genetics or computers (Hayles 1999). This body may also be imagined as a fusing of human/animal as with the character Spiderman, or human/alien as with the character Ripley in the *Alien* films (1979–1997), or as the merging of the 'real' and the 'virtual' as seen in the films *Tron* (1982), *The Matrix* (1999) and *Avatar* (2009). Posthuman bodies are often represented as monstrous or abhorrent (Graham 2002), with such texts addressing our fears and anxieties about new technologies. The film *Death Becomes Her* (1992) imagines a potential dystopic end-result of cosmetic surgery, while in the world of glossy magazines celebrities who are deemed to have had 'too much' cosmetic surgery (for example, Cher or Heidi Montag) might be labelled 'plastic fantastic', implying that they are more artificial than real and therefore posthuman. The pornographic actor Lolo Ferrari, who was famous for having the largest breast augmentations in the world, had her implants designed by an engineer and is an extreme example of a real-life posthuman (Jones 2008: 129–49).

However, 'posthuman' does not have to be restricted to works of science fiction or speculations about future grotesque bodies, it can also be used to describe more mundane examples like people who have developed muscles using gym equipment or who play sport or do yoga using a *Wii* console. People with pacemakers, bionic ears or breast implants could be described as posthuman. Cybertheorist N. Katherine Hayles (1999: xiv) suggests that merely using a computer to interact with others makes us posthuman: '[a]s you gaze at the flickering signifiers scrolling down the computer screens, no matter what identifications you assign to the embodied entities that you cannot see, you have already become posthuman'.

Thus, someone who conducts much of their social life using Facebook might be called posthuman, as might someone who spends a great deal of time in the virtual world of *Second Life* (2003) or in the online role-playing game *World of Warcraft* (1994). The fact that we do not tend to think of such bodies as posthuman attests to the fact that the definition of 'normal' is constantly changing. For example, Louise Brown, the first baby born as a result of in vitro fertilisation (IVF), was represented in 1978 as posthuman and was labelled 'the test-tube baby' (*Time* 1978) and called a 'SuperBabe' (*Nature* 2008). The technological aspects of her conception were highlighted and *Time Magazine*'s cover featured an image of a test tube being touched by the hand of God, with no mother or womb in sight. Today, with more than ten thousand IVF births occurring per year in Australia alone (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2009) and IVF treatment almost standard for those with fertility troubles, babies conceived using IVF are rarely thought of as 'posthuman' or even as particularly technologically enhanced. Thus the 'posthuman' is a movable category, often applied to the new and unknown. As philosopher Rosi Braidotti (2006: 197) writes:

> ... in the historical era of advanced postmodernity, the very notion of 'the human' is not only de-stabilised by technologically mediated social relations in a globally connected world, but it is also thrown open to contradictory redefinitions of what exactly counts as human.

Posthuman bodies, whether fictional or real, are boundary-crossers. They allow us to question the dualities of nature/culture, biological/manufactured and animal/human. This last category signals a post-humanism that has recently come to the fore because of increased concerns about the environment, global warming, extinction of species and (mis)treatment of animals (Castricano 2008). Such posthuman scholarship examines human links with other forms of life (rather than with technology), often emphasising a potential harmony between humans, animals and the planet (Haraway 2003). It is perfectly demonstrated in the film *Avatar* (2009), where digitally enhanced embodiments are combined with themes of inter-species harmony and the joys of being 'one' with the environment.

'Digital bodies' are closely related to the idea of the posthuman (Bell 2001). The ways that we have taken up digital media have called into question previously unquestioned divides between sender/receiver, audience/producer and author/reader. Because so many of us now blog, Facebook and tweet, media theorists argue that we live partly digital lives and that we are in a continual process of self-designing and self-narrativising (Bell 2001).

The film *The Matrix* (1999) offers a view of digital bodies that is utterly dystopic and yet full of wonder. It describes a hellish virtual world created by digital technologies. However, the most powerful and enjoyable bodies in the film are not 'real': inside the virtual world (the matrix) bodies can dodge bullets, jump buildings and perform extreme martial arts. This film, produced in the early years of the new digital age, and other more recent ones like *The Social Network* (2010) express the profound ambivalences that we have to 'being digital' (Negroponte 1995). This is a state that we find seductive, a state many of us enjoy hugely, and yet one that makes us scared of losing touch with the 'real world'.

204 chap13

Monsters and the (un)dead

The huge rise in recent years of vampire, werewolf and zombie fiction is linked to notions of the posthuman but also to ideas of history, tradition and continuity. In the *Twilight* books (Meyer 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008) and films (2008, 2009, 2010), the heroine (Bella) strongly wishes to be a vampire. Once this desire is fulfilled she has superpowers, is more or less immortal, and her senses are hugely heightened. Thus an ancient terror (the vampire) is re-dressed as an improved or über-human. Recent vampire novels such as *Let the Right One In* (Lindqvist 2004) and television series like *Ultraviolet* (1998) and *True Blood* (2008) have also departed from depicting vampires as monstrous fiends, instead focusing on their desires to be integrated into human society (Waller 2010). This re-casting of the vampire may symbolise a culture more prepared to integrate difference — Nina Auerbach argues in her beautifully titled book *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (1997), that each age creates the vampires it needs. However, despite vampires currently enjoying a more integrated status, it is worth noting that they are usually depicted as young and beautiful — in other words, in popular culture, vampires are more desirable than fat or old people — and thus the question of what bodies in popular culture are *not* is again as important as what they are.

The dead body or the corpse is another significant 'other' body in popular culture. Until the mid-twentieth century people died at home and their bodies were laid out in front parlours for visitors. Death was part of life. But in contemporary culture death is institutionalised — we tend to die in hospices or hospitals before being put in mortuaries and then cremated or buried. Open coffins are now rare. Perhaps we are compensating for this loss by aestheticising the dead body in popular culture. Throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century there has been a phenomenal rise in the depiction of corpses in television dramas. Programmes like *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (2000) and *Six Feet Under* (2001) feature corpses in every episode. However, as with the depiction of vampires, this new visibility is highly edited; these corpses are rarely unattractive or overweight, and they suffer few of the indignities (such as body leakage) that real corpses do. Significantly, the dead bodies in such programmes 'speak' — they have narrative roles. So, via popular culture, the corpse has moved from being a private body to a public one, an ugly one to a beautiful one, a silent one to a speaking one.

Body modifications and Pornification

Body modifications such as tattoos, piercings, brandings and scarifications once signalled difference, deviance and criminality (Atkinson 2004), but have recently come to express quite different things in popular culture such as belonging, being fashionable, individuality and control or ownership of the body (Pitts 2003). It is always worth keeping in mind that different cultures value (or abhor) different body modifications, and also that the definition of 'body modification' can be very broad. Some body modification practices are culturally endorsed while others are pathologised and condemned. Anne Balsamo (1996) argues that all body modifications are used to indicate status, class, gender, subculture, education, knowledge, belonging and beauty, but only insofar as they relate to specific cultures and historical moments.

In our own cultural moment the sexualisation or 'pornification' of popular culture (see Meyers 2008; Nikunen et al. 2007; Rutherford 2006) is closely integrated with certain body modifications. Pornification refers to the 'mainstreaming' of pornography, where nudity, sex and sexual references in popular culture have become commonplace. One body modification that has been directly influenced by pornification is the Brazilian wax procedure (where all pubic hair is removed), which was standard in pornographic images for at least a decade before becoming mainstream. This is an interesting example of a body modification that has changed its meanings dramatically — once a way of marking the bodies of sexual performers (with all the accompanying stigmas), it is now seen by many as simply a part of 'good grooming'. Like the facelift on older women, the Brazilian is now commented upon when it has *not* been done, as happened when Kate Moss appeared with pubic hair visible through transparent underwear on the cover of a French magazine (see Photo Magazine 2010, cover image, and the discussion forum at http://www.gossiprocks.com/forum/magazines-photoshoots/135875-kate-moss-photo-magazine-france-september-2010-a.html).

Conclusion

With the adoption of new technologies and the development of new texts and genres, popular culture is constantly morphing. Definitions of normal/abnormal and beautiful/ugly bodies change according to time and place, and are intricately connected with what is represented in popular culture as 'natural' or ideal. While there are countless fruitful ways to think about popular culture and the body, applying the categories presented above to an object of study, be it a particular kind of body, a certain practice, or a text or discourse, is a good way to begin. And as I have argued, popular culture is a powerful force not only because of what it depicts but also because of what it leaves out. Thus, a good scholar will consider bodies both inside and outside of its frame, bodies that are both in the spotlight and hidden by popular culture.

205

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Legitimating the First Tattoo: Moral Passage through Informal Interaction

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Once considered low class or dangerous symbols, tattoos began to be defined as hip, trendy, and glamorous in the 1990s. Using the increasing popularity of tattoos among nineties youth as an example of moral passage, this article examines some of the interpretive processes at work in the destigmatization of deviance. Whereas researchers have positioned political action or population shifts as the main forces influencing moral passage, this article posits a new route toward social change. It builds on participant observation data with a population of middle-class tattooees and examines how individuals attempted to legitimate their tattoos during interactions with others. First-time tattooees in the 1990s are seen as agents caught between multiple symbolic orders—symbolic orders that generated conflicting images of tattoos. Relying on a set of legitimation techniques, middle-class tattooees worked to overcome the negative meanings associated with tattoos by getting body art that conformed to core mainstream norms and values. By examining the creation and use of these legitimation maneuvers, this article reveals the way in which definitions of deviance are negotiated in everyday contexts. In addition, the process of legitimation identified in this article points to one way in which everyday interactions can contribute to larger cultural shifts.

Once considered an artifact of criminals, gangs, sailors, and social outcasts, tattoos careened into the American mainstream in the 1990s. If the increased numbers of college students, young urbanites, and business professionals wearing tattoos have not adequately articulated the idea that tattoos have reached mainstream status, the media have driven the message home. Print journalists have claimed that tattoos are "edging into the mainstream " (*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, November 29, 1998, p. 1), that they are so "thoroughly middle class" that the only rebellious thing about them "may be the decision not to get one" (*Providence Journal-Bulletin*, July 15, 1999, p. 6B), and that "7 million adults now have tattoos" (Telvin 1999:1A). Celebrities such as Cher and Johnny Depp who openly sport tattoos

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have reinforced the message that tattoos are moving "from being a symbol of the outcast to that of the rock star, model, and postmodern youth" (DeMello 1995:49).

Periodically throughout American history, tattoos have undergone dramatic redefinition. In the late 1800s elite social crowds adopted small, easily concealed tattoos and made them a fad among European aristocracy and the American upper class (Parry 1933; Sanders 1989; Vale and Juno 1989). After the turn of the century, especially after World War I (Steward 1990), tattoos became associated primarily with deviant characters. Rubin (1988) has argued that since the 1960s the practice, structure, and patronage of tattooing experienced a "renaissance" that included an influx of fine artists to the profession of tattooing. By the 1980s and 1990s the renaissance in the tattoo profession was met with a dramatic moral passage (Gusfield 1967) as tattoos entered popular culture.[1]

In this article I look at the phenomenon of becoming tattooed from the perspective of individuals contemplating their first tattoos in the late 1990s. Although media images in the 1990s often defined tattoos as hip and trendy, many individuals suggested that older definitions associating tattoos with dangerous outcasts continued to shroud this form of body modification. To reconcile their desires for tattoos with their fears of being associated with low-status groups, the middle-class tattooees often employed a set of legitimation techniques to help maintain their social status. I argue that these techniques went beyond stigma management maneuvers designed to repair identities during face-to-face interactions. Instead, they framed tattoos within core mainstream norms and values. In the end, individuals' identities and their tattoos were rescued from ill repute.

Given the complex and quickly changing meanings associated with tattoos in the 1990s, the example of becoming tattooed provides an opportunity to closely examine some of the core assumptions of social change theories. Social constructionists have agreed that moral passage (Gusfield 1967) results from changes in the way individuals act toward and interpret particular behaviors. Some constructionists, working within a moral entrepreneurial model, have argued that legitimation can be achieved when individuals participate in politicized social groups to demonstrate, rally, and collectively press for changes in legal, media, political, and other formal institutions (Becker 1963; Best 1990; Kitsuse 1980; Lofland 1969; Sagarin 1975; Spector and Kitsuse 1977; Trice and Roman 1975; Warren 1980). Those working within a diffusion model (Adler and Adler 1978; Carey 1968; Goode 1970; Winick 1977) have offered a less formal, political view of moral passage by suggesting that destigmatization occurs when middle-class individuals take up particular deviant activities.

While remaining faithful to the interpretive call to uncover the ways in which social actors collectively respond to objects, behaviors, and situations, moral entrepreneurial and diffusion explanations have tended to ignore everyday, informal interpretive processes at work in social change. Whereas moral entrepreneurial theorists have focused on the formal, political activity of deviants, I

suggest that informal, everyday practices are an important part of the acceptance of tattoos in the 1990s. Whereas those using the diffusion model have suggested that legitimation occurs when mainstream individuals adopt particular behaviors, I argue that middle-class individuals must do more than just adopt deviant activities to contribute to moral passage. Rather, these mainstream individuals must use a set of interaction maneuvers to steer a moral passage. By outlining the types of behaviors that occur during legitimation, I offer a new model of moral passage that establishes the role of face-to-face interactions in changing social definitions.

The tendency to ignore everyday interpretive processes speaks to some substantive problems in the field of deviance. As many researchers have noted, the deviance literature has provided rich descriptions of the eccentric lives of deviants (Liazos 1972) while ignoring larger processes at work in the lives of all social actors. As Ben-Yehuda (1990:226) has stated, "The sociological study of deviance must consider total social structures and/or processes by examining deviance as a relative phenomenon and part of [a] larger social process of change and stability in the realm of symbolic-moral universes." Arguably, moral passage theories satisfy Ben-Yehuda's call by building general theories regarding formal political activity or shifts in middle-class populations. However, by ignoring everyday activities of deviants themselves, moral passage theorists have not explained how everyday interactions contribute to changes in general symbolic climates.

I look at the dominant themes in the lives of a population of tattooees in the 1990s. With an eye to underlying common social dynamics, I offer a view of some of the interactional processes that contribute to the legitimacy of tattoos in the 1990s. Although the example of legitimation techniques is generated from a population of middle-class tattooees worried about maintaining their social status, I argue that this example points to how interactions contribute to social change.

To examine how individuals attempted to negotiate the tattoo status in everyday interactions, I first describe how I came to be interested in the subject of tattoos, how I gathered data, and the nature of my role and interactions among a community of middle-class tattooees. Next, I discuss how individuals attempted to negotiate a passage through conflicting demands attracting them to and discouraging them from becoming tattooed. I delineate the initial attractions to getting tattoos as individuals' attempts to tap into older deviant and fringe meanings associated with tattoos in order to gain independence and freedom. I explain individuals' aversions as forces competing with their hopes to use the deviant roots of tattoos. Middle-class tattooees resolved the tension between wanting to break norms and desiring to appease conventional tastes by developing a set of techniques to make their tattoo experiences conform to the key concerns of mainstream individuals. Finally, I examine how tattooees' use of legitimation techniques points to an informal moral passage process that explains change as stemming from informal, everyday interactions rather than organized, political action.

SETTING AND METHODS

I collected data for this article during a four-year participant observation at the Blue Mosque, a tattoo shop located in a middle-class university town in the western United States.[1] Falling within the opportunistic research tradition (Riemer 1977), this study had a serendipitous beginning. I first walked into the Blue Mosque in spring 1996, when I accompanied a friend who was getting her first tattoo. Before entering the clean, comfortable, and friendly shop, I had never thought about getting permanent body art myself. In fact, I had specifically promised my family that I would never get a tattoo. After watching my friend go through the experience, I changed my mind and began wondering what forms of body modification I could sport. The shop's congenial atmosphere made it easy to return several times while choosing my own piercings and eventually my own tattoos. During my visits, I formed friendships with all the artists and started dating and eventually married the shop's owner, Lefty Blue. Our home became a stopping ground for tattooists traveling through town and a social center for the shop.

The shop became an important part of my initial attraction to this world. Advertising itself as an art gallery and tattoo studio, the Blue Mosque offered the thousands of visitors walking through its doors each year a glimpse into the culture and artistry of tattooing. Each of the five tattooists working at the shop had completed from two to ten years of fine arts education and, along with their original tattoo art, often hung pieces of their fine art in the shop. The central waiting area of the studio, which could accommodate up to sixteen people, became an important gathering place where shop regulars, clients, and artists shared humorous stories, talked about the days' events, and casually glanced at books of tattoo art. With comfortable black leather furniture, a Persian rug, and a collection of Indian and Asian sculptures, the waiting room served initially as a social location that allowed me to forge quick friendships with the artists.

My tattoo recreational life became a research interest after Lefty and I took a vacation to California. We rented a car and roamed the California coastline, visiting a score of tattoo shops and discussing the meaning of tattoos in society. At the end of one of these conversations, Lefty mentioned that someone should do a study chronicling the changes in attitudes toward tattoos. As a graduate student in sociology looking for a dissertation topic, I quickly stepped up to the research task and Lefty willingly assumed the responsibility of key informant.

Because the other tattooists had already met me in the context of my relationship with Lefty, my research role became "the girlfriend" and eventually "the wife."[2] More accurately, because many of the tattooists had girlfriends during my research, I became just one among a group of these women and a peripheral member of the setting (Adler and Adler 1987). Romantic partners were part of a larger social group called "shop regulars" that included cherished tattoo clients and friends who hung out at the shop and frequently attended informal social functions such as barbecues, dinners, picnics, brunches, bowling parties, and snowboarding

excursions. From the beginning of our relationship, Lefty and I hosted many of these events.

As a tattooist's wife and a shop regular, I gained a unique view of this social world. Over the four-year participant observation study, I visited the shop hundreds of times and was present during thousands of conversations among tattoo artists both at home and at social occasions. Similar to Sanders's (1989) role as a shop regular, I also had many chances to talk with tattoo clients. Occasionally, I was asked to take over for the shop manager while he ran errands. I chatted with clients as they thumbed through books and asked numerous questions about the nuances of getting tattooed. At first I documented all my interactions by taking copious field notes after I returned home from a shop visit or after a conversation with an artist. Soon I began to see that first-time tattooees were a unique group in this world. I noticed that they were much more concerned about the societal reactions than were more experienced clients. I began to focus my interactions at the shop and my field notes on this novice tattoo group. During informal interactions, I inquired about novice clients' motivations, fears, and reasons for choosing particular designs.

Men and women received their first tattoos at the Blue Mosque in equal numbers. Ages of novice clients ranged from eighteen to sixty, although most were in their twenties or thirties. In addition, first-time clients at the Blue Mosque were usually residents of the predominantly white, middle-class town in which the shop was located. Many were students at the nearby university, which was known for attracting a middle- to upper-middle-class student body. Therefore, my observations reflect the middle-class experience of getting a first tattoo. I resembled the clients in age, class, race, and ethnicity, which made developing rapport an easy task. In addition, as a woman with only one visible tattoo, I was seen by first-time female clients as more approachable than the heavily tattooed men at the shop. This initial rapport made it easy for me to recruit clients for in-depth interviews. From early interviews and conversations with clients, I began to gather that they feared the negative images associated with tattoos. Thinking that my alliance with the tattoo artists and other heavily tattooed shop regulars might dissuade interviewees from speaking openly about their fears, I began to recruit interviewees by asking my friends on and off campus to refer individuals to me who were thinking about getting or who had gotten a single tattoo. I conducted these interviews outside of my home and the shop.

Combining in-shop and out-of-shop recruitment methods, I completed forty-three interviews with a collection of people involved in various aspects of the tattoo scene, including people who had only one or two tattoos, clients who were heavily tattooed, people who decided not to get tattooed, and professional tattooists. During casual conversations and interviews, I asked about their initial impression of tattoos, what first made them want to become tattooed, what their tattoos meant to them, what made their tattoos special, and what their concerns were regarding getting and having a tattoo.[3] Since most clients primarily feared

that getting a tattoo might hurt their relationship with their parents, I interviewed ten parents of tattooees and potential tattooees using the same out-of-shop recruitment methods I used for first-time tattooees. I asked questions regarding parents' impression of tattoos, how they felt about their children getting tattoos, and what would help them feel better about their children's tattoos. As the wife of a tattooist and a member of the shop, I was especially interested in individuals' impressions of tattooists, how clients negotiated their ideal tattoos with tattooists, and what environment individuals felt would be best for acquiring a tattoo.

With each casual conversation and interview, I began to see that, more than any other tattooees, first-time clients were concerned with crafting a tattoo that would be acceptable in conventional society. As my analysis progressed, I focused my shop observations and interviews on the dimensions of each emerging concept, including the components of clients' excitement and fears about becoming tattooed and the ways they attempted to acquire tattoos without upsetting others around them. This method of mixing analysis and data collection closely resembled the constant comparative and theoretical sampling procedures articulated by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

NEGOTIATING THE TATTOO STATUS

In the 1990s tattoos quickly became a visible feature of middle-class life as they were seen in advertisements, on charismatic athletes, and even on such well-known American icons as Barbie (Kuntzman 1999). Despite the increasing popularity of this form of body art, many mainstream moralists continued to see tattoos as markers of "alienation from mainstream norms and social networks" (Sanders 1989:41). The result was the creation of a sort of cultural war (Moynihan 1993) over the definitions and meanings of tattoos in society.

Reflecting the competing definitions associated with tattoos in the 1990s, middle-class individuals were plagued by confusion, conflict, and multiple challenges as they obtained their first tattoo. Like the establishment of rules in a police department (Manning 1977), treatment of psychiatric patients (Strauss et al. 1963), or development of institutional identities (Kleinman 1982, 1996), obtaining a tattoo became a negotiated process. Although some negotiated orders are marked by cooperation and mutual dependence, the moral climate surrounding tattoos in the 1990s injected conflict into the tattoo journey. Individuals often felt attracted to becoming tattooed after interacting in the deviant, hip, or trendy worlds they shared with their friends. Conversely, after interacting in the conventional worlds they shared with their families, individuals often experienced several tattoo aversions. Potential tattooees developed a set of legitimation techniques to maximize what they saw as the positive benefits of becoming tattooed (independence and autonomy from authority) and minimize the negative meanings associated with tattoos (low class, criminal, dangerous).

DEVIANT ATTRACTIONS

Becoming tattooed proved an extremely provocative prospect for many people, especially youth, in the 1990s. The idea that individuals are drawn to deviant lifestyles has remained a well-established assumption among deviance and criminology researchers. The deviant life offers several attractive perquisites, including the chance to bond with peers (Akers et al. 1979; Elliott and Menard 1996; Erickson and Empey 1965; Hirschi 1969; Warr 1993), rebel from or defy conventionality (Hebdige 1979; Jankowski 1991; Merton 1968), and, for men, construct a masculine identity (Messerschmidt 1993). In the example of tattooees, many suggested that an intoxicating deviant mystique surrounded this form of body modification. Some felt that tattoos connoted freedom from conventionality and used their tattoos to escape conventional constraints. Others saw tattoos as a way to become more enmeshed in fringe social groups (Sanders 1989; Vail 1999). In this way tattoo attractions played on individuals' desire for particular identity and interactional opportunities.

Freedom from Constraints

Building on older, deviant meanings associated with tattoos, many respondents suggested that becoming tattooed symbolized liberation, independence, and freedom. This was especially true for individuals who felt inhibited by the conventional social opportunities available to them. Several tattooees first contemplated becoming tattooed while in high school or college. Some suggested that their peers in conventional high school and college crowds were cruel, petty, and shallow and began to see getting tattoos as a way to step outside of the dominant peer politics surrounding them (Adler and Adler 1998). Meg, a college sophomore, described her reasons for wanting a tattoo while in high school:

> Meg: Maybe it was my sophomore-junior year in high school [when I first started thinking about getting a tattoo]. My school was actually very conservative and I did things to kind of break out from the style.... This was basically a private school for two types of people. There were the really, really rich people ... and the other set were the kids who got kicked out of public school.... I didn't want to be part of either group.
> Katy: How would a tattoo differentiate you from those people?
> Meg: No one else had one, as far as I know.... It is a way of setting yourself apart from the crowd.... A tattoo is there forever. That means that forever you are going to be a little bit different from the crowd.

Women especially saw tattoos as a sign of liberation and freedom and became tattooed to construct a sense of self outside of conventional ideals of femininity and female beauty (DeMello 1995; Mifflin 1997; Sanders 1991). Contrary to traditional images of women as soft, vulnerable, and physically weak, they described becoming tattooed as an act of toughness and strength. Tattooed women were considered those who "did not take shit," and were forceful, resilient, and had control over their lives. Emphasizing the issue of strength and control, Judy, a college professor, commented:

> It is so traditionally unfeminine. It is a strength sign for women to go out and get something like that. It shows that they are not wimpy, but then some of them go out and get these really wimpy tattoos. I think that that is even a strength sign, even if they want to express that strength in a traditionally feminine design.... It means something for a woman to be making a decision to permanently mark her body without having to get permission from her father or her boyfriend or something like that. It's a big empowerment thing.

For some men and women, becoming tattooed marked a passage from one life phase to another. Potential tattooees often saw this passage as representing movement out of an oppressive phase and entrance into a freer and more independent one. This passage included such activities as moving out of their parents' houses, graduating from college, or ending unsavory relationships. Because they saw having tattoos as a violation of female beauty norms, many women used their tattoos to symbolically "take back their bodies" from their husbands' or boyfriends' control. Grace, a college junior, explained how she used her tattoo to end her relationship:

> My boyfriend was always like, "You have to be between 105 and 107 pounds." It was horrible. He used to make me get on a scale. When I did this [got a tattoo], I was taking back my body and I was doing something for me. I was pushing him away. I was trying to get him to break up with me because I didn't have the strength to do it.

Deviant Associations

While tattoos represented a sign of independence and freedom from constraints for some individuals, others saw them as a way to increase their attachment to alternative social groups (Sanders 1989; Vail 1999). Research participants reported turning their backs on popular social sets when they were in high school. Instead, they enmeshed themselves in fringe social groups such as punk rockers, straight edge groups, dead heads, and skate punks. Members of these crowds often wore tattoos, as well as other forms of appearance deviance, as a way to mark their disassociation from mainstream culture (see Hebdige 1979). While interacting with individuals in these groups, many became eager for tattoos. Lorna, a tattoo artist at the Blue Mosque, explained:

> I was involved in the whole punk rock thing. I got involved with that as soon as I went to high school.... The normal people were a little scary, and I never fit in with that. I went to my first punk rock show and that was a revelation for me. I went wow this whole thing is so neat. These are people I can relate to and the music's something at some level I can relate to.... They [tattoos] were there, they existed, they were part of that. I started obsessing about them. I got my first one when I was seventeen.

Some participants became tattooed before interacting in unconventional circles. Feeling dissatisfied with mainstream life, many used their tattoos to gain entrée into fringe social worlds. Lefty described his former girlfriend's reasons for becoming tattooed: "She was a San Francisco funky woman. She wanted to get the jobs at the

cool places. She wanted to be able to waitress at the neat restaurants with tattooed people. She went right ahead and got tattooed on her forearm before I got tattooed on my forearm."

Becoming tattooed also helped a few individuals gain membership in the Blue Mosque's social world. Tattooists preferred to produce larger work for many reasons and often celebrated clients who received large tattoos.[4] By talking enthusiastically about these clients' chosen designs, working diligently after hours to render the best images possible, and often reducing their fees for these valued customers, tattooists established a hierarchy among clients. Many shop regulars reinforced the tattooists' prestige system by stopping in to watch the large pieces in progress and commenting on how "cool" or "awesome" these tattoos would be. For many, getting larger work became a way to establish privileged status in this social world. Ron, a college senior, described his first meeting with the Blue Mosque artists and the construction of his first professional tattoo:

> I searched for a week for a design. I came up with the album cover that I thought was pretty neat. I just took it in there one day. . . . The artist goes, "Oh you want the penis." I said what? They go, "So you want this penis thing." And I looked at [the design] and it was this very phallic image and I'd never even thought about it that way and I go, "Oh my God, that looks like a dick and balls." So I said, "That is pretty cool, why not?" The tattooist said, "This is probably the craziest tattoo I've done." I was honored.

Tattooists admired Ron's willingness to receive a "crazy" piece and quickly embraced him as a favorite client. While tattooists' first priority was to produce quality work, they inadvertently created a social world in which outsider and insider statuses were drawn according to the size and type of tattoos that clients received.[5]

DEVIANT AVERSIONS

One of the major constraints that prevents individuals from engaging in deviance is their relationship with mainstream individuals. Those with a high stake in conventional life (Waldorf et al. 1991), who have strong bonds to conventional individuals (Hirschi 1969), or who have strong external social support (Garmezy 1985; Werner 1989, 1992) are often thought to be protected from deviance or delinquency. In the example of potential tattooees, aversions to deviance included the fear of damaging relationships with parents and the desire to maintain legitimate statuses. While interacting with family members, conservative friends, and employers, many learned that important people in their lives disliked tattoos and looked down on tattooed people. No matter how much these young men and women wanted to use tattoos to establish independence from authority, most could not separate themselves from wanting to secure approval from parents and appear successful in conventional society. Like tattoo attractions, tattoo aversions played on key aspects of individuals' identities and social networks.

Conservative Reactions

Middle-class tattooees circulated in several social worlds. While at school and with friends, they often learned that tattoos symbolized independence and freedom from conventional society. However, with family, at work, or hanging out with conventional individuals, potential tattooees learned that many continued to see getting tattoos as outrageous and unacceptable behavior. Through their interactions with tattoo critics, potential tattooees studied the many ways a tattoo might change their interactions in conservative social worlds.

Strangers and acquaintances may have judged tattoos implicitly, but parents spoke openly about their dislike for them. Interviews with parents revealed many dimensions of their disapproval of tattoos. They often mentioned that tattoos communicated dirtiness and poor hygiene. They saw tattooists as unconcerned about sterilization and thought of tattoo shops as smoke-filled, unclean places. Parents expressed particular concern that their children might contract diseases or infections when getting tattoos.[6] Fran, a mother and health professional, explained her concerns:

> There is always a worry about diseases when you let someone else stick you with anything. You never know how clean and sterile their needles are. You don't know if they follow the correct procedures to protect you from infections. Even health professionals make major mistakes. How can some clerk in a tattoo parlor say they do it right all the time?

Parents also saw tattoos as serious status risks. Many parents feared that their children would be looked down on because tattoos signified association with undesirable social groups. Frank, a father of four, discussed some of the reasons he disliked tattoos:

> My initial fears were that I associated tattoos with people who are not my favorite: Hells Angels, sailors, and convicts. . . . I didn't like what the tattoos meant to them. . . . With Hells Angels and the convict world, I didn't like their willingness to scar themselves It was pitiful and shameful. These tattoos were obtrusive and really damaged their future possibilities. I associated [tattoos] with self-destruction . . . like their obsessive use of drugs and alcohol, petty crime, and just generally stupid behavior which got them into trouble.

Parents had usually spent considerable time attempting to steer their children toward successful, happy lives in conventional society. The idea of their children getting tattoos cast a shadow over their hopes and dreams for their children's future. Nedra, a mother of two, described her worries: "No matter how old your kids get you want to protect them. From the tattoo, you want to protect them from being ostracized, from being laughed at, from being put down. I don't want that to happen to my kids." Children's tattoos also threatened their parents' social status. Parents of children who became tattooed were seen as "too permissive" and as "poor moral guides." Among the most pressing concerns for parents was maintaining the image of being a "proper parent." Jillian, a mother of four, described her response when her daughter got her first tattoo: "I remember my daughter kept telling me that she

wanted one [a tattoo]. At first I was a little anti the idea. What were people going to think? They would probably look at me as the example and say, 'Oh jeeze, you would let your daughter get a tattoo.' It would reflect on me too."

Status Anxiety

After interacting with friends and parents, potential tattooees began to see that tattoos held many different meanings. Potential tattooees experienced status anxiety when they imagined how the negative meanings associated with tattoos might change their interactions with important individuals in their lives. Younger tattooees especially expressed a common concern that receiving a tattoo would threaten emotional ties with family and their parents' regard for them. Larry, a college freshman, was determined to get a tattoo. He described his experience with his father after experimenting with deviant body modification in high school:

> He hit the roof when I got my ear pierced and when I dyed my hair. I didn't do it to rebel against him or to hurt him. . . . I was crushed. I hated it. My dad and I had a pretty strong relationship so it really bothered me. That really hurt him. Of course I want my dad's approval and my dad's love. I wasn't doing it to hurt him.

Reflecting on his father's reactions to his ear piercing and hair dying, Larry braced himself for emotional turmoil and the loss of his father's esteem after getting a tattoo.

Some feared serious financial losses if they became tattooed. Melody, a college junior, had received four tattoos while in college. She explained her concerns about revealing her tattoos to her parents:

> My parents are completely against tattoos. They believe they are for bikers and sailors and that anyone who has one is scum. They threatened to cut me off from college and kick me out of their house if I ever got one. . . . They are paying for college and my apartment. Unless I want to get cut off, my tattoos will have to remain a secret until I'm twenty-two.

Potential tattooees often internalized their parents' worries that tattoos might threaten their future opportunities. Stew, a senior in college, suggested that his parents' prohibitions did not deter him from getting a tattoo. However, he understood and agreed with the cause of his parents' concerns. He explained: "I believe that they want you to make the right decision and to not have regrets later in life. It may be so important now, to get a tattoo, but you may be stuck and branded for life. I think that it is important that parents try to encourage their children to think it over."

Parents were often successful in getting their children to plan for the future. In fact, worries that their future opportunities would be threatened reigned as a constant concern to those considering tattoos. I interviewed Sula, a twenty-eight-year-old professional woman, while she waited to get her first tattoo. She discussed some of her apprehensions:

> In six months I am going to quit my job. My job is great. I love my job . . . but I need to be doing something that is going to make a much bigger impact on the world. That is probably going to be working with kids who have entered the criminal justice system. That is what my concern is. . . . I'm aware of the fact that having a tattoo might make the people that I'm working with look at me differently or that the kids are going to have a hard time figuring out who I am. They are not going to respect me as much.

Aside from losing status in family and professional spheres, some potential tattooees acknowledged that tattoos might threaten important aspects of their self-presentations in the larger society. Addison, a twenty-nine-year-old graduate student, explained:

> I went through this weird little period of grief after getting my ankle tattoo. Although I had thought about and wanted a tattoo for two years and was completely dedicated to having a tattoo, I experienced this unexpected sadness. It started when I was watching this old movie with Lauren Bacall. She was standing behind a billboard with only her ankles showing. Humphrey Bogart let out this terrific whistle, like isn't she beautiful. I realized that my ankle would never evoke that same sense of femininity. Sure, in some alterna-crowd it might say "cool, deviant chick," but it would never universally communicate "beauty."

Once they realized the status consequences of having tattoos, individuals lost their initial tattoo zeal. Many discussed worries about others' reactions as forces that "competed with" or "muddied" their enthusiasm. Meg, who decided not to get a tattoo, described the competition between tattoo attractions and aversions as a battle between good and evil. She remarked:

> I think that in the back of my mind that I want one [a tattoo]. But even from the moment that I started to want one, there is the fear of . . . the consequences. Kind of like the little angel on one shoulder and a little devil on the other shoulder. One telling you to do something and one telling you all the consequences of what would happen. I guess my little angel is stronger than my little devil.

Through a series of interactions, individuals learned ways to reconcile their desires for tattoos with their fears of losing social status. While interacting with parents and other conventional individuals, potential tattooees collected detailed information about the nature and dimensions of the anti-tattoo sentiments surrounding them. This information prompted many respondents to pursue body art in ways that complemented mainstream norms and values. Potential tattooees also interacted with and watched others embark on the journey of becoming tattooed. Their observations allowed them to pick up on techniques used by those facing the same dilemma.

LEGITIMATION TECHNIQUES

At its core, the competition between attractions to and aversions from deviance involved a legitimation process. Working within a Weberian framework, some scholars have looked at legitimation as having authority and power over others (Thomas, Walker, and Zelditch 1986; Walker, Thomas, and Zelditch 1986; Walker and Zelditch

1993; Wolf 1986). Legitimation among tattooees remained a subtle expression of power and prestige; it was not located in the power dynamics between subordinates and superiors working in formal organizations. Like many deviants who find themselves subjected to informal sanctions, potential tattooees worried about losing status in interaction contexts. Similar to those who use accounts (Scott and Lyman 1968), neutralizations (Sykes and Matza 1957), and other stigma management techniques (Goffman 1963), tattooees expressed concern about how they would be defined during face-to-face interactions. To maintain their middle-class status, and all its advantages, tattooees employed four legitimation maneuvers to define their actions and their tattoos within core mainstream norms and values. Like accounts, verbal neutralizations, and stigma management techniques, legitimation techniques often rescued individuals from negative sanctions during face-to-face interactions. However, unlike stigma management maneuvers, legitimation techniques worked by changing the meanings associated with the deviant activity.

Using Mainstream Motivations

Throughout the process of becoming tattooed, individuals attempted to frame their desires for tattoos within mainstream definitions of success and achievement. Like deviant and criminal individuals with tattoos (Phelan and Hunt 1998), middle-class tattooees in the 1990s used their tattoos to announce their passage through particular moral careers. Whereas prison gang members wanted to chronicle their passage through deviant careers, middle-class tattooees used their tattoos to mark conventional aspects of themselves.

Many tattooees explained that they wanted tattoos to commemorate special times in their lives. Their celebrations usually centered on a set of conventional achievements such as graduation from college or graduate school, finishing major exams, or the birth of children. As rites of passage, getting tattoos at major life transitions served as permanent reminders of lessons learned, milestones accomplished, and personal growth gained. Anya, a college junior, described the symbolism of her "forget-me-not" fairy tattoo:

> It took three years for me to finally find what I wanted and for it to have meaning.... I was here for the summer and I'm leaving tomorrow. It was a really good experience here. I did so much reading. I read all about metaphysics. I have a new outlook on life and changed a lot of things. I wanted something to represent my stay here and everything that I learned here.

Like Anya, who wanted to celebrate everything she had learned, including metaphysics, many other tattooees often selected designs that symbolized their skills and achievements in a variety of fields. Environmentalists chose images of mountain landscapes and trees, writers received images of characters in books, Greek mythology aficionados selected images of gods and goddesses, musicians got images of guitars and saxophones, and sports enthusiasts received images of their favorite teams or sports, such as bicycles, basketballs, or lacrosse sticks.

Potential tattooees also explained that tattoos helped them to celebrate their favorite personality traits. They chose designs with symbolic meanings, for example, to foster their sense of humor (comic book characters), their artistic nature (nonfigurative designs), their gentleness (flowers, birds, dolphins, hearts), or their personal power (lions and jaguars). Judy described why she was drawn to her tattoo:

> I liked it right off the bat. I started thinking about it and why I liked it. The design is kind of round, kind of strong, it flowed from one half into the other without stopping and separating. . . . It reinforces and says "me." I felt that I didn't want a flower or a bird or one of the really femmy designs. It didn't fit my personality. I felt that I was a forceful woman and I needed a forceful tattoo. I needed something strong.

Interestingly, the life transitions, skills, achievements, and personality traits that individuals celebrated with tattoos were those that were also celebrated and rewarded in conventional society. By casting their motivations for tattoos within conventional frameworks, individuals were marking their passage through mainstream moral careers.

Using mainstream motivations quelled parents' concerns about tattoos. Parents who initially suggested that they did not approve of tattoos sometimes changed their minds when they heard the reasons that others became tattooed. Luanne consistently noted that she did not want her seventeen-year-old son to get a tattoo. However, after watching a few of her friends get tattoos, she began to see tattoos as more acceptable. She explained:

> I was raised with the idea that tattoos were just army or navy guys. People who had tattoos were renegades who thumbed their nose at society. . . . It took me a long time to change my mind that getting a tattoo was something that guys do when they get drunk. . . . I've heard some wonderful ways that people have used tattoos. One story is about this woman who had a daughter who . . . was killed. She had several sisters, her mother, her father, and her aunt all decided to commemorate her by having a sunflower. Her [daughter's] favorite flower was a sunflower. I thought that was beautiful. . . . The meaning behind having a tattoo now, it's a symbol that really represents something to people. I like that idea.

Like Luanne, who felt that commemorating a child was a "legitimate" reason to become tattooed, many tattoo critics found that there were compelling conventional reasons for becoming tattooed.

Committing to Conventional Behavior

Responding to conventional individuals' beliefs that tattoos accompanied a host of undesirable behaviors, tattooees became dedicated to proving that they could get a tattoo while remaining active in a variety of conventional pursuits, including school, family, and professional careers. Some tattooees suggested that their involvement in conventional activities outweighed the negative meanings associated with their tattoos. Addison explained why she felt that her tattoo was not a serious threat to her social status:

> My dad said something negative about [my tattoo] the other day. He made this little joke about me having a little bit of dirt on my ankle. However, I don't think that he really means anything by it. How could he really oppose? Look at me, I'm everything he could want a kid to be. I'm a serious student. I get great grades. I am doing well in a career that I love and he loves. I'm married. Someday soon I will give him plenty of grandchildren. With all that, what difference is a tattoo going to make?

Others attempted to demonstrate how getting tattoos was part of their commitment to conventionality. Potential tattooees often noted how they carefully planned their tattoos and attempted to show how they were conforming to conventional standards of self-control and rationality. Earl, a twenty-eight-year-old writer, said that his father initially worried about his tattoo but became less worried over time.

> Earl: He was worried that I was experimenting and trying different things and really swinging all over the place in who I wanted to be. . . . [I]t [the tattoo] would be some mark that I have been to hell. It was like the mark that I had been scarred when I went experimenting. . . . It was a studied choice I made and something I considered for a long time. I never did it on a whim. . . .
> Katy: What made him change?
> Earl: He probably started to recognize that I was still the same person. I was growing in a certain direction. . . . I wasn't fluctuating all over the place.

According to Earl, one of the more potent defenses against losing status in the family was proving that he was still "growing in the same direction." For Earl, this meant continuing to behave according to his parents' core values, including "being a good person" and "working towards a professional career."

Contrary to the image of first tattoos as the product of reckless, impulsive, and drunken decisions, tattoos at the Blue Mosque resulted from careful planning. Adopting their parents' concerns about safety, hygiene, and cleanliness, first-time clients at the Blue Mosque often searched for clean shops that employed experienced, professional artists who conformed to rigorous sterilization procedures and artistic goals. Stew explained his concerns about finding the perfect artist:

> I would want to go and see how he did the work[,] . . . [w]hat they are doing now, how their business is run, do they have a license. If it is well known, if people recommend them to me, I will go and check them out and maybe watch them do a tattoo if they will let me. I will look at the art that they have on the wall that they offer, and if it is like a bunch of dragons, and that is it, that is all that they do is blood and dragons, then I probably wouldn't go to them. I also want someone that could share in what they are doing to me. I wouldn't want some messed-up drug addict doing my tattoo. . . . He would have to be good and he would have to be professional. He would have to have a license.

In addition to searching for the ideal artist and shop, clients wanted to select the ideal design that would be the perfect expression of themselves. Clients often visited the shop many times to look through books of tattoo designs while they crafted the optimal image, body location, and color palette. Judy explained her initial vision for her tattoo:

> I thought that blue would go with everything I had. I thought about getting red on it, then I thought that that would be a little much. I had to look at particular designs . . . and then one day, another day in the shop, I was looking through their books of past designs and I saw one of the tattooists' designs, this one that I have. I saw a lot that I liked, but I didn't know if it would have been just the right tattoo for me.

Tattooees' behaviors before, during, and after becoming tattooed demonstrated their continued involvement in conventional activities. By carefully studying their tattooists, their (tattoo) environments, and their designs, tattooees demonstrated that they did not make spontaneous decisions. Instead, tattooees showed that getting tattoos, like conventional activities, required hard work, restraint, and much forethought. In this way tattooees placed getting tattoos within a repertoire of conventional behaviors.

The technique of committing to conventional behavior resembled the destigmatization technique of transcendence (Warren 1980). Unlike those engaging in the technique of transcendence, however, tattooees did not attempt to "insulate, hide or encapsulate [their] negative essence by superior performances" (Warren 1980:65). Rather, they attempted to demonstrate how their tattoos were part of their conventionality. Commitment to conventional behavior thus helped the stigmatized behavior itself, not just the stigmatized person, to transcend a deviant status.

Tattooees were often pleased to find that their commitment to conventionality worked to appease their parents and helped others to overcome their worries about tattoos. Many tattooees' parents, who initially feared the idea of their children getting tattoos, admitted feeling that the tattoo did not detract from their children's other conventional attributes. Nedra, who was concerned that her child would be negatively labeled, described why she did not oppose her daughter's tattoo: "The only thing I worry about [with my daughter's tattoo], is that she will continue to get more. The one that she has, I'm not so worried about. . . . I think that being in the field that she is, having the education that she does, the tattoo is not going to label her as a counterculture person."

Other parents suggested that they approved of the way their children pursued becoming tattooed. The following is an excerpt from my field notes describing my conversation with a parent of an eighteen-year-old:

> I just got off the phone with a friend of mine. She told me that her daughter was thinking about getting a tattoo. My friend is from an upper-class family and I am assuming that this family will not like one of their own getting a tattoo. However, instead of being worried, my friend sounded excited. She told me that her daughter went to every tattoo shop in town, asked about their sterilization procedures, and looked at all their portfolios of artwork before deciding to get a tattoo. She also said that her daughter found a very clean and professional shop in town. At the end of the conversation, my friend suggested that the care with which her daughter selected the shop showed that her daughter was thinking wisely and being very adult in her tattoo decision.

Offering Verbal Neutralizations

Potential tattooees often found themselves verbally justifying their tattoos and their desire for tattoos. In these cases individuals often relied on condemnation of the condemners (Sykes and Matza 1957). Larry explained how he might respond to a disapproving stranger: "If someone wants to treat me differently because of the tattoo I would have on my ankle, that is a pretty shitty person. It would not be someone that I would want to deal with anyway."

Condemnation from close friends or loved ones presented tattooees with the possibility of more serious emotional losses. Therefore, managing friends' reactions required careful review. Stew discussed his feelings: "It would also limit who I might want to meet. Just because they don't like tattoos doesn't mean that they aren't a great person. . . . It is a big concern. I like people; they should like me. They shouldn't have a first impression distorted by a tattoo. It is their own little neurotic opinion."

Like Stew, who vacillated between not wanting to offend people and wanting to freely pursue having a tattoo, many respondents worried about being rejected by close friends. Overcoming parents and family members' condemnation proved even more difficult. Marty, a forty-three-year-old, discussed her family's reactions:

> I think the time that they [her parents] were from, people from the thirties and forties, the types of women who tattooed themselves were either women in carnivals, women strippers. That is the generation they are from. . . . I just think that they are so old, I don't want to upset them. Even though I'm forty-three and part of me is like, "What is the deal? I'm 43. It is my arm."

Marty's attempts to neutralize her parents' concerns were subtle. By framing her parents' feelings resulting from their age, she indirectly stated that her parents were old, and out of date (see Sanders 1999). This view proved to be a consistent theme. Where tattooees easily condemned strangers, they often became more subtle and conflicted about verbally attacking close friends and family.

By condemning certain critics, tattooees attempted to do more than repress "the wrongfulness of [their] own behavior" by "attacking others" (Sykes and Matza 1957:668). Their comments about others represented verbal claims and efforts to shift the normative consensus away from intolerance of tattoos. Tattooees attempted to claim that condemners were deviants for not keeping up with emerging trends and changing social norms. In this way many attempts by tattooees to dismiss condemners can be seen as indirect appeals to higher loyalties.[7]

Conforming to Conventional Aesthetics

Because tattooees worried that others thought of tattoos as unsightly emblems of outcast culture, they wanted artwork that departed as much as possible from images of "ugly," antisocial tattoos. In contrast to members of deviant groups such as bikers, punk rockers, and skinheads, middle-class tattooees primarily wanted small,

discreet tattoos with conventional themes. For women, this often meant getting images that they associated with femininity. Grace said: "To me, up until I got one, and to her [her mother], tattoos were ugly. They were macho and white trash. I got one and mine is not like that. Mine is very feminine. Mine is very unique. . . . I think that when girls get tattoos it should be soft." Size was as important as imagery and themes. First-time tattooees often preferred to get small designs and suggested that small tattoos were the least likely to offend others. Kit, a recent college graduate, explained what she liked most about the tattoos worn by her friends:

> I like that it didn't take over the whole body, that it could be subtle and put on different parts of the body where you don't have to show it. It is for yourself. If you want to show people that is fine, but you don't have to. It doesn't have to be, here comes the tattoo. It is the person first. . . . In addition, I like beautiful art and colors. More like butterflies and flowers and bright happy things rather than skulls and things you don't think of as being so free.

In addition to desiring subtle, prosocial images, many tattooees remarked that their tattoos were "pieces of art" and that their tattooists were on the same level as fine artists. Gretchen, a graduate student, discussed the artistic integrity of her tattoo artists:

> They want people to express themselves and they want to have fun with it. . . . I think that they are far more likely to do really imaginative pieces and to really put part of themselves into that piece, not just from their design style but from the way that they approach a subject. The color work is great. I really haven't seen such incredible color work in anyone else's book. . . . The fact that they are really dedicated not only to what they do but to improving themselves . . . in terms of being able to expand their personal style and coming up with really imaginative ways of expressing what they want.

Individuals' attempts to create discreet, pleasant, fine art–inspired tattoos worked to sway some critics' opinions of tattoos. Frank initially did not want his children to get tattoos for fear that they would be stigmatized. After looking at two of his children's tattoos, as well as tattoos worn by their contemporaries, Frank changed his mind. He explained: "It is clear that tattoos have become much more artistic. They are crossing lines and it has erased the stigma. Some of these tattoos on the shoulders, I find artistic."

While individuals initially reported being attracted to the deviant mystique surrounding tattoos, their motivations for tattoos, their repertoire of behaviors before, during, and after getting a tattoo, and the types of tattoos they acquired usually demonstrated their conventionality. In the end, their tattoos did more to announce their connection to rather than their independence from conventionality.

The techniques of legitimation employed by tattooees played an important part in changing conventional individuals' opinions of tattoos. Conservative parents, friends, and partners reported liking some aspect of others' tattoos. Tattooees' behaviors, their motivations, and the aesthetic quality of their tattoos were among the more powerful forces that softened conventional individuals' stances. In fact, after

seeing their children, friends, or partners become tattooed, a few critics suggested that they were interested in becoming tattooed themselves. Martha, a mother of two, described her changing reaction:

> I guess as a child I was aware of tattoos. I thought they were ugly. I thought that they were all that kind of sailor blue, black, green color. . . . And then I became aware that tattoos were gaining an avant-garde connotation. And then my daughter started shopping around for hers and thinking about getting one. The first time I thought about getting one for myself is when my daughter asked me if I would get one with her.

CONCLUSION

I have shown how middle-class tattooees take up a once-deviant behavior and help to reduce or remove the stigma associated with it through a series of legitimation maneuvers. Interaction rested at the core of the development, use, and success of these legitimation techniques practiced by middle-class tattooees in the 1990s. Potential tattooees initially felt that tattoos connoted freedom and independence from adult constraints. However, after interacting with the conventional individuals in their lives, potential tattooees learned the different ways that tattoos threatened core conventional values and norms regarding hygiene, beauty, decision making, and self-presentation. These young adults became concerned that the negative associations attached to tattoos would vitiate the positive connotations of becoming tattooed. Through interaction with others (tattooees, parents, tattooists), potential tattooees learned different ways to negotiate their tattoo status. This network of informal, everyday interactions eventually led tattooees to develop, refine, and use a set of similar responses to maintain their status after getting tattoos.

These data suggest not only that tattooees pursued becoming tattooed in common ways but that their efforts to maintain legitimacy were largely successful. When tattooees braced themselves to hear criticisms and complaints from others, they were often pleased to find themselves the recipients of acceptance and praise. Over time, many tattooees found that their standing in conventional society remained unchanged. Legitimation techniques not only worked to mitigate the negative associations with tattoos, but they worked to conventionalize many aspects of the tattoo experience. In an ironic twist, tattooees ended up confirming many of the norms and values they were initially trying to escape. My findings suggest the need for a model of moral passage that places everyday interactions at the center of its explanations.

In fact, those working within the two dominant interaction models of social change, the moral entrepreneurial (Becker 1963; Best 1990; Spector and Kitsuse 1977) and the diffusion (Adler and Adler 1978; Goode 1970; Winick 1977), tend to gloss over the importance of everyday interactions. Those working within the moral entrepreneurial model have put such forces as moral campaigns, political protests, and media coverage at the center of their theoretical discussions. Within this model,

social construction has become equated with formal, political, or institutional action. Those working within the diffusion model have not looked at the interactional mechanisms that cause association with mainstream individuals to end in the legitimation of a behavior. At best, the diffusion model suggests that legitimation occurs through imitation. My research goes beyond suggesting that mainstream individuals imitate the activities of deviants. It suggests that middle-class individuals are conscious, self-reflective actors who interpret the social meanings of their activities and the consequences these meanings have for their identities. It also demonstrates how deviants develop a set of patterned techniques to negotiate for more conventional statuses of particular behaviors.

These findings point to a general inability of our theories to explain how interactions are tied to social change. The dominant image provided by moral passage theories is that informal, everyday interactions can only serve as stigma management techniques (Davis 1961; Goffman 1963; Hewitt and Stokes 1975; Lyman 1970; Scott and Lyman 1968) and that changing social definitions of deviance are the result of larger social forces, formal political behavior, or population shifts. However, I argue that informal interactions occur alongside larger, more formal forces and contribute to moral passage. Given the common social constructionist argument that everyday, symbolic interaction remains at the core of how objects and behaviors are constructed (Best 1998; Blumer 1969; Mead 1934), I argue that our theories need to offer a specific explanation of the way interactions contribute to cultural shifts. To date, the most forceful statement explaining this process comes from Stokes and Hewitt, who have argued:

> Members of a society facing altered circumstances but still cognizant of culture, may use aligning actions to square their altered conduct with those prevailing standards. Over longer periods of time, the presumption we make is that culture follows conduct, and that the evolutionary drift is toward the adjustment of culture to actual conduct. (1976:848)

This research goes beyond arguing that cultural norms eventually follow behavior and suggests a particular process wherein face-to-face interactions contribute to definitions of deviance. Combining these findings regarding legitimation techniques with existing research on the diffusion of deviant activities to mainstream groups (Adler and Adler 1978; Carey 1968; Goode 1968; Thornton 1985; Winick 1977) points to an *informal legitimation process.* This process includes such components as deviant attraction, deviant aversion, and reconciliation. Like many deviants, potential tattooees were often enticed by the prospect of breaking norms. "Deviant attraction" occurred when individuals, especially middle-class youth, flirted with deviance to establish their "cool" status or break adult norms that they found constraining (Adler and Adler 1978; Goode 1970). In addition to experiencing attractions to deviance, potential tattooees often endured moments of "deviant aversion." To alleviate their conflicting concerns between expressing independence by attaining a tattoo and maintaining their standing in conventional circles, individuals engaged in a process of "reconcilia-

tion" whereby they attempted to capitalize on the positive associations with deviance while avoiding the negative ones. While engaged in reconciliation, potential deviants drew on their interactions with multiple individuals, especially with a group of loosely organized deviants (Goode 1970) who struggled for personal or professional legitimacy (tattoo artists, friends). During the reconciliation process, individuals developed and practiced legitimation techniques to avoid losing status.

Individuals can experience different aspects of the legitimation process at various times. In addition, many may find themselves engaged in more than one component of the process at the same time. No matter how these elements play out in the lives of social actors, the process points to a similar end: the use of legitimation techniques helps individuals to avoid status losses and elevates the image of deviance in the eyes of others. When practiced frequently by many people, legitimation techniques promise to exert a powerful influence on the eventual acceptance of the behavior by mainstream society.

The context of tattoo legitimation in the 1990s sheds some light on when legitimation is mostly likely to occur. During the 1990s, people attributed conflicting meanings to tattoos as the older deviant meanings coexisted with newer, more progressive ones. Given the varied tattoo images circulating in different social groups, individuals with contacts in many social worlds were likely to experience attractions to and aversions from this form of deviance. Lacking a clear consensus regarding the meaning of becoming tattooed, individuals who experience conflict were likely to use their everyday interactions to tip the general moral balance toward acceptance of this activity. This suggests that individuals might be more likely to use legitimation techniques with activities that lack a unified symbolic meaning. Those engaged in commonly denounced activities (i.e., pedophilia, incest, devil worship) might be more likely to distance themselves from or hide their deviance by using stigma management techniques. The occurrence of legitimation techniques might also indicate the level of moral consensus on particular activities. If individuals tend to rely on legitimation more often than stigma management techniques, then society might be experiencing a time of moral indecision regarding certain deviant acts.

Becoming tattooed in the 1990s demonstrates some of the informal means through which a behavior becomes more tolerated. This study implies that informal interaction processes might be an important force not only when behaviors become normalized but also when deviance is created and tolerance for an activity is decreased. Future research needs to identify how such formal behaviors as moral entrepreneurial campaign building (Becker 1963), claims making (Best 1990; Spector and Kitsuse 1977), public arena competition (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988), and formal political behavior combine with informal interactions in everyday contexts to create deviance.

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NOTES

1. Throughout history, tattooists have reported working with middle-class clients (Steward 1990). However, the numbers of middle-class tattoo clients during the 1980s and 1990s increased so dramatically that many tattooists relied almost exclusively on a middle-class clientele.
2. Warren (1988:36) notes that sexual relationships with subjects in the field is a "prevalent" theme in fieldwork but not one about which "researchers like to elaborate." Nevertheless, sexual relationships in the field are a documented reality (Davis 1986; Golde 1986; Goode 1999; Kulick and Wilson 1995; Newton 1993; Styles 1979).
3. Interestingly, among all the concerns inherent in the first tattoo, price was usually not an issue. First tattoos were usually small and cost between $100 and $200. This did not prove an economic hardship for the middle-class individuals in this subculture.
4. According to tattooists, larger work was less likely to blur and lose distinction over time. In addition, tattooists were able to use more of their fine art skills while working on large designs.
5. Tattooists did not acknowledge that they were creating distinctions between in-groups and out-groups. Many suggested that, unlike those without tattoos, they never judged others. In fact, many quoted the common adage, "the only difference between tattooed people and non-tattooed people is that we don't care if you don't have a tattoo."
6. The history of tattooing in America reveals several popular panics over the connection between tattoos and diseases. Steward (1990:190) notes that "by 1968 over 47 major cities . . . had special ordinances against tattooing." Many of these ordinances, especially those in New York City in 1964, were to control the spread of such diseases as hepatitis B. While some medical literature has implicated tattooing in the spread of diseases (Jones, Maloney, and Helm 1997; Limentani et al. 1979), McCabe (1995) suggests that the outlawing of tattooing in New York City came more from moral concerns than from attempts to stem the spread of hepatitis B.
7. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this insight.

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