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**“RUNNING LIKE BIG DAFT GIRLS.”
A MULTI-METHOD STUDY OF
REPRESENTATIONS OF AND
REFLECTIONS ON MEN AND
MASCULINITIES THROUGH “THE
BEATLES.”**

MARTIN KING

**A Thesis submitted to the University of
Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy.**

The University of Huddersfield

June 2009

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis was to examine changing representations of men and masculinities in a particular historical period (“The Sixties”) and to explore the impact that this had in a period of rapid social change in the UK and the legacy of that impact. In order to do this, a multi-method study was developed, combining documentary research with a set of eleven semi-structured interviews.

The documentary research took the form of a case study of The Beatles, arguing that their position as a group of men who became a global cultural phenomenon, in the period under study, made them a suitable vehicle through which to read changing representations of masculinities in this period and to reflect on what this meant for men in UK society. The Beatles’ live action films were chosen as a sample of Beatle “texts” which allowed for the Beatles to be looked at at different points in the “The Sixties” and for possible changes over that time period to be tracked. Textual analysis within discourse analysis (based on a framework suggested by van Dijk [1993], Fairclough [1995] and McKee [2003]) was used to analyse the texts.

Ideas advanced by the Popular Memory Group (1982) about the interaction of public representations of the past and private memory of that past were influential in the decision to combine this piece of documentary research with interviews with a sample of men, in an age range of 18 to 74. The interview stage was designed to elicit data on the perception of the participants of the role of representation (with particular reference to the Beatles) of masculinities on them as individuals and their ideas about how this may have had an impact in terms of longer term social change.

Ehrenreich’s (1983) notion of a male revolt in the late 1950s, an emergence of a challenge to established ideas about men and masculinity, was also influential, particularly as it is an idea at odds with the “crisis in masculinity” discourse (Tolson, 1977; Kimmel, 1987; Whitehead, 2002) at work in a number of texts on men and masculinity. Examining further Inglis’ (2000b : 1) concept of The Beatles as “men of ideas” with a global reach, the chosen Beatle texts were examined for discourses of masculinity which appeared to be resistant to the dominant. What emerged were a number of findings around resistance, non-conformity, feminised appearance, pre-metrosexuality, the male star as object of desire and The Beatles as a global male phenomenon open to the radical diversity of the world in a period of rapid social change. The role of popular culture within this process was central to the thesis, given its focus on The Beatles as a case study. However, broader ideas about the role of the arts also emerged with a resultant conclusion that “the sixties” is where a recognition of the importance of representation begins as well as a period where representations of gender (as well as class and race) became more accessible due to the rise in popularity of TV in the UK and a resurgence in British cinema.

The thesis offers a number of ideas for further research, building on the outcomes of this particular study. These include further work on the competing crisis/ revolt discourse at work in the field of critical men’s studies, ascertaining female perspectives on representations of masculinities and their impact, further work on the Beatles through fans and an application of some of the ideas at work in the thesis to other periods of British history.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Why the Beatles? : Personal Location

“Time present and time past
Are both perhaps contained in time future
And time future contained in time past”

(Eliot, 1941 : 5)

In the summer of 2001 I was on a holiday in Greece when I got a phone call to say that my mother had died. I decided to come back alone and, after the flight home the following morning, in setting out for the journey across the Pennines to my father’s house, sick of the silence of the past 24 hours, I pondered on what I should listen to on the journey. I chose the Beatles’ *A Hard Day’s Night* album, it’s jangling, upbeat optimism redolent of a time when we were all very much alive and living in modern jet age Britain, at the centre of the universe (or so it seemed to me). The Beatles, it seems, have provided a soundtrack to my whole life, through the best of times and worst of times (as Dickens once said, although, obviously, not about the Beatles). Along with many other people (as I have discovered over the course of researching this thesis) the Beatles represented something for me about change, about what and how I wanted to be (even at the age of six at the height of Beatlemania). There was something about the possibilities that they offered, in some sort of abstract way, around what growing up in the 1960s might lead to. There are a number of examples of this idea in the Waxing Lyrical quotes (see Appendix 1) including the following, from a female fan, which provided the impetus for the idea of using The Beatles as a case study within a study on men, masculinities and social change, and which I included in one of the original “ideas” submitted as the basis of a possible proposal (see Appendix 2).

“It didn’t feel sexual as I would describe that now. It felt more about wanting freedom. I didn’t want to grow up and be a wife and it seemed to me that the

Beatles had the kind of freedom I wanted ... I didn't want to sleep with Paul McCartney, I was too young, but I wanted to be something like them, something larger than life."

(Lewis, 1992 : 22)

Yes, I loved the music. I still only have to hear the opening bars of *I Want to Hold Your Hand*, and I am, once again, lying on the floor of the living room in 1964 listening to our new stereosound record player (with detachable speakers for full stereo effect!), high on life and full of optimism. And, as the music developed and things got weird and parents became disapproving of the "druggy" Beatles, I was intrigued and just went with it. But it was the "something else", encapsulated by the quote above, that also drew me in – their wit, the way they looked and dressed, their irreverent attitude and potential for subversion, their very Beatle-ness was what really appealed. Obviously these things were not fully articulated within my six-year-old world view but, like me, they were new and now, and were on the up and we were all going places.

I was born in 1958, the beginning of Marwick's (1998) long sixties and was 16 when they ended in 1974, making me, most definitely, a child of the '60s and so, in retrospect, there seems to be some logic, from a personal perspective, of the choice of the 1960s, within that period, as an area in which to study social change and the relationship between the past, the present and the future. It is, then, a thesis rooted in a personal interest in identity, masculinity and the historical setting in which these things come to be considered.

My parents sneaked across the border from working class to middle class, like many others, in the era of Macmillan's never had it so good Britain (Sandbrook, 2005) and 1960 saw us relocate from York to a village in Lincolnshire, my father having taken a sales job with the English Electric Company, travelling around in his company Ford Anglia, selling the new white goods representative of the consumerist Macmillan era. Here we saw out Marwick's (1998) High Sixties, my own experience being that, despite the contested nature of the swinging sixties, discussed later in the thesis, it definitely did all seem to happen in Lincolnshire. What has been particularly interesting in reading extensively around this material, is the sense, in many ways, it

makes of my own personal experiences, a recognition of things that happened in the 1960s or the 1980s that have been set in a theoretical context by various authors. For example, it always seemed to me that the sixties ended in 1968, when we moved back to Yorkshire, to the type of housing estate later immortalised in *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads* and other 1970's suburban sitcoms. Shortly afterwards my paternal grandmother, a woman who despite her 1940s-ness had shared in my early 1960s' Beatle obsession, religiously cutting out Beatles stories from the Daily Express and saving them for my next visit, died. In retrospect I now see this, for me, as a key event marking the end of Marwick's (1998) high sixties, a view shared by journalist/novelist Hunter S. Thompson who stated that the period "when almost anything seemed possible ... peaked on March 31, 1968" (Thompson, 1972 : 134). My tenth birthday, as it happens! This period of the past has, I guess, been ever present for me, ever since, though the cultural texts, style, design and optimism of the period, much of which (and the contested nature of such discourses) will be discussed in later chapters. Similarly with the Beatles. Despite forays into '70s' greatcoat rock, boiler suit - wearing punk, bequipped 1980s' indie pop (see www.myspace.com/thedesertwolves), '90s' house and a continued interest in 21st century indie (see www.thevermontsugarhouse.co.uk), The Beatles have always been something I have come back to.

When I first came to Manchester, in the late 1970s, I knew a girl who had only brought one LP with her from home to her student accommodation – the Beatles' *Revolver*. Being immersed in the sounds of the Jam and the Buzzcocks at the time I found this a little odd, but now it makes perfect sense! In choosing the Beatles as a case study for this thesis I was asked by my wife (as I now like to call her since our recent post-modern nuptial event in Las Vegas) whether it wasn't just me that thought The Beatles were a key reference point for men in the 1960s. A fair point. (What she actually said was "are you sure it's not just your obsession?"). However, further research has revealed this not to be the case, although my 13 year old daughter made the observation that if I were to make a list of things I liked it would only consist of two items: "yourself and The Beatles".

The next section in this chapter provides an academic rationale for the use of the Beatles as a text through which to study social change and changes in representations

of masculinity. Literature reviews, textual analysis and interviews have drawn together other viewpoints, while a recent conversation with a professional colleague revealed his childhood disappointment in discovering that everyone knew about the Beatles and they were not just “his”, a discourse of ownership and belonging reflected in many other texts. As a child I certainly engaged in the ‘wanting to be like them’ discourse, the possibility of being like something else, which, obviously, I did not name at the time, but, in retrospect, is something reflected in many texts that I have come across, and part of the process of putting together this thesis has been to explore what that “something else” actually means in relation to men and masculinities.

My personal location in terms of this particular study around men and masculinities came initially from a rather simplistic question about what made my generation different from my father’s, probably emerging from the “new man” thesis of the 1980s and the “new lad” discourses of the 1990s. In a recent documentary on the 1960s, playwright Alan Bleasdale made the statement that “... with the Beatles we were going to be different to our dads”, a similar notion. “Why isn’t your generation racist like grandpa’s?” my daughter once asked me. Over-simplistic yes, but incisive all the same, I thought, and it set me pondering on what it actually was that meant that I had different attitudes and numbered black and South Asian people among my friends, colleagues and neighbours, coming to the conclusion that cultural texts were highly important and influential for me in this regard. My adolescence was spent not far from Leeds, where racist graffiti was common in the early 1970s, where people would tell you not to forget to take your passport if you were going to Bradford, and I went to a school where teachers had no qualms about telling racist jokes, all of which it was very easy to get caught up in. However, by the early 1970s, it seems to me, I reassessed my position. My Beatle fan-dom, was undimmed by their splitting up and I reflected at this point on the way in which the Beatles had always made great play of the influence of black music in their music. This, combined with a love of Tamla Motown and Ska and an emerging admiration for films like *Shaft* and the Bruce Lee Kung Fu movies, lead me to consider race and racism at this point. In the later 1970s I loved the Clash and their musical and political alignment with reggae music, which all came together one glorious afternoon in 1978 marching through London to see them perform in a Rock Against Racism concert in Brockwell Park, an important identity milestone in many ways.

Similarly, retrospectively, researching and writing this thesis has made me reflect on my own version and definitions of masculinity and the ways in which I have engaged with this. As a child I loved the emerging fashion of the 1960s. Interestingly, I wasn't allowed a round-collared Beatle jacket when they came out for boys – “too girly”. There was also a long battle between my mother and father over whether I was allowed an Action Man (mother – “yes”; father – “it's a doll”). The positions were reversed in the early 1970s row over whether I could have an RAF Greatcoat (father – “yes: manly”; mother – “the shame of second hand clothing”). I loved Illya Kuryakin's roll neck sweaters in *The Man from Uncle* and Scott Tracy's cardigans in *Thunderbirds* (both of these items were allowed). Despite dalliances with huge flares and Mickey Mouse t-shirts ('70s' androgyny) and boiler suits and Oxfam chic ('70s' subversion). I now realise that I spent the early part of the 1980s dressed like Cliff Richard in *Summer Holiday*, an early return to my 1960s' fashion roots. As an older man I favour the classic cut suit (the right sort of suit in an academic environment still has the power to subvert expectations) and am still keen on hair experiments. Narcissistic heterosexuals like myself now have a label thanks to Mark Simpson (2004). A good number of my new first year students last year thought I was gay and an interesting conversation around why this was came up. Ideas around “not letting yourself go”, “grooming” and “gestures”, emerged as explanations, all of which are discussed in various parts of this thesis.

My first job after leaving school was on a building site (in those days we did our “gap year” anthropology closer to home with a bit of Inter-Railing if you were lucky). I wanted to see what “real men's work” was like and thought the rough and ready bunch that greeted me on my first day would take exception to my middle class-ness but, as time passed, I had many expectations challenged and overturned as they turned out to be loyal, caring and supportive of one another, treating me like a strange delicate specimen who might end up trapped in this life forever if I didn't get myself off to college. They were, mainly, men who liked beer and rugby, many of them had done a stint down the pit and found the building game (as they put it) more palatable, a chance to engage in class warfare by doing as little as they could get away with while getting paid for having a laugh (it is possibly the best job I have ever had!). I have also worked in an all female environment when I became Manchester City

Council's first male nursery assistant in 1978, a far less nurturing environment for colleagues, where tension, tears and interpersonal warfare seemed to be the order of the day. In my interview for the job I was asked how I would handle the fact that some of the children may have had very negative experiences of men. "I suppose act less like a man" I replied. Thirty years of theorising later we probably all now have a clearer idea of what that means, but I had an inkling of what I meant at the time and the eighteen months I spent serving breakfast to deprived and abused under fives in Wythenshawe was another interesting lesson in gender studies.

I also now realise, after reading Barbara Ehrenreich (1983), that when I left my first wife in 1986 (after four months of marriage – long story) I was engaging in Hugh Hefner's vision of reclaiming the indoors, setting myself up in a bachelor pad with four types of Twinings teabags (very pre-metrosexual), plenty of grooming products and brand new Levis. The Nick Kamen Levi-ads were instrumental in this process so I was fascinated to read Tim Edwards' (1997) piece on this over ten years later.

At the time Kamen's cool, trendy availability (I hadn't fully got my head around the gay/straight crossover thing at this point) seemed to offer a model for escape from the wrong-turn I had taken. I even bought his Madonna-produced single (*Each Time You Break My Heart*) and played it loudly in my flat (alongside The Smiths and more "serious" mid '80s' product, obviously). When my second wife and I went on our first date, to the now legendary Hacienda, we went back to my flat and danced to the aforementioned Kamen record, my Hefner fantasy world of masculinity meeting new man discourses head on.

In outlining this personal location I have drawn on a number of episodes and ideas from my own life and questions always remain around the issue of why some things and not others, or whether I have fitted theory to practice or vice-versa. These are key questions about the relationship between the past and the present that will be explored as part of the thesis. There are, of course, scenes from an edited text, but I have tried to highlight some of the interesting things that have made me reflect on masculinities and being a man. In many ways my life is, perhaps, much more like my father's than I envisaged. My wife and I have a mortgage, three children, two cars and ever increasing direct debits which pay for the mundanities of keeping it all going; yet it is

probably the subtleties and nuances that make our lives not like our parents' or like Bob and Thelma's on the Elm Lodge Housing Estate in 1974. Much of this thesis is about the subtleties and nuances that lead to change and move us from A to B, that challenge and subvert dominant discourses and explain how and why new ideas and ways of being emerge.

In reflecting on this in relation to men and masculinities, I became particularly interested in looking at the idea of texts and representation and their impact on the process of social change. I began to engage with the growing body of work on this area in the late 1990s and worked some of it into a unit I had developed with a colleague (Representations of Health in the Mass Media), seeing gender and identity as a key component in the study of health. Again, this began in a rather simplistic way, tracking visual changes in representation of masculinities from 1958 – 1974, a period I saw as significant in terms of radical visual changes, but a period I didn't realise at the time (interestingly) was Marwick's (1998) definition of the long Sixties. Initially this involved looking at clips from *Room at the Top* (1958), *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960), *Easy Rider* (1969) and *Shampoo* (1975) [a film made in the 1970s about the "end" of the 1960s] and looking at what changed in terms of men's appearance but also the settings/situations and relationships in which they were portrayed. This initial idea, then, formed the basis of what was to become my research proposal, containing notions of the importance of texts and representation and the 1960s as an important era of social change for men.

Jane Shattuc's *The Talking Cure* (1997) is also a text which I started using around this time, a text which examines the history of US TV Talk Show and then uses interviews and analysis of web-based activity to explore further questions about the cultural significance and importance of this phenomenon. What I found interesting was her rationale for writing as a fan of the shows – unashamedly – which set me thinking about the possibility of using cultural texts that I really liked as a basis for a thesis, eventually settling on 'The Beatles' as a medium through which to examine changing representations and ideas about men and the effects of changes for men in a particular historical period. The idea grew as I dug around and found that there was not a great deal of academic or even semi-academic texts around on the topic despite the millions of words written about the Beatles. Inglis' (2000a) work provided a starting point and

as I have been researching and writing other interesting texts (McKinney, 2003; Starke, 2005) have emerged. I have had some correspondence with Jan Mäkelä, whose PhD thesis on John Lennon was published in 2004, and June Skinner-Sawyers' edited collection *Read the Beatles* (2006), was of particular interest to me as it pulls together old and new writings, blurring the past/present divide and reflecting on the contemporary significance of the Beatles.

In drawing this thesis together I have drawn on a variety of texts, both academic and non-academic, from across a variety of areas. There is a multi-disciplinarity about it that, I think, reflects my own research interests and approaches. The writing of it has also drawn me back to some of the things I first discovered as an undergraduate. The works of Stuart Hall and others at the Birmingham School, and the work of the Mass Observation Movement, chronicling people's war time experiences as an ongoing project to document social history and social change as well as drawing in artists, poets, film-makers and other men and women of ideas, have been influential in the production of this piece of research. I have also pondered on what this thesis might have looked like if I had chosen to do it as a follow-on from my undergraduate degree in the 1980s, which also raises interesting questions about the past and the present. Given that the writing on men and masculinities was in its infancy in this period it would have been a highly original piece of work! But the social context in relation to this and to the status of the Beatles, ideas about media and cultural studies in general, and representations in particular, means that it would not have been rooted in such a rich set of texts, both theoretical and cultural as it is in 2009. And, as a man of 26, my perspectives on men and masculinities would, I guess, have been quite different from the way they appear within the following chapters. I have attempted to provide a rationale for all the choices made and, given the confines of the requirements of a PhD submission, tried to make it reflect what it is I particularly like about the Beatles, the 1960s and the myriad texts on men and masculinities I have discovered; a place where interesting ideas come together to produce an end product which it is hoped will repay the reader for the time invested in it. "Where Lennon and McCartney meet Gramsci and Foucault" is one of the headings on a poster presentation I prepared on this work for a conference in 2007. Marshall McLuhan's (1964) left field ramblings, Devin McKinney's (2003) dark perspectives and the Gonzo journalism of Hunter S.

Thompson (1972) have all played a significant part in my attempts to make creative that which must be contained by subheadings.

And finally, to use a 21st century media cliché, it has been a “journey”, back through places and to visit people (both literally and metaphorically), some of whom I hadn’t thought about for a long time, some of whom I had not met before, and, in that sense, it has been a labour of love. I guess I have always been aware of and interested in the relationship between the past and the present and the way in which the past is always, somehow, in the present. This piece of work has allowed me to apply this general sense of curiosity to a specific topic and it is my hope that the words contained in the subsequent chapters of this thesis will explain how these reflections have brought me to the conclusions I have drawn about the significance of the Beatles and the 1960s to present and future debates about men and masculinities, and the ways in which representations and identities are bound up in some sort of relationship, a place where times present and past intersect to create some sort of understanding of possibilities for the future.

I started this section with a quote that started me thinking about the Beatles as a case study in masculinities and will end with one that, perhaps, encapsulates what I have come to understand about identity, “In the quieter precincts of the self you are what they sounded like” someone once wrote (Stark, 2005 : 270). I know what that means now.

Why the Beatles? : A Rationale

Introduction

Why the Beatles? For many, including MacDonald (1994 : 1), they are an aspect of British cultural history whose superiority and peerlessness needs no debate:

“Agreement on them is all but universal: they were far and away the best ever pop group and their music enriched the life of millions.”

The main aim of this introductory chapter is not to debate the “best ever” discourse, although this is part of their cultural significance, but rather to explore some of the discourses both academic and popular that surround the Beatles as a cultural phenomenon and, therefore, to provide a rationale for the use of the Beatles as a case study through which to reflect on changing representations of men and masculinities in the 1960s. As the most photographed, talked about men of the decade, described by Evans (1984 : 7) as “the most important single element in British popular culture in the post war years” they provide, it will be argued, a suitable case study. This chapter will establish their global popularity and cultural significance in this period (and beyond)¹, and unpick some of the claims made by Inglis (2000a); that the Beatles were an historical event, cultural phenomenon, musical innovators and role models for young people.

Facts and Figures

Forty-seven years after their first single, *Love Me Do*, rose to number 17 in the UK charts in 1962, the Beatles remain as famous as ever and the words of press officer Derek Taylor, announcing their break-up in 1970, still seem to ring true: “The Beatles

¹ Inglis (2000a) provides an authoritative summing up of their career:

“On one level the story of the Beatles is deceptively easy to relate, not least because it has been retold, reproduced and reinvented on so many occasions. John Lennon met Paul McCartney in Woolton 6th July 1957, and shortly afterwards invited him to join his group (then known as The Quarrymen). In 1958 McCartney introduced Lennon to George Harrison: these three remained the nucleus of the group amid numerous variations in personnel (of which the most important was Stuart Sutcliffe’s membership from January 1960 to June 1961), changes of name (Johnny and the Moondogs, The Silver Beatles, The Beatles), and a performing history largely confined to Merseyside (with occasional spells in Hamburg) for the next five years. At the beginning of 1962 they agreed to place their management in the hands of Brian Epstein, a local businessman. In August of that year, several weeks after the group had accepted a provisional recording contact with E.M.I.’s Parlophone label, drummer Pete Best was replaced by Ringo Starr. In October 1962, *Love Me Do*, their first official single, was released and was a minor chart entry; and in February 1963, *Please Please Me* became their first British Number One. In January 1964, *I Want to Hold Your Hand* was their first US Number One, and for the rest of the decade the Beatles dominated popular music around the world. They toured extensively until August 1966, when they elected to abandon live performances in favour of studio work. Epstein died in August 1967, and in 1968 the Beatles established their own management and recording company, named Apple. In April 1970, after increasing involvement in individual projects, the group effectively disbanded.”

(Inglis, 2000a: xv)

are not a pop group, they are an abstraction, a repository for many things.” (Sandbrook, 2006 : 724). With record sales topping half a billion (including 17 UK and 20 US number ones) their iconic images continue to fill TV screens whenever the 1960s are mentioned; frozen in time stepping down from their plane at JFK in 1964, cuddly mop-tops surrounded by screaming fans, cool and groovy in their mid ‘60s’ roll neck and shades incarnation, resplendent and moustachioed in Sgt Pepper costumes, hirsute on the Apple roof top in 1969. Googling the Beatles in 2009 gives you 23,200,200 hits (Jesus gets 206,200,000 more of which, later). The website Beatlelinks.com leads you onto Beatles web sites too numerous to list – facts, music, pictures, collectables etc. Still a global, cultural phenomenon, a repository for many things.

Two are dead and two are living but their fame as The Beatles seems undimmed. The phenomenal, and surprising amount of newspaper coverage generated by Linda McCartney’s death 1998, George Harrison’s death in 2001, Paul McCartney’s marriage to Heather Mills and the resultant fatherhood and messy high profile divorce, the release of a remixed version of 1970 album *Let it Be* in 2003, and wranglings over the Apple name and access to downloads means that they continue to make front page news in the early part of the 21st century. Their existence as a recording group only lasted for an eight year period, yet the texts that remain to document the global phenomenon that was the Beatles; including books and articles, both popular and academic, music, films, magazines and the “official” history now available in the *Beatles Anthology* book (2000) and accompanying DVD (2003), provide evidence of an extraordinary male cultural phenomenon of the 1960s or, indeed, of the 20th century.

Their rise to global popularity and their high visibility worldwide around 1963/4 is discussed later in this section. Kot (2006) sees their popularity in this period as being summarised by two events: their first appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show* in the US in 1964, seen by 73 million people in the US and their occupation of the top five slots in the US Billboard Chart in the same period. Marwick (1998), in a similar vein, sees this tour as a key event in the establishing of British youth culture as a global cultural force.

The mid 1990s saw the release of the TV *Anthology* documentary and accompanying CDs. In November 1995 they were the biggest selling act in the US with the first two *Anthology* CDs selling 24.6 million copies, accompanied by back catalogue sales of 6 million. Over 50% of buyers were teenagers or in their twenties. Similarly with the release of the #1 album (a collection of UK/US number 1 hits) in 2000. As the new millennium began they were top of the Billboard US Chart with 30 million sales worldwide, again the biggest purchasing group was in the 16-24 age band with people over 40 only accounting for 25% of sales (Skinner-Sawyers, 2006).

What are The Beatles?

The demographics provide an interesting insight into the continued popularity of the music. They were and are an extremely popular musical phenomenon. But what else were, and are, the Beatles? Mäkelä (2004 : 237) states:

“It is notable that as early as 1964 the Beatles had conspicuously expanded from being a music group to a highly mediated and circulated product ... The Beatles’ early fame was underpinned not only by music, albeit it remained at the centre of their celebrity, but by appearances in different media forms and situations, as in comic television shows and films.”

Inglis (2000a) has argued that despite the general acceptance of their historical, sociological, cultural and musical significance by the popular media, loyal fan base (including newer fans introduced to their work through Oasis and other Brit-pop groups of the 1990s) and “serious” music press such as *Mojo* (which produced several special editions devoted solely to the various phases of the Beatles’ career in 2002), there is a dearth of academic work on the subject of the Beatles, this despite the growth of media and cultural studies as a discipline within the Academy in recent years. He concludes that:

“There is an absence of any sustained sociological interrogation of the group, its music, and the debates they provoked.”

(Inglis, 2000a : xv)

It is the intention within this thesis to address some of the issues raised by Inglis (2000a) with particular reference to the Beatles as men and their role as a focus for changing representations of masculinities. Ideas around the ways in which the Beatles “helped feminize the culture” (Stark, 2005 : 2) and their role as “one of the 20th century’s major symbols of cultural transformation” (Stark, 2005 : 2) will be examined through an exploration and analysis of their four live action films. However, in order to understand how they came to be viewed as culturally significant it is first necessary to examine the phenomenon of Beatlemania and the way in which their eventual emergence as ‘men of ideas’ (Inglis, 2000b : 1) is grounded in their traditional male pop-star-ness.

Beatlemania (www.youtube.com/watch?v=zhlx3wjs8ky)

“The images persist: four guys in suits or smart raincoats being chased by hundreds of fans, girls frenzied at their merest glimpse, sloping bobbies – arms linked, teeth gritted, straining to hold back the throng”

(Lewisohn, 2002 : 46)

Hysterical scenes had surrounded male stars before the Beatles (Valentino in the 1920s, Frank Sinatra in the 1940s, and Elvis and Johnny Ray in the 1950s) and has subsequently (The Monkees in the late 1960s, The Osmonds and the Bay City Rollers in the 1970s, Take That and Boyzone in the 1990s). However, Beatlemania remains the yardstick, an alliance between the media, fans and a cultural phenomenon unlike any other. “In the beginning there was the scream” states Stark (2005 : 10) and he goes on to claim that the screams that had greeted Frank and Elvis seemed to increase fourfold for the Beatles, while Marshall (2000) sees the beginnings of Beatlemania as the shaping of modern celebrity, a presentation of self for public consumption that went beyond what had gone before.

In 1963, the Beatles had four number one singles, two number one albums, a 13 week BBC radio series (*Pop Goes the Beatles*) and had toured the UK four times. Perhaps, as some have argued, they were the right men in the right place at the right time given the social changes of the early 1960s (Sandbrook, 2006), while Mannheim commented on what would now be recognised as the rising importance of popular culture and its seeming ability to blur class barriers:

“One of the impressive facts about modern life is that, unlike preceding cultures, intellectual activity is not carried on exclusively by a socially rigidly defined class.”

(Mannheim, 1960 : 139)

Their supposed status as four working class lads from Liverpool², a well worn rags to riches narrative beloved by the media, was central to Beatlemania, and their youth and exuberance was in keeping with the new classless society discourse at work in the early 1960s (Marwick, 1998; Sandbrook, 2005; 2006). Marshall (2000 : 163) talks about the “pleasures of personality” at work within the Beatles and the way that this was portrayed through the new global medium of TV in particular (although their films, as will be discussed later, also provided a vehicle for this). The pleasure discourse is something that recurs in discussion of the Beatles and again, this will be discussed later in the thesis. Marshall also sees Beatlemania as providing a link between fame and the artistic process, “a re-reading of the cultural value of fame and celebrity” (Marshall, 2000 : 170) as well as an event that united artist and fan through the phenomenon of hysteria linked to live performance. As the psychologist E.E. Sampson (1988 : 5) has stated, “the reactions of others are required for us to be” and Beatlemania was very much a phenomenon about the reactions of others, based on a relationship between The Beatles and their fans which was then fed back to all through the mass media (Lewisohn, 2002). This phenomenon was populated

² The newly discovered academic interest in class in the early 1960s led, it can be argued, to a wish to create a working class discourse around a cultural phenomenon from a Northern UK city (the terms Britain and UK are used interchangeably within this thesis). Lennon’s upbringing was decidedly middle class, McCartney’s slightly less so. Harrison’s father drove a bus and Starr came from the impoverished Dingle area of Liverpool, so, possibly, a 50% working class phenomenon.

predominantly by female fans, often, therefore, seen as feminised in itself, and linked through the disciplines of crowd theory and social psychology to weakness in the female constitution (Marshall, 2000). This is perhaps most famously, illustrated by Paul Johnson's (1964) "The Menace of Beatlism" in the *New Statesman*, a stinging attack on the "bottomless chasm of vacuity" (Johnson, 2006 : 53) at work in Beatlemania. This quote gives a flavour of the piece:

"Those who flock round the Beatles, who scream themselves into hysteria, whose vacant faces flicker over the TV screen, are the least fortunate of their generation, the dull, the idle, the failures."

(Johnson, 2006 : 54-55)

However, as a new phenomenon, the Beatles, with their youthful exuberance and wit, were well suited to the needs of the tabloid press and, thus, the phenomenon grew. The term "Beatlemania", coined by the Fleet Street Press in the UK (initially *The Daily Mirror*) is generally accepted to have come to full fruition following the group's appearance at the Royal Variety Performance in November 1963 (Gray, 1963; Ellen, 2002a; Lewisohn, 2002). Norman (1981) has challenged the idea that Beatlemania somehow gripped the nation overnight, rather advancing the view that an alliance of Fleet Street and the Beatles' rapid rise in popularity in 1963 ensured their household name status. In the week following the Royal Variety Performance *The Daily Express* ran five front page stories on Beatlemania and *The Daily Mail* began to use a logo comprising of four fringed heads rather than the words The Beatles³ (Norman, 1981).

Norman (1981 : 210-11) offers the *Daily Mirror's* diagnosis of the phenomenon from 1963:

"You have to be a real square not to like the nutty, noisy, happy, handsome Beatles ... How refreshing to see these rumbustious young Beatles take a middle aged Royal Variety Performance audience by the scruff of their necks and have them Beatling like teenagers ... They're young, new ... The Beatles are whacky. They wear their hair like a mop ..."

³ An early introduction for the British public, perhaps, to the work of de Saussure (1960) and Barthes (1972).

By the following year George Harrison (or rather, his ghost-writer) was sending back a regular column for *The Daily Express* from wherever their world tour had taken them⁴. It was their first visit to the US in 1964, however, that made Beatlemania a global phenomenon, given the cultural positioning of the US and its global media networks, which were more fully developed than those in the UK (Sandbrook, 2006). Highly successful British acts had not made the crossover to the States and the group, beginning to recognise their own power, had refused to go until they had a hit single there (The Beatles, 2000). The scene that greeted their arrival at JFK Airport in February 1964 has been seen many times over (The Beatles, 2003). McKinney (2003) comments on the now familiar “British Invasion” discourse with the male reporters of the day using war like metaphors such as “conquer”, “invade” etc, so often used to describe anything from financial takeover to sporting events, imbued as they are with the concept of masculinism (Brittan, 1989)⁵. He argues that had women been writing the same story metaphors of seduction may have been used instead. Beatlemania’s appearance in the US represents, he argues, “romance and fascination on a giant scale” (McKinney, 2003 : 52). This has been documented by a number of authors in relation to their impact in relation to generation, gender, class and race (Norman, 1981; Ehrenreich et al, 1992; McKinney, 2003; Mäkelä, 2004) and some of their arguments will be explored later, through an examination of the Beatles’ films. McKinney (2003 : 54) describes how in footage of the US tour the Beatles can be seen as caught up in the whole Beatlemania phenomenon themselves. He states: “their delight is clearly the real, youthful thing.”

Two appearances on the *Ed Sullivan Show* and appearances at the Washington Coliseum and Carnegie Hall, all within a short period of time, established their popularity in the US, achieving “an intimacy and ease with their audience unlike anything that existed before them, unlike anything that exists today.” (McKinney, 2003 : 56). Manager Brian Epstein described their initial press conference in the US as the turning point in their career (The Beatles, 2003), a chance for a wider audience

⁴ My own Beatles scrapbook from the period contains undated (definitely 1964) entries from the French tour: “Paris – it’s the Gear” – Beatle George Harrison reporting (*Daily Express*) and “The Girl who made it – A kiss from a beauty for Beatle George Harrison – who sends another exclusive report from America” (*Daily Express*).

⁵ See Chapter 3.

to see the gang at play, announcing their Liverpoolness to the world (Stark, 2005) and engaging in witty banter unknown before in pop performers (www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbwfp-1Ag299feature=related).

“Their handling of the first American Press conference was consummate: articulate and witty Beatles in best switched on bright and breezy mode. So the American Press went along with the fun, just as Fleet Street had done.”

(Lewisohn, 2002 : 49)

Footage from *The Beatles Anthology* DVD (2003) shows a press-pack clamouring for pictures and what would now be called sound bites from the group:

“Q – Are you all bald under those wigs?

John – we’re all bald and deaf and dumb too.

Q – Are you guys going to get a hair cut at all?

George - I had one yesterday.

Q – Why does it [the music] excite them so much?

Paul – We don’t know.

John – If we did we’d form another group and be managers.

Q – Will you sing?

John – We need money first.”

The beginnings of the Beatles ordinary, yet extraordinary status bestowed on them by the Beatlemania phenomenon is apparent in these early press conferences (Hutchins, 1964). Cohn (1972 : 132), in analysing the first US press conference, notes that they:

“Answer politely, they make jokes, they’re most charming but they’re never remotely involved, they’re private ... they’re anti-stars and they’re superstars both.”

Their quintessentially English sense of humour, Liverpool’s comic tradition and the Beatles’ links to the British satire movement are well documented by Mäkelä (2004). He also argues that the mockery and spoofing of questions and questioner at work in these events, as well as being seen as a natural element of the Beatles, is also an early

indication of a subversive reading through which an anti-establishment stance was consciously produced, often through the use of humour in saying the unsayable. It was also controlled, as witnessed by the furore caused by their attempt at pop satire. The infamous “Butcher cover” for the US album *Yesterday – and Today*, showing the group holding raw meat and headless dolls, was hastily withdrawn by Capitol Records (McKinney, 2003).

The Beatles’ position in the national consciousness at this time is summed up by Norman (1981 : 277-8):

“The Beatles were no longer a teenage fad ... they had become a national obsession ... In Britain throughout 1964, their doings and sayings ran in all the papers everyday like some wildly popular, all-embracing strip cartoon. They had become, like cartoon characters, an elemental silhouette in which all desires and fantasies could be lived and gratified.”

However, the Beatles’ celebrity and popularity enabled them to express new ideas, challenging the old order as, presented as high-profile spokesmen for a burgeoning “movement”. Coser (1965) draws parallels between the new intellectual elite of the 1960s and the court jester of medieval times; a role which allowed for the subversion and ridiculing of the established order of the times despite the lowly status of the jester:

“Among the intellectuals’ ancestors we may also reckon the medieval court jester. The role of the jester ... was to play none of the expected roles. He had the extraordinary privilege of dispersing with adherence to the usual proprieties because he was outside the social hierarchy ... ”

(Coser, 1965 : ix)

It was following their first trip to the USA in 1964 that work began on the first Beatles’ feature film *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964). Originally titled *Beatlemania* (Carr, 1996; Neaverson, 1997) the film set out to capture the phenomenon, a representation of the Beatles real lives made into fantasy and fed back into the phenomenon itself via the global medium of cinema. The Beatles’ perceived humour and youthful

exuberance was at the heart of *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) while comparisons with the Marx Brothers (Norman, 1981; The Beatles, 2000; Starke, 2005) only emphasised the subversive nature of their humour and jesting.

“Men of Ideas” (Inglis, 2000b : 1)

“We’re not Beatles to each other, you know. It’s a joke to us. If we’re going out of the door of the hotel we say ‘Right! Beatle John! Beatle George now! Come on, let’s go!’ We don’t put on a false front on or anything. But we just know that leaving the door, we turn into Beatles because everybody looking at us sees the Beatles. We’re not Beatles at all, just us.”

(Lennon, 1966 : 87)

John Lennon’s insight into the concept of representation provides an introduction to an examination of the relationship between the Beatles, the Beatles themselves as men, popular music and the broader social environment. Inglis (2000b) advances a number of arguments around the ways in which popular music can operate as an agent of change in the potential and cultural environment. This is in stark contrast to Adorno’s (1991) views on popular culture, which he saw as dominated by “standardisation and pseudo individualisation” (Strinati, 1995 : 65), so that popular songs became indistinguishable from each other.

The Beatles’ constant association with new ideas and changing musical and visual styles (The Beatles, 2000; 2003; Mäkelä, 2004) is a central part of their artistic status. The medium of popular music in which they worked was relatively new in the early 1960s but almost 50 years on they remain unparalleled in the amount of change and development both musically and visually, achieved in a relatively short period of time and the critical esteem in which they are still held and their continued commercial success show no signs of diminishing (Inglis, 2000b; Skinner-Sawyers, 2006).

However, while music is at the core of their commercial success and intellectual and creative activity (Cosser, 1965), it was their ability to go beyond the expectations of

what a popular music group is/was that establishes them as a cultural phenomenon. Discussion in later chapters will explore what Lennon referred to as “the depth of the Beatles’ song writing ... a more mature, more intellectual – whatever you want to call it – approach” (Sheff and Golson, 1981 : 121). Equally important to their status as “men of ideas” (Inglis, 2000b : 1), though, is their breaking down of the popular/intellectual divide through their engagement with other art forms: books, films, TV and the avant-garde movement of the 1960s.

The Beatles themselves, both at the time of their global popularity and in retrospect, seem to have taken different positions on the cultural significance of the Beatles and the depth of their work. Lennon’s statement above, for example, seems at odds with his famous “It’s only a rock band that split up” (The Beatles, 2003) quote, his response to media questioning about the end of the Beatles.

At other times, it seems, they did recognise their role in popularising different musical, artistic and visual styles through their global popularity and influence:

“John: Whatever wind was blowing at the time moved the Beatles also. I’m not saying we weren’t flags on the top of the ship. But the whole boat was moving. Maybe the Beatles were in the crow’s nest shouting ‘land ho!’ ... but we were all in the same damn boat.”

(Sheff and Golson, 1981 : 78)

More recently McCartney has recognised the cultural impact of the Beatles (Wilde, 2004) but in many respects this is irrelevant⁵. Given that no popular music group had been conceptualised in this way before it seems unreasonable to expect those at the centre of the phenomenon to engage in an academic analysis of its cultural impact.

So, while Adorno’s (1991) theory seems highly applicable to the early 1960’s “boy” singers (Adam Faith, Billy Fury, Eden Kane) who preceded the Beatles or the Boy Bands of the late 20th and early 21st century that followed them (Boyzone, Westlife,

⁵ McCartney, in an interview with *The Word* magazine in 2004, has discussed this in some detail. His appearance in June 2008 at the concert to celebrate Liverpool’s status as City of Culture was accompanied by a montage of film clips and images of general bricolage spanning the Beatles’ career, again showing some engagement with cultural context.

Blue) it fails to hold water in the case of the Beatles, as it does not recognise the ability of artists working within an industry with an emphasis on mass production to develop their work beyond its boundaries. Mellers (1973 : 183) argues that the Beatles had a “multiplicity of functions” which seemed to confuse the Beatles themselves as well as critics.

It is their acquisition of and association with many of the other cultural elements of the period combined with their global popularity that establishes them as the cultural phenomenon they were (and are), and sets them apart from other individuals or groups of male artists in this period. The Rolling Stones, for example, were (and remain) very popular. Set up by Fleet Street as the Beatles’ main rivals and nemesis, bad boys playing the blues in an overtly sexual way, but, in essence, they were just a popular group that sometimes made the news because of their controversial public behaviour (Sandbrook, 2006). As MacDonald (1994: 20) asserts, it was the Beatles who were “the perfect McLuhanites.” At the centre of a new network of global communication and media and “pioneers of a new ‘simultaneous’ popular art” (MacDonald, 1994 : 20), centre stage in Marshall McLuhan’s global village (McLuhan, 1964).

Sandbrook (2005 : 149) describes how in the early 1950s literary critics were searching for a post war cultural revival. In particular he quotes author J.B. Priestley as he wondered:

“... where in the Madame Tussaud’s of the national consciousness are the men of letters ... or, for that matter, the other kind of creative artists? Name ten, widely known and highly regarded, under fifty years of age. Who and where are the massive talents, the towering personalities, the men of genius? Who represents us abroad as we ought to be represented?”

The emergence of the Beatles, in the period of post war affluence now known as “the sixties”, can be read as a response to Priestley’s plea. Certainly, by 1964, there were four men under fifty that had become firmly established in the Madame Tussaud’s of the national consciousness that would fit the bill. It is the Beatles’ move beyond just producing music to their representation as being bound up with the intellectual and cultural ideas of the time (Inglis, 2000b) that is important, in this sense. Gramsci

(1971: 9) argues that “Each man ... carries on some form of intellectual activity, that is he is a ‘philosopher’, an artist, a man of taste” and Inglis (2000b : 1) asserts that The Beatles can be read in this way, as “men of ideas” who were given a “multiplicity of voices” (Inglis, 2000b : xvii) due to their elevation, through the mass media, as men who were speaking for a generation. He argues that the group operate on a number of levels:

“...as a historical event, as a cultural phenomenon, as musical innovators and as role models for millions of young people around the world.”

(Inglis, 2000b : 4 – 5)

He also cites their subversion of expectations of what a popstar should be as another reason why they fit with ideas advanced by Gramsci (1971) and Coser (1965). Coser in *Men of Ideas* (1965) takes a historical perspective on the rise of the “intellectual” in a number of fields – academic, scientific, literary, politics and the mass-culture industries. He states “intellectuals need an audience, a circle of people to whom they can address themselves and who can bestow recognition.” (Coser, 1965 : 3). Economic rewards may be part of this recognition but he also talks about “psychic income” (Coser, 1965 : 3) pre-empting Bourdieu’s (1998) concept of cultural capital, as being equally important, while Said (1994: 9) states:

“The intellectual is an individual endowed with a facility for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy, an opinion to, as well as for, a public.”

The importance of the role of the independent artist and intellectual in resisting social norms, stereotyping and pushing the borders of acceptability in society is emphasised by Mills (1963), while Gramsci (1971), too, argues that intellectuals can influence social reality through their creativity.

Inglis’ (2000a) argument that the Beatles (as a cultural phenomenon) can be read in this way, is a compelling one. He compares the role of the Beatles in the 1960s to that of the wandering minstrels of the middle ages:

“This overall sense of a distinct, dynamic and diversified community in which the Beatles were active and influential has prompted a comparison with the jongleurs or ‘wandering minstrels’ of the middle ages, the itinerant poet-musicians who used their musicianship to fulfil a multiplicity of roles – entertainer, critic, chronicler, commentator – and who were simultaneously courted and distrusted by those who aspired to be their patrons.”

(Inglis, 2000b : 16)

Sixties activist Abbie Hoffman articulates a similar view, arguing that the Beatles were part of a cultural revolution where the best and popular were, at a particular historical moment, the same, citing *Sgt Pepper* (1967) in particular as a cultural artefact with wide reaching implications (Giuliano and Giuliano, 1995).

The Beatles, then, can be read as a male cultural phenomenon brought about by a particular set of social changes (Marwick, 1998; Sandbrook, 2005; 2006) and operating at a time when attitudes to popular culture, especially popular music, were changing and when musicians broadened their intellectual and social associations, achieving a certain gravitas which had not been seen before. Poirer (1969 : 162) states:

“People tend to listen to the Beatles the way families in the last century listened to readings of Dickens, and it might be remembered by literary snobs that the novel then, like the Beatles and even film now, was considered a popular form of entertainment generally beneath serious criticism, and most certainly beneath academic attention.”

The Beatles’ importance as a case study in representations can be further established by looking at their relationship to the British establishment, their relationship to homosexual manager Brian Epstein, highly significant in relation to representations of men and masculinities, their relationship with 1960s’ counterculture, and changes in their appearance and style, (all of which will be explored through an analysis of their

films)⁶ and an examination of their particular place in the context of the social changes of the 1960s.⁷

A Focus for New Ideas

Their role as “men of ideas” (Inglis, 2000b: 1) and their relationship to other social and artistic change in the decade is particularly interesting, not least because of the way in which commentators have tried for many years to determine whether the Beatles led musical and artistic change throughout the decade. Their role in breaking down some of the stereotypical expectations for young people (especially men) is intrinsically bound up with this debate about their role in social change. Opinions differ. Many commentators such as Melly (1970), argue that they had the knack of picking up on trends and making them their own. He uses the example of their seeming disappearance as the whole mid 1960s’ swinging London scene became a little jaded, emerging in multi-coloured bandsman’s outfits on the cover of *Sgt Pepper* just in time for the “Summer of Love” in 1967, creating the impression that they had invented psychedelia. In reality, the ideas and influences which came together to be labelled “psychedelic” in the “Summer of Love” of 1967, had actually been emerging from the West coast of the US and the UK underground scene since the early 1960s (MacDonald, 1994; 2003).

Their role, can be characterized as providing a focus, a prism through which to read cultural development and social change in the period. Through their “brand” (in the modern parlance) a number of ideas were brought into popular consciousness magnified through the lens of their position in popular culture and consciousness at the time. MacDonald (2003 : 87) sums up this position:

“... it seemed to many fans of the Beatles that the group was somehow above and beyond the ordinary world: ahead of the game and orchestrating things ... the key was that they picked up a certain special ideas before their immediate competitors when their ideas were still at an early stage of development.”

⁶ See Chapter 6.

⁷ See Chapter 2.

Their global fame, established through Beatlemania meant that, in MacDonald's (2003 : 87) words, "the group magnified what it reflected." This became true not only of their changing musical output. Their status as "men of ideas" (Inglis, 2000b : 1) meant that the media (and fans) became interested in their opinions on broad intellectual topics, which had not happened to pop stars previously, and unlike previous pop performers they seemed, somehow, to be open to the radical diversity of a changing world.

“We’re Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band, we hope you will enjoy the show.”

“One of the leading motifs of the Beatles’ psychedelic period was the theme of carnival – a multicoloured explosion of street-level popular culture against which the grey establishment of the time was seen in repressive contrast.”

(MacDonald, 2003 : 33)

Carnival provided one of the key themes in what is seen as the biggest ‘event’ in The Beatles’ career – the release in June 1967 of *Sgt Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*, an event described by critic Kenneth Tynan as a decisive moment in the history of western civilization (MacDonald, 1994: 198). Critics argue about whether *Revolver* (1966) is a better album (Mojo, 1995) and there are similar themes and influences at work in both albums (Sandbrook, 2006), but *Pepper* is the place where all the aspects of pop culture came together under one roof, an iconic representation of psychedelia and counterculture, a blooming of musical ideas, an event. MacDonald (1994) sees it as drawing together influences from the English fringe arts, folk music, musical hall and the Anglo-European counterculture, while Ellen (2002b : 102) sees *Pepper* (1967) as a distinctive change in musical direction for the Beatles:

“By an organic shift rather than strategic design, Stockhausen, The Beach Boys and Lewis Carroll were being ushered in the front door while Elvis, Buddy Holly and Carl Perkins were shuffled out the back.”

(Ellen, 2002b : 102)

Melly (1970) in his book *Revolt Into Style*, a look at the pop arts in 1960s' Britain, provides an insightful analysis of Sgt Pepper's importance in placing the Beatles at the centre of the "happening" world in 1967.

"... the justification for the whole, largely absurd, bead-hung period lies in one artefact, the LP *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, the Beatles' near flawless chef-d'oeuvre. For me this is conclusive proof that pop can be both art and pop, immediate and timeless. I don't know if such a balance can ever be struck again. It was perhaps pop music's classic moment ... *Sgt Pepper* is on one level ideal thesis and examination material. It's full of esoteric references, irony, red herrings, deliberate mystification, musical influences, the lot."

(Melly, 1970 : 112)

The sleeve, featuring the Beatles surrounded by cut-outs of their heroes, and containing printed lyrics for the first time, was designed by pop artist Peter Blake and represented the "cross-pollination" (Melly, 1970: 135) of the multitude of influences the Beatles had been experimenting with, "a microcosm of the underground world" according to Melly (1970: 135) and a coming together of pop music and pop art.

It has hard to imagine the release of a popular music album having such an impact now but debates about the importance of *Sgt Pepper* (1967) and its merits or otherwise went beyond the music press. Just as Beatlemania had provided an obsession for the tabloids, The Beatles' perceived cultural importance by 1967 meant that debate new took place in the "serious" press and journals across the world. Marshall (2000 : 173) describes this process as "the shift in audience perceptions of the popular music celebrity."

William Mann famously (and favourably) reviewed the album in *The Times* describing it as "a sort of pop music masterclass" (Mann, 2006a : 96). Mann had

already compared Lennon and McCartney's work to that of the classical composers in a previous Times piece in 1963, drawing particular reference to the Mahler like Aolian cadences in *Not a Second Time* (1963) [Mann, 2006b]. Elsewhere, a public argument about the album's merits and significance took place between Richard Goldstein, the best known US music critic at the time, in the *New York Times* and Robert Christgau in *Esquire* magazine. Public outrage at Goldstein's review led to a rebuttal in *The Times*. Goldstein then responded in the *Village Voice* (Christgau, 2006). Under a piece entitled "Pop Music: The Messengers", Christopher Porterfield praised the album and drew attention to the fact that "serious" classical composers were taking note of the Beatles' work and that this constituted the transformation of pop music into art (Porterfield, 2006). The Beatles, argued Porterfield (2006 : 102), had "moved on to a higher artistic plateau."

MacDonald (1994) cites Lennon's art school background and his association with Stuart Sutcliffe⁸ as a key influence on his work in this period. Melly (1970) draws attention to the collage effect in *Pepper*, drawing parallels with early 1960s' pop artists. *Pepper*, he argues, mixes a variety of musical influences, lyrical imagery from music hall, Victoriana and LSD-influenced lyrical content, multi-tracking, phasing and a number of other emerging recording techniques. Whitley (2000) has written a piece on *The Beatles* (1968) [the so-called *White Album*] as a post-modern production but many of the arguments he advances, around its mixing of musical styles and genres, disregard for previous conventions and constructions, its use of juxtaposition of forms and its inclusive rather than exclusive approach to various art forms prevalent at the time, can equally apply to *Pepper* (1967). "Juxtaposing high and low art makes each style a comment on the other and a commentary on art, in general" states Whitley (2000 : 108) and *Pepper* has certainly been discussed in these terms, both at the time and in retrospect. Its use of a music hall style format and concept served to confirm the quintessential Englishness of the album. "The music hall is dying and with it a significant part of England. Some of the heart of England is gone, something that belonged to everyone, for this was firstly a folk art", wrote playwright John Osborne in 1967 (Sandbrook, 2005 : 133). The revival of something

⁸ Sutcliffe, an art school friend of Lennon's, was an early member of the Beatles and accompanied them on early tours to Hamburg. A talented artist he left to focus on his studies but died tragically of a brain haemorrhage in 1962. See Davies (1968); Norman (1981).

of the form, a modern form of the folk-art incorporated by modern day minstrels (Coser, 1965) into the music of *Sgt Pepper* (1967) is another example of the juxtaposition of the high and low art Whitley (2000) has described. Again, the construction and release of what was essentially “just” an LP became an event because it was something produced by the Beatles, four men who had seemingly redefined what it meant to be an Englishman. The Englishness of *Pepper* often discussed by critics, encompasses art, intelligence, creativity and satin costumes, a far cry from the traditional masculinity, (what Brittan, [1989] describes as an ideology that justifies male domination), at work in 1950s’ British film texts, for example, which constructed Englishness in a totally different way with hegemonic masculinity to the fore (Spicer, 1997). Carrigan et al. (1985) see hegemonic masculinity as a dominant version of masculinity which is reproduced through key institutions in society (mass media being one such institution). [See Chapter 3 for a full discussion].

One example of the album as event is seen in the footage of the recording of the orchestral part of the song *A Day in the Life* (1967). A recording session is staged as “a happening”, with members of the Rolling Stones and the Monkees plus Donovan and other contemporary celebrities in attendance, filmed in a style suggesting an acid trip (The Beatles, 2003). The “serious” classical musicians are wearing false wigs, false noses and other carnivalesque attire as if to emphasise the subversion of “establishment” high art. The piece provides an avant-garde crescendo to the LP with the players being asked to play as one instrument.

“Paul: I told the orchestra, there are 24 empty bars. On the ninth bar the orchestra will take off and it will go from its lowest to its highest note. You start with the lowest note in the range of your instrument and eventually go through all the notes of your instrument to the highest. But the speed as which you do it is your own choice. So that was the brief, the little avant-garde brief.”

(Miles, 2002a : 84)

The album also marks the beginning of the fans' obsession with the meaning of the Beatles lyrics and songs and the beginnings of a literary analysis of pop music which has continued ever since. What were the 4000 holes in Blackburn, Lancashire? Who blew his mind out in a car? (*A Day in the Life*). What does the laughter after George's *Within You, Without You* signify? Is Henry the Horse a reference to Heroin? Is the mention of Meet the Wife (in *Good Morning, Good Morning*) a reference to the humdrum existence of "normal" "square" life represented in the sitcoms of the day? Are the Beatles Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band? Is it a comment on fame and alter egos? *Sgt Pepper* is also the primary source of the "Paul is Dead" phenomenon. In October 1969 a rumour regarding Paul McCartney's death, which is thought to have originated at Ohio University via WRNR-FM, a Detroit underground radio station, and an article by Fred La Beur in *The Michigan Daily*, emerged as a modern day folk tale or myth, until it made international news (McKinney, 2003). McCartney had been killed in a road accident in 1966, went the rumour, replaced by a look-a-like, clues having been left within the music and album covers including *Sgt Pepper*, by the other Beatles. Not only did McCartney have his back to camera on the rear cover shot but the iconic front cover also, supposedly, held a major clue:

"If anyone looking back at the picture in the summer of love, when *Pepper* ruled the earth, ever saw the Beatles' bed of soil and plot of multi-coloured flora as anything but a garden of plenty, promising limitless growth and endless bloom, they didn't mention it, only now, in 1969, were people claiming ... that the cover of *Sgt Pepper* depicted not a garden but a grave."

(McKinney, 2003 : 280)

All of this is another illustration of the Beatles' importance in cultural terms which stretched beyond the boundaries of that normally associated with popular musicians.

Art and a Giant Dansette

“I’ll never forget the release of this record. You could hear it everywhere you went. I remember leaving a friend’s house and going next door to find the next track was playing, as if the sound was radiating from one giant Dansette. And here’s a thing: parents seemed to like it and nobody minded ... *Sgt Pepper* came so charged with optimism that possibly even people in their 30s liked it!”

(Ellen, 2002a : 104)

It is reported that on completion of the final mix of the album the Beatles drove from Abbey Road studios to the Chelsea flat of their friend Mama Cass. In the early hours of the morning they opened all the windows and played the album as London awoke (Paphides, 2008). This may or may not be true but it is a representation of the way that the significance of *Sgt Pepper* (1967) as event had come to be viewed. High over London, still perceived as the cultural capital of the world at this point in the 1960s (Sandbrook, 2006), the Beatles released their masterpiece to the masses below.

As Moore (2000 : 143) states:

“... the Beatles approach was simply to work, rather than painstakingly encode hidden meanings to be disinterred by those at the forefront of social change. From this point of view, to the extent that *Sergeant Pepper* is a window on sixties’ culture, that window is very much an upper storey, disengaged from the traffic below.”

MacDonald (1994) argues that *Sgt Pepper* provides an LSD experience for people who had never taken drugs. Moore (2000) also debates this issue. The sounds, lyrics, the idea of the concept album and the way in which the whole pop-art experience is presented makes this seem plausible⁹.

⁹ My 9 year old self loved the “weirdness” of the whole thing. Having recognised that *Strawberry Fields Forever* (1967), released earlier that year was a long way from *She Loves You* (1963) for reasons I could not entirely fathom, I certainly remember *Sgt Pepper* (1967) as an “event”. My abiding memory of the summer of 1967 is staying at my cousins’ house and the three of us sneaking downstairs early in the morning to play *Sgt Pepper* (1967) which had been bought by their parents (then in their

The Beatles position at the centre of the UK pop culture universe was emphasised later that month, on June 25th 1967, when they were chosen to represent Britain in the first live worldwide TV satellite broadcast, *Our World* (BBC, 1967), [www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLxTps/V220] a truly McLuhanite affair, involving 18 countries worldwide and events as diverse as opera and circus performers. Bedecked in bells, beads, flowers and kaftans they performed the newly composed *All You Need is Love*, (1967) again with a number of their contemporaries (including Mick Jagger and Keith Richards from The Stones, Keith Moon of The Who and Eric Clapton of The Cream) in attendance (Badman, 2002). Authors such as Sandbrook (2006) are keen to point out that the biggest selling album of 1967 was *The Sound of Music* or that *Strawberry Fields/Penny Lane* (1967) was the first Beatles single not to make number one. Nevertheless, the *Sgt Pepper* (1967) “event” has come to be regarded by many as the pinnacle of the Beatles’ career, a milestone in the cultural history of the 1960s or, by others, as another contested high profile artefact of a contested decade (Melly, 1970; Marwick, 2003; Sandbrook, 2006).

Bigger than Jesus: The Beatles as Cult

“Born in Liverpool, given to the world.”

This quote from a fan, taken from Radio Two’s (2008) *Don’t Start Me Talking About the Beatles*, a collection of fans’ reminiscences tying in with Liverpool’s year as City of Culture in 2008, sums up the quasi-religious aura with which people often talked about (and continue to talk about) The Beatles. The Beatles as quasi-religion is, therefore, another important element in establishing why they were so culturally important, as famous men, and why they provide a suitable case study for this thesis. Within the context of this thesis John Lennon’s self-association with, perhaps, the most famous man of all time, plus the way that quasi-religious elements weave their way in and out of the Beatles’ story is significant. Lennon’s assertion in 1966, that

30s), handling the gatefold sleeve, reading the lyrics and revelling in the strange direction the Beatles seemed to have taken.

the Beatles were more popular than Jesus, is probably the best known “story” in this area but there are a number of other quasi-religious connections. Lennon was interviewed by Maureen Cleave for *The London Evening Standard* in which he was observed in his own home and engaged in discussion on topics of the day, confirming that by this stage Inglis’ (2000b : 1) “men of ideas” status was publicly recognised and accepted. As part of the discussion he got onto the topic of religion.

“‘Christianity will go’, he told Cleave. ‘It will vanish and shrink. I needn’t argue about that: I’m right and I will be proved right. We’re more popular than Jesus now; I don’t know which will go first – rock ‘n’ roll or Christianity.’”

(Fricke, 2002 : 57)

Published on 4th March 1966 in *The Evening Standard* in the UK, the story caused no particular stir but its reproduction in US teen magazine *Datebook* on 29th July, just as the Beatles were about to embark on a US tour caused a Beatle backlash around the States. Twenty-two radio stations, mainly in the South, banned their records; many held Beatle trash burnings (The Beatles, 2003) and death threats were received from the Ku Klux Klan. Lennon was forced to defend his comments on religion at a press conference at the Astor Towers Hotel in Chicago on August 11, the day before the US tour began in Chicago [www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXMEf0173EQ]. As Fricke (2002: 57) succinctly states: “He apologised only for the manner, not the meat, of what he said”. His attempts to explain rather than retract his comments – to go beyond the “what’s your favourite colour” approach to the pop-star interview is interesting (and uncomfortable) to watch (The Beatles, 2003) in that it provides a stark contrast to their zany humorous 1964 US press conferences and illustrates that the US was not ready for the pop celebrity as man of ideas (The Beatles, 2003). Fricke (2002: 57) concludes:

“The most openly combative of the four Beatles, Lennon was poised to trip someone’s wire someday. His big mistake was the choice of subject. A central paradox of American democracy is that one of our most cherished liberties – freedom of worship – is often the root cause, or fuel of our most destructive arguments ... It was bad enough, fundamentalists believed in ’66,

that the Beatles incited Teenage USA to extremes of idolatry. Such provocative godlessness, from a foreigner no less, was intolerable”.

The event brought a realisation of the popularity, emerging influence and power the Beatles seemed to have in relation to their fans. It is an illustration of their role as “perfect McLuhanites” (MacDonald, 1994 : 20) and, perhaps, brought into focus a realisation that the cultural phenomenon of the Beatles was something divorced from their “real” selves. This representation of themselves as “Beatles” was something that they had begun to comment on interviews.

“John: If I’d said ‘television is more popular than Jesus’ I might have got away with it. I am sorry I opened my mouth. I just happened to be talking to a friend and I used the word ‘Beatles’ as a remote thing – ‘Beatles’ like other people see us – I said they are having more influence on kids and things than anyone else, including Jesus ... it was part of an in-depth series she was doing, and so I wasn’t really thinking in terms of PR or translating what I was saying.”

(The Beatles, 2000 : 226)

Marshall (2000) argues, that, again, the Beatles because of their popularity, seemed to be operating on a trajectory opposite to that usually followed by popular entertainers. Scandal normally has a negative impact on an celebrity’s career yet, in the Beatles case, with particular reference to the “bigger than Jesus” scandal, they seemed to set a precedent for an emerging concept of popular music as oppositional. He states:

“... what has to be understood about the Beatles as celebrity is that scandal, within the discourse of popular music as rock, actually works towards a form of legitimation. Generational divides can become more clearly demonstrated through such emotionally charged incidents.”

(Marshall, 2000 : 171 – 2)

The argument that the publicity produced by the scandal “makes the celebrity a deeper and richer text” (Marshall, 2000 : 172), leading to a form of politicization, can be viewed in the broader context of 1966; the end to touring and the “mania” period, a

focus on the creativity of studio activity and Lennon's assertion that the song *In My Life* (1966) represented a creative step- forward can all be read as transitional events taking the Beatles into Inglis' "men of ideas" (2000b : 1) period of their career.

In the original Cleave interview Lennon also discussed his interest in religion at the time and his interpretation of Schonfield's *The Passover Plot* (1965). Lennon included the quasi-religious statement "There's something else I'm going to do, something I must do – only I don't know what it is" (Cleave, 1987 : 72) in the interview. As McKinney (2003 : 144) points out:

"It will be apparent enough to anyone with a little Beatle history that Lennon saw himself in Christ, Christ in himself ... He identified with Christ as one identifies with another person, as one sees prosaic struggles reflected in anothers'."

His actions later in the 1960s, such as walking into a meeting with the other Beatles and declaring that he was Christ (The Beatles, 2000), writing quasi-religious lyrics to the *Ballad of John and Yoko*¹⁰ and his Christ – like appearance and self appointed role as messenger of world peace, all add weight to the argument (Mäkelä, 2004). When Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber allegedly asked Lennon to play Christ in their new musical *Jesus Christ Superstar* he was interested but the writers changed their mind, wishing to find an unknown actor. As Mäkelä (2004 : 151) points out "In a way, Lennon had already been playing Christ."

It can be argued that there is a quasi-religious aura to all fan worship (Lewis, 1992). However, McKinney (2003) gives a number of examples to illustrate the way in which Beatle worship seemed to take this a stage further.

The bringing of disabled fans ("the cripples" as Lennon liked to call them) to touch the Beatles on early tours (The Beatles, 2000; McKinney, 2003), their "involvement"

¹⁰ See Chapter 6.

in the Manson family killings¹¹ and the “Paul is Dead” rumour all draw attention to the Beatles’ quasi-religious relationship to their fans and followers (McKinney, 2003). In fact McKinney (2003 : 143) goes as far as to argue that “... the Beatles became a religion ... At Beatle concerts ... kids found a community of worship.”

This is well illustrated by an extract from a letter to the *Playboy* adviser from March 1965:

“It may seem sort of silly but things have reached the stage where I’m getting a little worried. My daughter and a number of the other kids in the neighbourhood have formed a real cult over the Beatles. They have built an alter in one girl’s bedroom and they burn candles and recite Beatle prayers ... when Susan doesn’t go to church with us because they are having their own services in their Beatle church, I start to worry a little.”

MD, San Francisco, California

(McKinney, 2003 : 143)

Adler’s (1964) *Love Letters to the Beatles* provides fascinating reading as a collection of fan letters both personal and published and adds further weight to the argument¹².

The Beatles’ “message” of peace and love which emerged post *Sgt Pepper* (1967) did have a quasi-religious quality, the “Paul is dead” myth similarly, and Mäkelä (2004) argues a strong case for reading Lennon’s death as a kind of martyrdom which was compared to those of political and religious leaders (rather than other entertainers) and that the mourning was interpreted as a mourning for the values that the Beatles had seemed to represent.

The quote which opens this section - “Born in Liverpool, given to the world” is yet another example of the way that the Beatles are still viewed and the quasi-religious discourses that still surround them. The next section examines the way in which the Beatles remain culturally important in the present.

¹¹ Charles Manson claimed that messages within *The Beatles* (1968), particularly the song *Helter Skelter* (1968), had led him to kill his victims. See McKinney (2003), Chapter 5, for a full account.

¹² See Appendix 1.

A 21st Century Phenomenon?

“They were the most Brilliant, Powerful, Loveable Pop Group on the Planet
... but now they’re really important.”

(Du Noyer, 2006 : 177)

So far this chapter has documented the cultural significance of the Beatles in the 1960s as a means of justifying their choice as a case study for examining representations of men and masculinities in the period. The introductory section contained an outline of the continued popularity and commercial success of their music in the 21st century. The “Waxing Lyrical” section in Appendix 1 pulls together a number of quotes in which people attempt to express what the Beatles meant and continue to mean to them. They remain highly visible today, as a cultural phenomenon, something that their PR men predicted in the early 1960s.

Tony Barrow’s sleeve notes for their first EP, *The Beatles’ Hits* (1963) states:

“The four numbers of this EP have been selected from the Lennon and McCartney song book. If that description sounds a trifle pompous perhaps I may suggest you preserve this sleeve for ten years, exhume it from your collection somewhere around the middle of 1973 and write me a very nasty letter if the pop people of the 70s aren’t talking with respect about at least two of these titles as ‘early examples of modern beat standards taken from the Lennon and McCartney song book’.”

(Barrow, 1963)

In the sleeve notes to 1964’s *Beatles for Sale* album publicist Derek Taylor predicts:

“The kids of 2000 will understand what it was all about and draw from the music much the same sense of well being and warmth as we do today. For the magic of the Beatles is timeless and ageless.”

(Taylor, 1964)

Over recent years “Beatle events” seem to have attracted press and media attention equal to that of their heyday reflecting, perhaps, Marshall’s (2000 : 173) assertion that “the Beatles embodied a series of cultural memories that overwhelmed their own present as a group.” The Britpop phenomenon of the 1990s, particularly Oasis’ stated love of the Beatles and “borrowing”, both musically and visually, drew attention to the Fab Four for a new generation. The world seems to be even more interested in, obsessed with, even, the Beatles today. There are a number of examples to illustrate this, which will be outlined briefly here. The tabloid obsession of the 1960s was with the exuberance of the Beatles and the possibilities of the future. 21st century coverage is about loss, the past, and death, a sort of bookending of almost 50 years of social change in Britain.

Linda McCartney’s death from cancer in 1998 produced a tribute edition of *The Daily Mirror* (20th April 1998) with a front-page headline plus “McCartney’s 30 years of love: pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 20 and 21”.

McCartney’s subsequent romance and high profile marriage to model Heather Mills has attracted extensive media attention, including magazine spreads (“Sir Paul McCartney and Heather Mills – Heather has brought romance back to my life” – *OK Magazine*, November 2001), stories of family rifts, “gold digger” stories and, in 2003, the birth of their first child. Their high profile, highly antagonistic, divorce in 2008 provided a number of interesting discourses, confirming the status of “St” Paul, the national icon, a representation of what the Beatles meant, juxtaposed with yet another female interloper, the personification of evil, if the tabloids were to be believed (Cummins, 2008a; Flynn, 2008).

The attack on George Harrison in his home by an intruder and the subsequent trial of his attacker (“Beatle wife: my fight to save George from maniac” – *Manchester Metro*, 15th November 2000) attracted front-page headlines and TV news coverage. Yoko Ono is still a frequent TV guest and Sunday Supplement interviewee (“Giving Peace a Chance” – *Life, The Observer Magazine*, 4th November 2001) and raised her

profile again in 2003 by speaking out against the war in Iraq, taking out billboard ads in New York and performing “cut peace”, an avant-garde protest piece first performed in the early 1960s.¹³

However, it was coverage of George Harrison’s death from cancer in November 2001, that was, perhaps, the most surprising even to those who would argue the case for their continued cultural significance. *The Daily Mirror* (1st December 2001) devoted its cover (“And the world gently weeps”), 12 pages and its leader to the news:

“The death of a Beatle has a special significance – even almost 35 years after they last played together – The Beatles will forever hold a special place in people’s hearts. Their music was the anthem for youth’s freedom.”

(Voice of the Mirror, 2001 : 8)

The Sun devoted its front page and headline (“Let it Be – Love One Another”) and 11 pages to the coverage. In its editorial – “A lovely man has passed this way” – it states:

“These four boys have given the world more pleasure than any musician since Mozart ... They made the world seem a better place ... Even now, 31 years after the Beatles split, their songs are as well know to children as ever.”

(The Sun Says, 2001 : 8)

The Guardian featured the event as its lead cover story (“George Harrison – 1943 – 2001”) a four page spread and an obituary that also drew attention to Harrison’s film production company, *Handmade Films*, responsible for the well respected British classics such as *Life of Brian* (1979), *A Private Function* (1984) and *Withnail and I* (1987).

The special tribute edition of *The Daily Mail* featured a cover picture of George and John with captions “George Harrison 1943 – 2001” “John Lennon 1940 – 1980”. Its

¹³ See Jørgensen (2008)

10 pages of tributes included the Saturday essay by Philip Norman (author of *Shout* [1981]) – “How the Beatles Changed our World”:

“But with the Beatles there was never any doubting the love. Everyone of every age quite simply adored them. That, above all, is the quality that has stood the test of time for more than 30 years.”

(Norman, 2001: 12)

There are a number of discourses which emerge which are of interest here, the loss of a golden age, the Beatles’ role in representing that, the loss of someone that seems known to everyone, George Harrison as a gentle, private man, and his interests in Eastern religion and philosophy.

More recently, the death of the Maharishi Yogi (Ruthven, 2008) and Neil Aspinall, the original Beatle van driver and later Chief Executive of the Apple Corporation, brought out the old press clippings one more time. Aspinall’s death made front page news, the *Mirror* going with “Macca weeps for the Fifth Beatle” (Miller and Cummins, 2008) and *The Guardian* running front page coverage from Beatle biographer Hunter Davies under the headline “Neil Aspinall: Beatles fixer and friend takes secrets to the grave” (Davies, 2008). Amongst it all, history is rewritten, myths perpetuated, poetic license exercised. However, the sheer volume of coverage and the continuation of the “waxing lyrical” cannot be denied.

Their music has also continued to make headlines – McCartney, Harrison and Starr’s coming together to record two new tracks based on some of Lennon’s unearthed tapes received widespread media coverage in 1995, with accompanying videos drawing on iconic Beatle images. (In footage of Paul, George and Ringo listening to the finished tracks on *The Beatles Anthology*, DVD (2003) they, interestingly, say “it sounds just like them” [meaning the Beatles] – they too are recalling a cultural phenomenon from another era). This coincided with *The Beatles Anthology* TV documentary – 25 years in the making (1995) followed by the book (2000) and DVD boxed set (2003). The Beatles’ dispute over the use of the name Apple was finally resolved in 2007 with the press speculating that downloads of Beatles’ songs (previously blocked because of the

dispute) may soon become available¹⁴. Given that downloads now count towards chart placing there has been further speculation that once they do become available all the top 40 places may be occupied by the Beatles¹⁵. The European City of Culture celebrations in Liverpool in 2008 opened with a visit from Ringo Starr and featured a McCartney concert as its centrepiece. An announcement by Starr in October 2008 that he was now too busy to sign autographs, an attempt, perhaps, to finally stop being Beatle Ringo made the BBC News (BBC News, 2008a). Following a messy media frenzy of a divorce McCartney, however, seems to be on the opposite trajectory, touring and continuing to perform Beatles' songs for the faithful, also making the news in October 2008 with a concert in Israel to mark the lifting of a ban on the Beatles performing there introduced in 1965 (BBC News, 2008b). And as this chapter was being written up, Beatle stories which made the news in November 2008 included the auctioning of what is claimed to be the signature of the 'real' Eleanor Rigby, McCartney's acceptance of a specially created ultimate legend award at the 2008 MTV awards in Liverpool and the possible release of an experimental Beatles track *Carnival of Light* (1967) which was considered too radical to release in 1967. Elsewhere popular Australian soap *Neighbours* featured four brothers named John, Paul, George and Ringo by their Beatle-fan parents and John Lewis' Christmas advertising campaign featured *From Me to You* (1963) as a soundtrack. And as an addendum to the "bigger than Jesus" debate outlined earlier in the chapter, the BBC ran a "Vatican 'forgives' John Lennon" story (Willey, 2008) in which a "semi-official" Vatican newspaper dismissed Lennon's comments as "a youthful joke" (Willey, 2008 : 1).

Conclusion

Marshall (2000 : 174) claims that the Beatles:

“... provide a road map for the organisation of the contemporary music personality”

¹⁴ EMI have now made all of the Beatles' solo work available for download.

¹⁵ To be frank, I was rather hoping this would happen before I finished the thesis. A sort of final vindication of the arguments in this chapter! However, the BBC announced in November 2008 that the deal was "stalled". "EMI want something we're not prepared to give 'em. It's between EMI and the Beatles I think, what else is new?" commented Paul McCartney (Youngs, 2008 : 1).

Creating a situation through which popular music, in subsequent decades, became a site for debate about youth, sexuality, gender, race and identity, the power of celebrity and its impact on the realities of everyday life. David Bowie's representation of gender tourism (Reynolds and Ross, 1995) in the early 1970s, punk's political and stylistic ramifications in the later 1970's (Hebdidge, 1978) and Madonna's sexual politics of the 1980's (Marshall, 2000) all provide examples of the claim. The Beatles' role in providing a blueprint, a road map, within this context has been discussed in this chapter, asserting that they provide a suitable case study with particular reference to the examination of changing representations of masculinity in a particular historical period and a male cultural phenomenon through which to reflect on social changes for men in this period. Their phenomenal global popularity, the way in which The Beatles as a phenomenon seemed to be a part of the national psyche, their right-place-at-the-right-time-ness in relation to the mass media in this period and the way in which they have become retrospectively symbiotic with the 1960s are all factors, discussed here, which, it can be argued, make them fit for this purpose. That they remain culturally significant in a populist sense in the 21st century, a period in which they have also finally begun to be recognised as such within the Academy, provides a further rationale.

Development of the Theoretical and Methodological Framework

Development of the idea

As discussed in the first section of this chapter, work on gender, identity and men and masculinities, in particular, began to creep into my teaching in the late 1990s, with work on changing representations of masculinities in a particular period in British social history. It was from this work that the idea of looking at changing representations emerged. I was particularly interested in the idea of dominant and resistant discourses, linked to a growing interest in the work of Michael Foucault but also returning to the work of Antonio Gramsci and the Birmingham School that had interested me as an undergraduate student in the 1980s. Having engaged in some of

the literature around men and masculinities I discovered that Jeff Hearn was based at Manchester University and approached him for an informal chat. This quickly resulted in the submission of two possible ideas for a research proposal (see Appendix 2), one based around rapid changes in representations of men and masculinities in the 1960s (containing a case study on the Beatles) and one arguing that the representations of masculinities to be found in the 1970s hark back to the eras pre-1960 as a way of re-establishing “certainty” after the social changes of the 1960s (I have a forthcoming book chapter which uses this idea and the BBC’s highly successful TV series *Life on Mars* (2006) used this very premise in juxtaposing representations of 1970s’ and 21st century masculinities).

Following discussions I attempted to combine the two ideas into one proposal (see Appendix 2) but eventually settled on “idea one” as the basis for the study, with the idea of combining documentary research and interviews in a multi-method study to examine changing representations of masculinities in the period 1960-1970. Over a period of time the interviews were “in”, then “out” and then “in” again, within a debate about whether it would be “too much”, and texts where masculinities were on display such as sit-com, advertisements and films were considered and some preliminary work was done around this.

However, Jeff Hearn moved to the University of Huddersfield and, as the study was under way and we had established what I considered to be a good working relationship, it made sense to register there. Viv Burr joined as a second supervisor and further discussions around the documentary research focussed on the idea of using the Beatles as a single case study through which to study representations of and reflections on men and masculinities as a more original approach, rather than combining it with other case studies around sit-coms and advertisements. At this stage I was conceptualising the Beatles as “a thing” through which masculinities were reflected but subsequent chapters will explain the development and further articulation of this idea.

With a supervisory team with a track record of publication in men and masculinities, representations, social constructionism and media texts, all of which were components of the emerging idea I had for the study, the theoretical and methodological

framework began to take shape. The starting point in terms of visual material was *The Beatles Anthology TV Series* (The Beatles, 2003), an “official” history of the group featuring interviews, film clips and live performances spanning the period 1957-70, leading to the birth of what are now known as “Anthology days”, where a non-academic friend and I spent an eight hour day watching The Anthology and, on subsequent “Anthology Days”, the films. It was decided that the four live action films, a chance to look at the Beatles in 1964, 1965, 1967 and 1970, would provide a suitable and manageable sample with a framework of discourse analysis within textual analysis (van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough, 1995; McKee, 2003). This was then used as a framework for analysis, drawing also on the work of Gramsci (1971), Foucault (1980) and Hall (1997).

The use of intertexts (McKee, 2003), including academic work, and music press articles and newspaper reports, both from the 1960s and the present day, a series of articles reprinted from the *New Musical Express* in 2002 and three special editions of *Mojo* magazine, from the same year, chronicling the Beatles’ history, also proved useful, both in combination with the data analysis and in terms of providing the rationale for “Why The Beatles?” in this chapter.

Other contextual material needed for the study related to men and masculinities and the 1960s as a period of social change and there are separate chapters on each of these areas.

In addition a total of 11 interviews took place, using a semi-structured format which incorporated visual trigger material from the documentary research stage, using a sample of men aged between 18 and 74, from a variety of social backgrounds, with attention to ethnicity and sexuality as part of the sampling process. Originally ideas around triangulation and checking out the findings of the documentary research against real life experiences and perceptions were in my head but as I became more embroiled in theoretical debates around research methodology and the complexities of the representation/reality and past/present debates this idea retreated into the distance. However, an interesting relationship between the documentary and interview data did emerge, but the interviews also provided something of a bonus in that as well as addressing the key research questions that had been formulated they also yielded

interesting data around the way that men construct their own masculinities (in this case in the interview situation).

Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured as follows; **Part One: literature and methodology** starts with Chapter 2, a review of the literature on social change in “the sixties” in the UK. This chapter explores the contested nature of the 1960s, social changes for men in this period and the rising importance of the mass media in the 1960s; a development central to a thesis on representation. The chapter concludes with an examination of the relationship between the Beatles and the 1960s and the ways in which they have retrospectively become synonymous with the decade in terms of representation.

Chapter 3 is a review of the literature on men and masculinities, which includes a section on 1950s’ man, as a background to the changes in the decade which followed and a section on the Beatles vis-à-vis masculinities, a further exploration of the use of the Beatles as a case study through which to examine representations of men masculinities.

Chapter 4 examines the literature on representation (including representations of the Beatles) in some detail as a precursor to Chapter 5, which is an outline of the methodological approach and research methods used within the thesis. This includes a discussion of epistemological and ontological positions and a rationale for the multi-method study, plus a discussion of the research process, methods and analytical framework used.

Part 2: Analysis and Findings begins with Chapter 6, an analysis and discussion of the Beatles’ four live action films, which are used as a case study of broader Beatle texts through which an examination of representations of and reflections on masculinities at work in the 1960s takes place. This piece of documentary research was combined with fieldwork, a set of interviews with a stratified opportunistic

sample of men. The analysis and discussion of this field work is outlined in Chapter 7: Looking back – what do men say?

The thesis concludes with Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusion, a chapter which draws together findings from the previous chapters and explores a number of emergent points of discussion. The research questions formulated were as follows:

- (i) How did representations of masculinities change in the '60s? (with particular reference to the Beatles as a case study).
- (ii) Can examples of masculinities be identified in this period which appear to be resistant to dominant discourses?
- (iii) Do men, in retrospect, recognise the '60s as a period of social change for men and can they identify the role of representation within the process of social change?

(See Appendix 4 for a more detailed plan of the thesis).

Part One

Literature and Methodology

Chapter 2: Social Change in “The Sixties” in the UK

Introduction

This chapter aims to do three things. Firstly, to examine the debates about social change in the UK in the 1960s, to examine different perspectives on the changes that occurred and the contested readings of the 1960s as a particular historical period.

The second aim of the chapter is to pull from this examination, particular issues which are pertinent to the subject matter of this thesis (i.e. representations of men and masculinities). The focus of the discussion is, then, on social change and its impact on men in this period¹, and on the rise of mass media with particular reference to the way in which TV became a dominant medium over this particular decade, changing the audience’s relationship with the outside world, bringing the outside inside and creating a new celebrity class. Part of this work focuses on the role of the arts in social change and the beginnings of academic interest in popular culture².

The final part of the chapter examines the relationship between The Beatles and the 1960s³ examining how and why they became (and seem to remain) synonymous with the decade.

“The Sixties”

Introduction

“... there was a self contained period ..., commonly known as ‘the Sixties’, of outstanding historical significance, in that what happened during this period transformed social and cultural developments for the rest of the century.”

(Marwick, 1998 : 5)

¹ See Chapter 3 and Chapter 6.

² See Chapter 4.

³ See Chapter 1 and Chapter 6.

Marwick (1998) puts forward a strong case for reading the 1960s as a period of cultural revolution, arguing that the reason that debates about the decade, its meanings and its significance, continue to rage on is because the decade provided a focus for a series of discussions about the sort of society that we wanted and he argues that we are still having those debates. The 1960s is a contested decade in many senses, and this is certainly reflected in the key texts that have been used in the construction of this chapter. Marwick's *The Sixties* (1998) provides a comprehensive chronicle of events of the decade, including those in the US, France and Italy, particularly those of the late 1960s, often characterised as student revolution time, which contribute to his notion of cultural revolution and the 1960s as the place where unresolved debates about society, class, gender, race and sexuality began.

Sandbrook's *Never Had it so Good* (2005) and *White Heat* (2006) focus on events in the UK and have a key theme of continuity which runs counter to the social revolution discourse. These three texts provide a very comprehensive review of events, ideas and debates around the 1960s which it would be impossible to replicate here. Instead, this chapter will focus on topics which are central to this thesis on men and masculinities and, therefore, relate to discussion in other chapters in the thesis.

The contested nature of "the Sixties" is reflected in the debate about what is meant by "the Sixties". Marwick (1998 : 5) states:

"The implications of periodization is that particular chunks of time contain a certain unity, in that events, attitudes, values, social hierarchies within the chosen 'period' seem to be closely integrated with each, to share common features ..."

Thus, authors writing about the 1960s tend to have different conceptualisations of what constitutes the particular period of unity. Marwick (1998) conceptualises the "long sixties" as running from 1958 to 1974 with the "high sixties" being 1964 to 1968. Sandbrook (2005; 2006) divides his texts between 1956/63 (the Suez Crisis, which he sees as an important marker as the end of British imperialism, to the emergence of the Beatles) and 1963/70. Hobsbawm (1994) talks of a golden age of

affluence from the late 1950s to the mid 1970s and there are a number of other variations⁴ (Sandbrook, 2005). Therefore, there is no real agreement about the boundaries of the period that we call the sixties. More populist approaches often choose to take the obvious route and begin in 1960 and end in 1970 (UK Living, 2008) but the academic debate is important in that the debate itself, it can be argued, is yet another competing discourse about the sixties.

As previously stated, Marwick (1998) and Sandbrook (2005, 2006) offer comprehensive accounts which outline some of these competing discourses. Marwick (1998 : 3) succinctly sums up the retrospective view on the 1960s:

“For some it is a golden age, for others a time when the old secure framework of morality, authority and discipline disintegrated. In the eyes of the far left, it is the era when revolution was at hand, only to be betrayed by the feebleness of the faithful and the trickery of the enemy; to the radical right, an era of subversion and moral turpitude.”

While Marwick’s (1998) account argues the social revolution line, one of his key themes is that it was a time of social change for ordinary people and that these were the most radical changes. Sandbrook (2005; 2006), on the other hand, is at pains to point out that the “swinging sixties” discourse is overblown and inaccurate, taking the view that many others have in retrospect i.e. that “Swinging London” in the mid sixties only involved a couple of hundred celebrities and that real life (in Hull or wherever), remained unchanged. This “alternative” 1960s’ discourse is, in itself, it can be argued, as much of a fabrication as the discourse it seeks to challenge and that the sixties of “bingo, Blackpool and Bernie Inns” (Sandbrook, 2005 : xxiv) is as much of a cliché as the sixties of Terry and Julie⁵ rubbing shoulders with the Beatles at the Bag o’ Nails⁶. Sandbrook’s (2005; 2006) emphasis on continuity, though, is an

⁴ Veteran DJ Jimmy Saville used to host a show in the 1980s playing hits of the 1960s. On one such show I distinctly remember him talking about how the 1970s really began in the late 1960s and that the ‘60s had begun in the late ‘50s, with the advent of rock and roll, illustrating that the debate is also present in popular culture.

⁵ 1960s film stars Terry (Terence Stamp) and Julie (Christie) were immortalised in the Kinks’ *Waterloo Sunset* (1967).

⁶ The Bag o’ Nails was a London discotheque frequented by the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Animals and other 1960s pop groups. (See Melly [1970]). It is reportedly where Paul McCartney first met future wife Linda.

interesting theme and all of these arguments add to the debate about what happened in relation to men and masculinities in the 1960s. Sandbrook (2006) pulls together, in the epilogue of his second text, *White Heat*, the arguments about continuity with a section on *Dad's Army*⁷ arguing:

“*Dad's Army* might seem an incongruous monument to the culture of the 1960s, but just as much as any of the Beatles records or the trendy films of Swinging London, it captured the spirit of the age.”

(Sandbrook, 2006 : 746)

Sandbrook (2006 : 748) sees *Dad's Army* as a metaphor for the “cautious sixties”, its popularity dependent on changes in the media technology and the BBC itself throughout the 1960s. It's existence reflected the increasing role of TV in individualized forms of leisure (Baudrillard, 1998) yet the programme itself provided a nostalgic gaze into the past: to more certain times, perhaps, reviving the certainties of social class and gender roles that had been challenged throughout the decade and a reassurance in the midst of the “crisis in masculinity” discourse (Tolson, 1997; Kimmel, 1987; Whitehead, 2002), an affectionate look back at what Sandbrook (2006 : 747) refers to as “a settled, ordinary society untroubled by the corrosive effects of modernity.”

This “lack of real change” discourse was shared by John Lennon in a retrospective look at the 1960s made in the early 1970s:

“The people who are in control and in power and the class system and the whole bourgeois scene is exactly the same except that there is a lot of middle-class kids with long hair walking around London in trendy clothes and Kenneth Tynan's made a fortune out of the word ‘fuck’. But apart from that, nothing happened except that we all dressed up. The same bastards are in control, the same people are running everything, it's exactly the same. They

⁷ The popular sitcom *Dad's Army* (BBC 1968 – 77) hinged around the adventures of a Home Guard Unit in Walmington on Sea in the second World War. Captain Mainwaring (played by Arthur Lowe) and Sergeant Wilson (John le Mesurier) became well known in households across the UK.

hyped the kids and the generation ... There has been a change and we are a bit freer and all that, but it's the same game, nothing's really changed."

(Wenner, 1971: 11-12)

The discourse is certainly at odds with Marwick's (1998) notion of the 1960s as social revolution, Booker's (1969) age without precedent, an era he described as a time of "breakneck, irreversible and unprecedented change" (Sandbrook, 2005 : xv) or MacDonald's (1994 : 24) "revolution in the head."

Marwick's (1998) golden age versus moral turpitude quote is, though, a fair summing up of the way that the decade continues to be contested by the political left and right, and the constant revisionism that continually occurs. Columnist Peter Hitchens sums up the popular 1990s' Tory reading of what happened in the 1960s:

"We allowed our patriotism to be turned into a joke, wise sexual restraint to be mocked as prudery, our families to be defamed as nests of violence, loathing and abuse, our literature to be tossed aside like to much garbage and our church to be turned into a department of the Social Security system."

(Sandbrook, 2005 : xix)

Interestingly, Tony Blair, who in the early throes of his premiership in the late 1990s liked to play up his "child-of-the-sixties-I-was-in-a-band" credentials as he invited Oasis'⁸ and other retro-rockers to No 10, eventually seemed to also subscribe to the view that all current social ills can be traced back to that particular decade. In a speech announcing a new criminal justice programme in 2004⁹ he told the audience it was time for the end of the 1960s liberal consensus:

"Blair told his audience that the 1960s had been an era of 'freedom without responsibility', producing 'a group of young people who were brought up without parental discipline, without proper role models and without any sense of responsibility for others'."

(Sandbrook, 2005 : xix)

⁸ See Chapter 1.

⁹ Some would see this event as his "coming out" as the true inheritor of the Thatcher project (see Hall [1998]).

Competing discourses of the sixties, then, continue to circulate, and the debate often seems to focus on the results of what happened during the decade rather than address the question of whether or not change took place. Marwick (1998), in his introduction to *The Sixties*, lists sixteen “characteristics of a new era” (Marwick, 1998 : 16) or developments of the long sixties that he sees as important in marking the 1960s as a period of radical social change. These include the formation of new subcultures, the rise of individualism, an emphasis on youth, advances in technology, improvements in material wealth, new modes of popular culture and concerns for civil and personal rights. All of these, he argues, form a break with the past, a fact not overlooked by Sandbrook (2005) who, in describing the Prime Minister Harold Macmillan’s position caught up in the Profumo Scandal¹⁰ (on the eve of Marwick’s [1998] high sixties) illustrates the way in which a number of issues were drawn together and placed into the public arena for debate in a way that would not have been possible in the previous decade:

“In the summer of 1963 Macmillan was almost engulfed by the Profumo Sex Scandal, which seemed to knit together a list of contemporary anxieties about materialism, promiscuity, subversion and corruption.”

(Sandbrook, 2005 : xvi)

Profumo is just one of many famous men who populate the written histories of this contested decade.

Men and the 1960s

Hearn (2004) has pointed out that men have been writing about men for a long time but calling it something else (for example, history or sociology) and the history of the 1960s is no different. The Beatles have been chosen as a focus for this thesis as,

¹⁰ See Sandbrook (2005) Chapter 17 for a full account. The scandal was based around revelations that Tory Cabinet Minister John Profumo had been having an affair with call girl Christine Keeler, who, was also having an affair with Soviet spy Yergey Ivanov, the implication being that a threat to national security had been posed. Profumo lied to the House over the issue.

arguably, the most famous men of the decade¹¹ but the written history of the 1960s is, essentially, a history of men and both Marwick's (1998) and Sandbrook's (2005; 2006) texts illustrate this. Marwick's (1998) accounts of international revolutionary activities focus on male activists, and his discussion of civil unrest in the US follows the usual JFK/Martin Luther King axis. Sandbrook's account of Winston Churchill's funeral opens *White Heat* (2006) and the class war of the early 1960s is characterised as a battle between Lord Home and Harold Wilson with the Wilson/Heath 1970 general election battle ending the decade. All of this is fascinating from a point of view of the examination of changing representations of masculinities in the decade¹². Sandbrook's account of the Suez Crisis which opens *Never Had it so Good* (2005) is particularly interesting in this context, as the test of Britain's imperial power in the world is linked to the test of Prime Minister Anthony Eden's masculinity, drawing on notions of Brittan's (1989) masculinism as a particular set of values¹³. Much is made of Eden's "man-about-town" persona (Hayward and Dunn, 2001) with a cabinet colleague going as far as to describe him as "part mad baronet, part beautiful women" (Sandbrook, 2005 : 8). The failure of the Suez adventure, Britain's dependent relationship with the USA¹⁴ and the event's historical significance as a marker of the decline of Britain as an imperial power is all wrapped up in a discourse around Eden's masculinity, his weakness due to failing health and his "refusal to be more ruthless" (Sandbrook, 2005 : 8)¹⁵. This is important within the context of this thesis in that the "end of an era" discourse, whether around Suez or the death of Churchill, the great war leader, can be read as the end of an era for the unquestioning acceptance of the dominant values of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) and the beginning of a challenge to the notion of hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004). Later arguments will be presented around the UK's cultural dominance, particularly in the early 1960s, and the opportunities offered by the post-imperialist environment in terms of the emergence of alternative versions of masculinity, both real and representational. When Sandbrook (2005 : xvii) describes Britain as "a country on the verge of an exciting new era of opportunity and possibility" as the

¹¹ See Chapter 1.

¹² See Chapter 3.

¹³ See Chapter 3.

¹⁴ Discourses around dependency and masculinity re-emerged in the early 21st century with the popular press characterizing Tony Blair as George Bush's "poodle" because of his support for the war in Iraq.

¹⁵ See Sandbrook (2005).

1960s began, the ways in which this statement could apply specifically to men will be explored¹⁶ in the next section.

Social Changes for Men

Never had it so good

In this section, it is the intention to outline some of the key social changes for men in the period, starting with a rather traditional facts and figures approach, drawing on the in depth work of Marwick (1998; 2003) and Sandbrook (2005; 2006), and ending with a look at the way in which discourses around masculinity pervaded much of the discussion of the changes of the 1960s.

As already discussed, “the sixties” is a contested period which political commentators often tend to think of as starting sometime in the often misquoted “Never had it so good” late 1950s¹⁷. At the heart of this discourse is the world of work for men and the changes that occurred, particularly in relation to increased standards of living. In 1951 average weekly earnings for men over 21 were £8.50 per week. This had risen to £15.35 by 1961 and £28.05 by 1970. Retail prices were 63% higher in 1969 than in 1955 but average wage rates showed an 88% increase in the same period. This, therefore, shows a significant increase in standards of living (Marwick, 2003). These figures are based on average wage rates. The average middle class salary is calculated to have risen by 127% in the same period, while the price of consumer goods fell.

The period is characterized by an increase in consumer goods, the new necessities of the affluent society. In 1956 only 8% of households owned a fridge. By 1962 this had risen to 33% and, by 1969, 69% of households owned one (Marwick, 2003). This is a huge change in terms of patterns of food purchase and consumption, but also in terms of what was deemed a necessary item for the household. Similarly, in 1951, only 1.5 million households had a telephone, rising to 4.2 million in 1966. However, by 1970 just under half of all households in the UK had a telephone (Marwick, 2003;

¹⁶ See Chapter 6.

¹⁷ What Harold Macmillan actually said was “... let’s be frank about it, most of our people have never had it so good.” See Sandbrook (2005).

Sandbrook, 2006). In a period characterised by discourses of technology and communication, this is an interesting statistic.

Car ownership is another statistic which offers a glimpse of significant social change in terms of the increased purchasing of consumer goods, changing standards of living and a shift towards a domesticity based on home and individualism (Segal, 1988; Sandbrook, 2006). In 1950 there were 2.3 million cars and vans on UK roads, rising to 9.1 million by 1960 and 11.8 million by 1970. The four-fold increase between 1950 and 1960 reflects a trend based on the affluent society thesis (Sandbrook, 2005) while a doubling of passenger kilometres travelled (1000 kilometres in 1961, 2000 kilometres in 1971) is also a reflection on the infamous axing of the railways in 1963 (Marwick 1998; Sandbrook, 2006) and a change in attitudes around transport, and the car, in particular, which would lead to huge social changes for many cities, with the development of the motorway networks in the UK throughout the 1960s (Marwick, 1998).

These changes happened within a discourse around the new post-war affluence, a “never had it so good” period following the austerity of the second world war and the continued rationing of food and other consumer goods well into the 1950s (Sandbrook, 2005), all of which was based on an assumption, that this represented progress, that it was a “good thing” and that men, as the main wage earners and, therefore at the heart of the discourse, would be content to carry on as usual. The next chapter looks at the work of Ehrenreich (1983) and Segal (1988) in examining “1950s’ man”, particularly with reference to the contradictions inherent in the produce/ consume cycle that men not only found themselves in, in this period, but which was seen as the way forward to prosperity and affluence. As Marwick (2003 : 91) states:

“Perhaps the visible growth in the organisation of durable consumer goods was necessary to help workers forget the conditions of the work place.”

Men At Work

The principles of the assembly line, imported from the USA, whilst producing the shiny new durable goods of the late 1950s, led to routine and repetitive work for large numbers of unskilled workers (Marwick, 2003). On the subject of work, Marwick (2003 : 89) goes on to say:

“On the one hand it is the curse by which almost all human beings are afflicted; on the other it is the activity through which most people establish their identity, feel pride, and, perhaps, find fruition or, at least, it is the activity which fills the largest slice of any person’s time between birth and death.”

Men’s work, then, in particular, is at the heart of much of the discussion in the next chapter; an examination of the ideas of masculinism (Brittan, 1989), hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) and Ehrenreich (1983) and Segal’s (1988) male revolt of the late 1950s and early 1960s¹⁸.

Again, though, this seems to be a contested area and one fraught with contradictions. While a large number of working class men were certainly caught up in the mind-numbing process of manufacturing it was the decline in this process that would be blamed for the social ills and rising unemployment rates of subsequent decades (Marwick, 1998). Between 1960 and 1998, 5 million jobs were shed by the manufacturing sector in the UK, including what had been significant employers in the steel and motor vehicle industries. As production of manufactured goods declined in the UK, employment in the sector fell from 42% of male employment in 1955 to just 18% in 1998 (Marwick, 1998). That particularly male institution, the trade union movement (which was predominantly linked to manufacturing at this point) was an important feature of the world of work in the 1960s. According to Marwick (2003 : 131):

“The basic point to be stressed is that up ‘til the late sixties trade union activity undoubtedly demonstrated the deep sense of cultural identity and class awareness of the British working class, it did not provide evidence of sharp class conflict in British society.”

¹⁸ See Chapter 3.

Throughout this period the number of strikes and days lost through strikes remained fairly constant and it is only towards the end of the 1960s that unions began to come into serious conflict with the Labour Government over wage restraint (Marwick, 1998; Sandbrook, 2006). The escalation of strike activity between the late 1960s and early 1970s illustrates this. Strike days per 1000 employees for the period 1965-69 stood at 156. For the period 1970-74 the figure was 585.

Cultural Revolution or Shift to Consumerism?

Social change around work, then, is a key feature of the 1960s, perhaps illustrating Sandbrook's (2006) point that, while the period is often popularly discussed in terms of youth, rebellion and revolution, gradual change and continuity is a defining feature of the decade. Marwick (1998), too, has argued that the increase in standards of living for ordinary working people is something which can be seen as a positive development of the 1960s. This question of work, and its relationship to an increased emphasis on consumer capitalism in the period, is important in locating the position of men, generally, within what is often characterized as a period of rapid social change.

MacDonald (1994) points out that, while Marwick's (1998) cultural revolution of the sixties has to be seen as some sort of reality, the 1960s is better characterized as "a revolution in the head" (MacDonald, 1994 : 24). One of the great contradictions of the decade he argues, is that amidst challenges to established practices and values, it is where capitalism beds in and the values of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) take further root. This is a discourse in direct opposition to that which has often surfaced in subsequent decades; the sixties as the breakdown of moral order and, as such, the events and values of the decade as responsible for what are perceived as negative social changes, a discourse promoted enthusiastically by the Tory New Right in the 1980s and more recently, as already seen, by the inheritor of the Thatcher project, Tony Blair (Hall, 1998).

MacDonald (1994 : 26-7) states:

“In the Sixties ... socially liberating post-war affluence conspired with a cocktail of scientific innovations too potent to resist. TV, satellite communications, affordable private transport, amplified music, chemical contraception and the nuclear bomb. For ordinary people – the true movers and shakers of the Sixties – these factors produced a restless sense of urgency headily combined with unprecedented opportunities for individual freedom.”

Cleverly, Packard's (1957) *Hidden Persuaders*, the men from the advertising agencies, had managed to equate the rise in consumer goods with the notion of individual ownership and hence freedom, what MacDonald (1994 : 27) calls “the mass shift to individualistic materialism”, and he draws parallels with the dominance of science in the Age of Enlightenment (Laqueur, 1990)¹⁹, seeing the Sixties as another period where science (particularly through the White Heat of technology discourse at work in the period)²⁰ brought about a change in social values, with consumerism coming to replace “the Christian glue which once cemented western society” (MacDonald, 1994 : 26). The labour-saving consumer durables, he argues, were another factor in breaking down traditional communality, as Hoggart (1957) had previously argued. The TV, telephone, hi-fi, and washing machine all allowed individuals to function in the private domesticated world of “the family” or “the individual”, while car ownership negated the need to travel en masse in a public space. “What mass society unconsciously began in the Sixties, Thatcher and Reagan raised to the level of ideology in the eighties” claims MacDonald (1994 : 29), and the key to the maintenance of this ideology was the work ethic, particularly for men, combined with an emphasis on individualised domestication, a process which had begun in the 1950s (Segal, 1988). This line of argument, then, challenges other discourses at work around social changes for men, particularly that relating to ideas about sexual revolution and the permissive society.

The Sexual Revolution

¹⁹ See Chapter 3.

²⁰ See Sandbrook (2006) Chapter 3.

The “so-called” sexual revolution and onset of the permissive society, seems, again, to be challenged by some of the statistics on marriage and the new developments in living arrangements within the context of the urban planning of the 1960s.

In the mid 1960s, 95% of men and 96% of women under the age of 45 were married (Sandbrook, 2006), while the proportion of married to single people in the total population remained constant between 1951 and 1971. What Marwick (2003 : 136) calls “the essential glue of the social fabric, the family” seemed to be well and truly bonded throughout the period. The *Sunday Pictorial* had stated in 1953 ‘An unmarried person in this country is a social misfit, and is suspect’ (Sandbrook, 2006 : 155) and this state of affairs still seemed to hold in the early 1960s.

Sandbrook (2006)²¹ provides an extensive historical perspective on the sexual revolution arguing, again, that both activity and attitudes had changed gradually since the early 20th century and concluding that “for millions of people the sexual revolution of the Sixties was little more than an illusion” (Sandbrook, 2006 : 471). However, the changes in the laws on abortion, homosexuality and the availability of the contraceptive pill, which all happened in the late 1960s, can be read within Marwick’s (1998) cultural revolution or as part of MacDonald’s (1994) revolution in the head thesis, part of an increased tolerance towards others and the activities they engage in and a discourse around the possibilities of pleasure (Stacey, 1992) for men in the period. Later in this chapter the changing role of the mass media will be examined with an emphasis on its role in bringing these possibilities into the lives of 1960s’ man, with new ideas and representations of different lifestyle choices, ways of being, and identity possibilities, as a part of the modernising of Britain.

The White Heat of Technology

“To the casual observer of 1965 or 1966 there were plenty of ways in which the very look of Britain was becoming more ‘modern’. Motorways, housing estates, high-rise tower blocks, new schools and hospitals, new cars on the

²¹ See Sandbrook (2006) Chapter 13.

roads, even new appliances in high street shops; all of these suggested that the country was rapidly moving ahead.”

(Sandbrook, 2006 : 159-60)

The new towns of the 1960s provide a representation of the modernisation agenda of Britain moving ahead and of new urban environments created to hold together the family, the glue of society (Marwick, 1998). The new towns of Skelmersdale (1961), Livingstone (1962), Runcorn (1964) and Milton Keynes (1967) were constructed with an emphasis on the car and “a palpable sense of technological enthusiasm” (Sandbrook, 2006 : 179) with some even having plans for monorail and hovercraft services. Given the historical perspective now available, and what has been documented of the failures of 1960s’ urban planning and attempts to mix the urban with green spaces, the ideas at work seem to have been overly optimistic, yet rooted in a belief in a better society (Crosland, 1956). The emergence of the new towns can definitely be read as a grand-scale investment in the discourse of the white heat of technology (Sandbrook, 2006) operating in the period. Home ownership doubled from 27% to 50% of all households between 1950 and 1970 and again this fits with MacDonalds’s (1994) thesis on the bedding in of capitalism.

“With home ownership came a new ethos of domesticity, fitting neatly with the new emphasis on the family unit and the pursuit of leisure. In the same period the number of gardens doubled to 14 million.”

(Sandbrook, 2006 : 183)

Sampson (1971), like Sandbrook (2006), interprets the love of home and garden, as well as the DIY boom of the late 1950s and early 1960s,²² as a sign of the inherent conservatism at play in British society in this period. Sampson’s (1971) 1960s’ man, and his review of 1960s’ masculinity, is very much of the hegemonic variety (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004), and not the challenging version offered by the Beatles in their films (see Chapter 6) or those at the centre of the Swinging London discourse (Melly, 1970). Rather, it is a man in his potting shed or

²² See Sandbrook (2006), Chapter 29, for a full account.

“mowing lawns, pampering pets, listening to music ... and watching television”
(Sampson, 1971 : 427).

The discourse which pulls together Sampson’s (1971) potting shed man and MacDonald’s (1994) future Thatcherites and Reaganites is that of the “white heat of technology”, a discourse which swept Harold Wilson’s Labour Government into power in 1964.

Addressing the Labour Party Conference in October 1963, Labour Leader, Harold Wilson gave his now famous speech on socialism recast in terms of scientific revolution:

“But the revolution cannot become a reality unless we are prepared to make far-reaching changes in economic and social attitudes which permeate our whole system of society. That Britain which is going to be forged in the white heat of this revolution will be no place for restrictive practices or for outdated methods on either side of industry ... In the Cabinet room and the board room alike, those charged with the control of our affairs must be ready to think and speak in the language of our scientific age.”

(Ziegler, 1993 : 143-4)

Wilson was to tie his, and the Labour party’s, colours to the mast of this scientific revolution, a discourse containing ideas around scientific advance, forging ahead and leaving behind the outdated “establishment” values of the privileged Tories, at this point led by Alec Douglas Home, a Lord, and close friend of the Queen. It also draws heavily on the ideas of the new classless society (Marwick, 1998) and juxtaposes Labour’s vision of a meritocracy with a society based on the old class divisions.

Boys’ Toys²³

The discourses at work in Wilson’s “enthusiasm for space age socialism” (Sandbrook, 2006 : 59) are important in the context of this thesis. The phrase “boys’ toys” was not

²³ “Take the Toys from the Boys” was used as a feminist anti-nuclear slogan in the 1980s.

really in common usage at the time but it is a set of policies, it can be argued, built on a vision of just that. Drawing on former Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's enthusiasm for the space age, the new consumer durable society of the early 1960s and on US President Jack Kennedy's youthful appeal and his enthusiasm for the space race (Sandbrook, 2005), the whole scientific revolution idea is imbued with the values of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) and is a discourse of masculinity at work in a wider sense.

Despite the failure of the actual policies and the whole space age revolution failing to materialise in British society, the ideas at work are important here. Even as he gave the speech in 1963, some parts of the media were sceptical about his ability to deliver, seeing the ideas as lacking substance and detail, at odds with the traditional values of the Labour movement, and based on an optimism about economic growth that did not materialise (Sandbrook, 2005; 2006).

In 1965, satirical magazine *Private Eye* mocked the language and ideas at work in the discourse talking about "synthetic faith", "the jack-boots of dynamism", "bashing aside the cobwebs of reaction and complacency" and "getting Britain moving" (Ingrams, 1965 : 119). Elsewhere political commentators bemoaned the worsening financial situation and Britain's failure to remain internationally competitive predicting that Wilson's vision would fail to materialise, based as it was on "Mickey Mouse Sociology" (Sandbrook, 2006).

Based on the phallic symbols of the space age, the thrusting Mercury and Apollo rockets seen on UK TV screens carrying American astronauts into space in the early 1960s, and Britain's own phallic symbol of modern Britain, the Post Office Tower, (opened in October 1965), the scientific jet-age discourse led to an open debate about the gulf between science and the arts in the UK at this point. Sandbrook (2006) documents the bitter exchanges between leading intellectuals C.P. Snow, for the hard "masculine" scientific approach and F.R. Leavis for the "feminized" arts, which represented another of the "battles" over the "white heat" discourse and its implications for the wider society. Elsewhere, while scientific advances in medicine, manufacturing and communication had certainly changed the face of British society since the mid 1950s (Marwick, 2003), by the mid 1960s some media products were

warning of the threats of mechanisation. New Science-fantasy shows like *The Avengers* and *Dr Who* showed mechanical beings taking over the country (Sandbrook, 2005) while, in the US, films like *Dr Strangelove* (1963) and *Fail Safe* (1964) had plots which revolved around the failure of technology to prevent nuclear disaster (Hoberman, 2003). Already the late 1950s' enthusiasm for the space age, which followed the launching of Sputnik, the first space satellite, and the public's love of the new (Booker, 1969) seemed to be on the wane and challenged by media texts which illustrated that advancing technology may be a threat rather than a blessing. For working men in the UK, the discourse of automation leading to a revolution in working hours was in already full swing. As early as 1955 the *Daily Mirror* had advanced this model of a future society:

“Automation, according to the Mirror, would bring a four-day week and higher salaries, although office boys and factory girls would have to retrain to take care of the machines that would be doing their jobs. The Robot Revolution, the paper concluded, might well bring about something which socialists fundamentally believe in – a shorter working week for all, less drudgery for all, and therefore more leisure for all.”

(Sandbrook, 2006 : 45)

Crosland's *The Future of Socialism* (1956), took up similar themes, with a vision of the future as focussed as much on what happens out of work, on pleasure and leisure, as well as the means to get there. The book takes an anti-masculinist (Brittan, 1989) approach to the future:

“Now the time has come for ... a greater emphasis on private life, on freedom and dissent, on culture, beauty, leisure and even frivolity. Total abstinence and a good filing system are not now the right sign posts to the socialist Utopia; or at least, if they are, some of us will fall by the wayside.”

(Crosland, 1956 : 520)

Despite the signposts at work in the discourse of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) that surrounded the scientific revolution theories, the optimism operating within British politics, wider society, and reflected in popular culture, cannot be denied. That

automation would lead to the decline of traditional industry and huge job losses, particularly for men (Marwick, 1998; 2003) was not yet part of the public consciousness and at this point the lovers of all things new, the neophiliacs, as Booker (1969) termed them, still had the upper hand.

Juxtaposed with the masculinist (Brittan, 1989) white heat discourses, a modernised Britain was, however, still dependent on the male breadwinner and the concept of the family wage and the new domesticated male (Sampson's [1971] potting shed man), a 1950s' concept (Segal, 1988) in a 1960s world. In this sense, social changes for men in the 1960s can be seen as fraught with contradiction. These were certainly real changes in standards of living and a shifting of class boundaries for some (Marwick, 1998, Sandbrook, 2005) but these changes seemed to be bounded by discourses of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) and containment. Elsewhere, discourses of pleasure and possibility (Stacey, 1992) emerged for men and, in discussing The Beatles' films in Chapter 6, the importance of men's changing visual appearance and attitudes to work and resistance to dominant discourses or traditional versions of masculinity will be examined, and the issue of crisis versus opportunity explored.

1960s' media as contradictory cultural practice

The Mass Media in the 1960s

“‘The Sixties’ in Britain is a construct with varied and contested meanings. The earliest and perhaps most persistent derives from a composite of media – constructed images evoking material prosperity, cultural innovation and youthful rebellion.”

(Moore-Gilbert and Seed, 1992 : 1)

This section aims to explore the importance of the mass media in the 1960s, both in the sense of changes that took place in the mass media in that period, (technical and cultural), but also in the sense of its importance in constructing “the sixties”, both at the time and in the re-presentation, in retrospect, of what Moore-Gilbert and Seed (1992 : 1) call “the conventional emblems of the sixties”. The way in which the 1960s is understood as a set of particular images is a good example of the way in which

representation operates and is, therefore, an essential component of this thesis²⁴. There are some recently published examples of texts which illustrate this. Sandbrook's (2005) *Never Had it so Good*, which covers the period 1956-63, uses images on the cover which include Sean Connery as James Bond, the Mini, Harold Macmillan and a new housing estate. His *White Heat* (2006), which covers the period 1963-1970, uses images of model Jean Shrimpton, Bobby Moore holding the World Cup aloft, Harold Wilson, Carnaby Street, Diane Rigg in *The Avengers* and (of course) The Beatles. Andrew Marr's *History of Modern Britain*, a TV series which ran on BBC TV in 2007, used images of the Mini, Christine Keeler and Mandy Rice-Davies and Harold Wilson with the Beatles in an accompanying web-based piece (Marr, 2007). The piece is entitled *Goodbye to Monochrome*, again re-presenting a common discourse of the 1960s in terms of technical advance and change, encompassed at the time in Harold Wilson's white heat of technology speech and, in retrospect, through a number of media products. Texts such as Moore-Gilbert and Seed's *Cultural Revolution* (1992) or Aldgate et al.'s (2000) *Windows on the Sixties* provide an academic analysis of the ways in which different types of texts, texts from the worlds of art, publishing, the Academy, or those emanating from class, race and gender spaces (Moore-Gilbert and Seed, 1992), came together to form a diverse set of contradictory cultural practices which are often seen as part of a unified counterculture (MacDonald, 1994) or an attack on traditional values or 'the establishment'²⁵. The rise of Mary Whitehouse's National Viewers and Listeners Association²⁶ and the retrospective attitudes of the political right are testament to the perceived power of the media, particularly the "new" medium of TV, to shock, challenge and subvert. Above all, there seems to be an agreement that television, in particular, had become "a staple feature of home life" as noted by Neale and Krutnick (1990 : 209), while Ridgeman, (1992 : 147) states:

"The 1960s it seemed, was the era in which it became gradually apparent that, above all, in the public life of the nation, television mattered; a period in

²⁴ See Chapter 4.

²⁵ See later this Chapter.

²⁶ Mary Whitehouse was a high profile national campaigner. She founded The National Viewers and Listeners Association in 1963, based on Christian values, in opposition to increasing sex and violence on TV. Her adversarial relationship with BBC Director-General, Hugh Carleton Greene, was dramatised in the BBC's (2008) *Filth: The Mary Whitehouse Story*, starring Julie Walters as Whitehouse.

which the very nature of television and its position within the cultural life of the nation became a matter of public debate and involvement.”

Martin (1981), however, argues that the mass media is a vital component of the social changes that took place in the 1960s but identifies a need to examine the complexities rather than take at face value the retrospective re-presentation of events:

“Dominant representations of the 1960s too often fail to make careful analytical distinction or to identify the precise discourses and institutions where specific contestations were occurring at specific times”

(Martin, 1981 : 10)

He goes on to look at key themes within this debate: the self absorption of British culture and its rising dominance, particularly in the early 1960s, coinciding with a resurgence in the British film industry²⁷, and the rise of TV in the UK. These themes provide a backdrop against which to read prominent cultural texts of the period, such as the Bond films or the visual media output of the Beatles. This is, then, an argument that there was a radicalism, a counter-cultural element at work, in many media products of the period, some of which began to examine and unpack the boundaries between the personal and political (Martin, 1981). The sex and violence on TV debate, which led to the confrontation between Mary Whitehouse and the BBC Director General Hugh Carleton-Green, is a good example of this. This battle of wills and contradictory ideological positions illustrates well the shift in perceptions among broadcasters so that (in the case of Carleton-Greene) they saw themselves as taking account of changes in society with a duty to be ahead of public opinion, rather than pandering to a lowest common denominator. It is also a good illustration of the way that this change in approach became part of a public debate about both change and how that change should be represented, particularly by the BBC. Ridgeman (1992 : 158) advances the view that:

“The great ‘drama’ of television during this period, it seems, is to be found in the critical struggle inside the institution and in the public debate surrounding

²⁷ See Chapter 6.

it – over the political status of broadcasting and its relationship with the whole unsettling process of social change²⁸.

Martin (1981) argues that the outcomes of this debate were highly influential over the decades that followed. The attacks on institutions and established practices apparent in the satire movement, for example, took a cultural rather than political form. This is just one example. As Martin (1981 : 9) states: “... in all kinds of ways the political ramifications of cultural change in the 1960s were undeniably significant”.

Another key theme is the emergence of a discussion about the role of the media in the democratization of culture. The establishing of the Open University and the Arts Council can be seen as major landmarks in this sense (Martin, 1981), while the establishing of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University in 1964 (Ridgeman, 1992), the beginnings of debate within the Academy around the relationship between high and low culture and the emergence of media and cultural studies as an academic subject area are all part of a recognition of the increasing role of the mass media in everyday life (Gripsrud, 2002).

The Dream Life: blurred boundaries

Hoberman’s (2003) *Dream Life: Movies, Media and the Mythology of the Sixties* conceptualises the events of the 1960s in the USA as a breakdown of barriers between political events and the movies. Hoberman (2003 : xii) claims that

“the distinction between passive consumer and active participant blurred, movies might be political events and political events were experienced as movies.”

The 1960s then, can be seen, in this context, as a time when a blurring between representation and reality begins to break down, an argument supported by the example of the rise in importance of the media in political campaigning plus the

²⁸ A similar debate reared its head again in late 2008, following the Ross/Brand affair (Jones, 2008), and in early 2009 over the BBC’s refusal to broadcast a humanitarian appeal for aid in Gaza (Percival and Dodd, 2009).

coverage of key events such as John F. Kennedy's assassination, the Vietnam war and the Moon landing, all of which were experienced through the shared medium of television, but also reflected in film products of the time. Hoberman (2003 : xi) states:

“A movie is an idea that accumulates meaning as it is conceived, produced, exhibited and reviewed. Because it is an idea consumed by millions, a movie can also be a source of group identity. ... The historian Benedict Anderson has described the vast audience as an imagined community: Marshall McLuhan coined the phrase ‘global village’ to describe its imagined intimacy.”

To illustrate, Hoberman (2003) cites US President John F. Kennedy's fascination with the Bond movies and his role as the first real style-over-substance, media-friendly world leader, links his cold-war machinations, such as the Cuban Missile crisis, to films such as *Dr Strangelove* (1963) and *Fail Safe* (1964) and sees the violence of the Vietnam war at work in the increasing explicitly violent films of the late 1960s such as *Bonnie and Clyde* (1968). He also sees another Warren Beatty film, *Shampoo* (1975), not made until the mid-1970s but set around Nixon's 1968 presidential victory, as the cultural product which best reflects the end of the 1960s. Hoberman's (2003) arguments are interesting and compelling as he advances the idea of the 1960s as a sort of dream life played out through the mass media, with particular reference to film. In a totally different way Mike Myers' *Austin Powers* films advance the ideas of a 1960s' dream life fraught with pleasure, a retrospective frivolous interpretation and representation of Sheila Rowbotham's (2001 : 255) phrase “the promise of a dream”, films which draw on the pleasures of a set of clichéd images from a number of 1960s' swinging London/sci-fi/ spy thrillers²⁹. Myers has re-presented the 1960s to a new generation through images of the E-type Jaguar, frilly shirts, sexually available women in short skirts, discotheques and exotic locations and, in doing so, has drawn on media representations of the 1960s which have been around for the past three

²⁹ Mike Myers is quoted as saying that he was taken aback by the way in which people “got” the Austin Powers films and seemed to derive as much pleasure from them as he had from the original “swinging” sixties films he used to watch with his brothers.

decades, a good example of the way that representation and re-presentation is a self-perpetuating process (Hall, 1997).

In a later chapter³⁰ The Beatles' films are considered as a case study in changing representations of men and masculinities in the 1960s and, in many ways, these films fit Hoberman's (2003) thesis; a dream life version of the decade which seemed to open up possibilities and opportunity, which is reflected in retrospective memories of fans who experienced them through their mass media personification³¹. However, it is likely that the way in which they first experienced that personification in the early 1960s would be at home, through the increasingly popular medium of TV.

The TV in the home

That television had certainly become an important part of the fabric of UK life by the early 1960s seems to be a reasonable observation. By 1961, 75% of households had a TV set³² and it seemed to be the prime form of entertainment, with the set, itself established as a focus of the domesticated environment (Spigel, 1992).

Silverstone (1994) argues that TV's status as a domestic medium is important and this has particular relevance in relation to Segal's (1988) arguments about the 1950s as a period when the bourgeois notion of home as a warm domestic space, where families came together, was undergoing a revival, with men being drawn much more into the domesticated home space. The rising importance of TV as the most popular form of entertainment, an alternative to the cinema or the pub or club, is central to her thesis. Philo (1990) and Silverstone (1994) see the rise of television as also being influential both in bringing the outside (events) into the inside (domestic space) but also through thematizing the family and gender, particularly with the introduction of the soap opera and the sit-coms in the late 1950s and early 1960s as spaces where representations of gender would become highly visible (Neale and Krutnick, 1990).

³⁰ See Chapter 6.

³¹ See Chapters 1 and 8.

³² In 1951 there were 764,000 combined radio and TV licences. By 1960 there were ten million (Sandbrook, 2005).

The TV set itself has a number of symbolic functions and these were only just beginning to emerge in this period. Gripsrud (2002 : 26) describes how early sets were:

“more clearly perceived as an alien element in the home, possibly a sort of wild animal one might have to *domesticate*. It was hidden behind doors, covered with cloths and topped with a maze of family photos, plants and knick-knacks”.

Thus, the TV set in the domestic environment began to provide a focus for family life, a technological link to people, places and events in a global setting or access to “a simultaneous experience of a particular event” (Gripsud, 2002 : 28). More than that, though, Silverstone (1994) claims that TV (and the radio to a lesser extent) provides a structure through which lives are ordered, providing a mediation between the construction of identity³³ and the macro functioning of society, again, reflecting an inside/outside binary (Petersen, 1998).

Not everyone in the early 1960s thought that these developments were a good thing. Arthur Seaton, the hero of angry novelist Alan Sillitoe’s *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960) was less than enamoured with the new found status of TV.

“Television, he thought scornfully when she had gone, they’d go barmy if they had them taken away ... They wouldn’t know what to do. There’d be a revolution.”

(Sillitoe, 1960 : 184)

This, again, reflects the contested nature of this particular aspect of the 1960s, with Arthur Seaton’s position challenged by those who saw the cultural opportunities offered by the new medium as the dawning of something else (Bourdieu, 1998).

³³ See Chapter 4.

The '60s as a Golden Age

The media as a place where “more abstract forms of community” (Gripsud, 2002 : 23) are established is an idea which is central to one of the dominant discourses about the media in its UK context in the 1960s, that of the golden age of television, with particular reference to the output of the BBC, under the directorship of Hugh Carleton-Greene in this period. Ridgeman (1992 : 139) provides a good example of the discourse at work, seeing 1960s' TV as:

“... an era characterized by experiment, innovation and a particular sort of cultural iconoclasm. New technologies, new practices and institutional structures emerged to provide the bases of the broadcasting that was to prevail for the next quarter of a century.”

This discourse is certainly powerful, seeing TV as a central element in Marwick's (1998) cultural revolution, a cornerstone of what he describes as a “technological civilisation of a sort not previously seen in twentieth century Britain”. (Marwick, 2003 : 114). However, as Sandbrook (2005 : 407-8) points out, despite the debates about the TV as *the* new form of entertainment or cultural debates about the low status of ITV³⁴:

“... it was from television that the majority of the British public now drew their entertainment, and through television that they understood the world beyond their immediate experience ... the television transformed the mental landscapes of ordinary viewers.”

Sandbrook (2005) sees television as the place where the events of the 1960s were played out and, as such, a central component in the way in which social change in the decade occurred. The establishing of ITV as a second channel in 1956 had thrown down the gauntlet to the BBC who had had the monopoly on TV since 1936, not only in terms of competition for viewers but also as a challenge to founder Lord Reith's assertion that the BBC should provide entertainment that aimed slightly higher than the viewer's expectations (Sandbrook 2005). Popular quiz show formats imported

³⁴ See Sandbrook (2005). I have friends who were not allowed to watch ITV as children in the 1960s as it was seen as “common”.

from the USA and old-fashioned variety acts such as *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* were soon providing mass experience for viewers across the UK. Thus, the arrival of Hugh Carleton- Greene at the BBC in 1960 was viewed as a key event and a chance to push the Reithian traditions of the BBC to even greater heights. Carleton-Greene came to the BBC with a manifesto of enterprise, risk, new talent, youth and innovation (Sandbrook, 2005). The “golden age of 60s’ TV” discourse seems to revolve around Carleton- Greene and his particular philosophy, with satellite characters, events and developments coming together to support the assertions that people made at the time and continue to make about the period.

The development of video tape offered more creative possibilities for production and location shooting, while the introduction of BBC2 in April 1964 on 625 lines, adding colour in 1967, (with colour coming to BBC1 and ITV in 1969), are all technological developments which changed the shape of 1960s’ TV (Ridgeman, 1992). Carleton - Greene’s appointment of Sydney Newman as Head of Television Drama in 1963 resulted in *The Wednesday Play*,³⁵ with high-profile authors and film makers producing what are now seen as classics of the genre. Newman was also responsible for the commissioning of other classics of their genre, including *Steptoe and Son*, *Z Cars* and *Doctor Who*.

David Attenborough’s appointment as head of BBC2 in 1964 is no less crucial an event, particularly with reference to Sandbrook’s (2005 : 40) notion that television had begun to take people “beyond their immediate experience” as it “transformed the mental landscapes of ordinary viewers.”³⁶ Attenborough was firmly committed to the Reithian idea of TV as a public service medium, one that could inform as well as entertain, a philosophy he continued to employ in his career as a highly successful

³⁵ The Wednesday Play, with contributions from key contemporary writers, was seen as the pinnacle of Newman’s contribution in this period, with its controversial subject matter, and its ability to shock and offered Mrs Whitehouse and her followers. Dennis Potter’s *Vote Vote Vote for Nigel Barton* was initially banned because Potter refused to rewrite an anti-capitalist speech that drew the play to its conclusion. Other work such as *Up the Junction* and *Cathy Come Home* are regarded as examples of BBC TV at its best (Marwick, 1998; Sandbrook, 2005).

³⁶ The Pilkington Committee was established in 1960 by the Macmillan Government to look at the future of broadcasting and the possibility of a future channel. With an elitist membership, which included Richard Hoggart, it published its report in the summer of 1962, a damning indictment of commercial television and its lowest common denominator approach. “BBC2 itself was conceived as a kind of testament to the values of Richard Hoggart and the Pilkington Committee” (Sandbrook, 2005 : 393).

programme maker and producer in subsequent decades. Attenborough's commissioning of the 13 part *Civilisation* series (presented by Kenneth Clark) is seen as, perhaps, the prime example of his work at BBC2, a programme described by Ridgeman, (1992 : 145) as:

“... a classic text in the reassertion, at the end of a contentious decade, of the BBC's underlying claim to the Reithian high moral and intellectual ground.”

Other texts of the Attenborough years at BBC2 (1965 – 1968) include Peter Cook and Dudley Moore's *Not Only But Also*, *Late Night Line Up*, an arts magazine programme, *Man Alive*, a programme looking at current social issues, *The Forsythe Saga*, *The Old Grey Whistle Test* and the *Money Programme*.³⁷

The discourse around Carleton-Greene and the golden age of TV is, of course, contested. In a similar vein to Sandbrook's (2005, 2006) emphasis on continuity and the debates about the radical v the ordinary throughout the 1960s, some authors see the “golden age” discourse as inaccurate, overblown and elitist. As early as 1973 Shulman (1973 : 94) had this to say:

“For most viewers the liberating influence of Hugh Greene meant little. They watched the BBC for *Grandstand*, the *Black and White Minstrel Show*, *Top of the Pops*, *Come Dancing*, *The Billy Cotton Band Show*, *Dr Finley's Casebook*, *Perry Mason*, *Dr Who*, *Dick Van Dyke*, *Rolf Harris*, *Val Doonican* and they were contented enough.”

As part of a BBC4 series on *TV in the Sixties*, in 2004, journalist Mark Lawson described the “golden age” discourse as a “smug cultural myth” yet concluded that it was a time when TV producers were encouraged to be different and avoid the temptation to copy existing formats, concluding that it was a “high point of hope and enthusiasm for TV”, thus seeming to take up two contradictory positions within the

³⁷ *Match of the Day* actually began on BBC2 in 1964, with the first outside Broadcast coming from Anfield in Liverpool or “Beatleville” as commentator Kenneth Wolstenholme described it on the programme. The crowd could be heard singing along to the Beatles' *She Loves You* (1963) behind him.

debate, while Shulman's (1973) argument seems to be more around the triumph of low culture over high culture.

The Sit-Com

Within the context of this thesis, all of these positions and the very fact of competing discourses around the mass media and the 1960s are crucial elements. Other elements, such as the establishing of situation comedy (or the sit-com) as a staple of British TV life, provided a place where changing representations of gender could be directly observed. Neale and Krutnick (1990) outline the development of sit-com from its roots in BBC radio to an extremely popular TV format by the early 1960s. Some TV sit-coms such as *Hancock's Half Hour* and the *Clitheroe Kid* came directly from BBC radio, others, such as *The Dick Van Dyke Show* and *I Love Lucy*, were US imports. Neale and Krutnick (1990 : 227) describe the sit-com, with its continuing and repeatable narrative, and a set of recognizable characters who became more and more familiar to the audience, as "an ideological form and stabilizing structure." The family tends to be the mainstay of the sit-com and thus provides a framework in which the relations between the sexes – often in a "battle of the sexes" scenario – can be observed. US sit-com families ranged from Mr and Mrs Average (*The Dick Van Dyke Show*), a battle of the sexes in cartoon form (*The Flintstones*) or a debate about changing gender roles and female emancipation disguised as witchcraft (*Bewitched*). While some British sitcoms followed this family format (*Til Death Us Do Part*; *Bless this House*) others used the sitcom framework as a specific focus for homosocial behaviour using father-son relationships (*Steptoe and Son*) or male friendship (*Hancock's Half Hour*; *The Likely Lads*) as a springboard for comedy (and pathos). Neale and Krutnick (1990 : 226) state:

“The charges of conservatism, excessive stereotyping of racial class, sexual and regional differences, and so on, which are often levelled at the sitcom, seem to pinpoint not so much the total imperviousness of the form but rather the particular way in which it operates as a site of negotiation of social change

and difference ... it's structuring mechanisms serve as a way of reaffirming norms by placing that which is 'outside' or potentially threatening".

This is an important point. The use of the sitcom and its location on primetime TV as a place where social change and the competing norms and values of the changing 1960's society played out in people's living rooms (Spigel, 1992) makes it another key media development of the period. Sitcoms provide important texts in which a comedic framework provides a forum for debate about change. There is much to be learned about changing representations of masculinities in the 1960s, and the accompanying debates by watching *The Likely Lads*, *Til Death Us Do Part*, or *Bewitched*³⁸, just as clumsy attempts at race-based sitcoms (*Love Thy Neighbour*, *Mind Your Language*, *Rising Damp*) speak volumes about attitudes in the multi-cultural Britain of the early 1970s.

The Rise of Celebrity

Another result of the rising popularity and cultural importance of TV in the 1960s was the rise of a celebrity class associated with that medium rather than film. The classic Hollywood years had led to the growth of the concept of celebrity with associated texts such as glossy magazines and a surrounding gossip culture (Murphy, 1997, Sweet, 2005). The emergence of popular TV programmes which started in the late 1950s and early 1960s led to what a 2003 Channel Four documentary termed *The Showbiz Set*. The documentary charts the rise of a celebrity culture which is highly recognisable in the early 21st century. TV stars mobbed in the street, the publication in the News of the World in 1960 of the first British showbiz exposé (decadent parties at the home of British actress Diana Dors³⁹) all based around the shared TV experience which saw popular shows such as *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* reach audiences of up to 20 million (Sandbrook, 2005). Bruce Forsyth, now a national treasure, became an early overnight star when he became the show's host and is credited with inventing the first TV catchphrase ("I'm in charge"). The emergence

³⁸ The original idea for this thesis involved using sitcoms and adverts as texts for analysis in relation to changing representations of masculinities in the 1960s.

³⁹ Diana Dors was touted as Britain's answer to Marilyn Monroe in the 1950s, despite the fact that the majority of her work is contained in B movies and low budget comedies.

of the showbiz set in the late 1950s paved the way for the pop-star celebrity of the 1960s and the whole 'Swinging London' phenomenon (Melly, 1970; Sandbrook, 2006). TV was at the centre of it all, while Inglis (2000b : 8) argues that the Beatles were "the undoubted principals in its cast." Beatlemania is generally thought to have been initiated around the period that the Beatles made their televised appearances from the Palladium⁴⁰ (Norman, 1981; Sandbrook, 2005) and their appearances at the time and, seemingly, at the centre, of this emergent medium made them, according to MacDonald (1994 : 20), "The Perfect McLuhanites".

McLuhan's Global Village

It is fitting, then, to end this section with a mention of Marshall McLuhan's (1964) *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. It is not the intention here to go through McLuhan's ideas in detail but rather to draw attention to the fact that this highly influential (and much debated) text about developments in the mass media in the 1960s emerged when it did, adding weight to the argument about the importance of the media and the arts in social change. The book itself, which McLuhan described as proceeding by analysis rather than a sequential series of arguments, is, it seems, a reflection of the melting point of ideas that come together through the arts in the 1960s, with TV as the medium which brought these ideas into the home. That the use of the importance and popularity of TV should also be accompanied by an academic interest in this process was also, perhaps, inevitable. *Understanding Media* (1964) advances a number of disparate ideas, including the often quoted "the medium is the message" (McLuhan, 1964 : 7), the idea of hot media which leaves little space for participation (radio, the movie) and cool media which leave space for the participant (TV, the telephone), the introduction of the terms global village, and age of information, the prediction of media such as the internet and email. McLuhan's ideas about the regulatory power of the media and television as host to ritual ceremonies⁴¹ have all been subsequently developed into a whole new academic discipline. The roots of cultural studies can be found in 1950s' society, particularly the work of

⁴⁰ See Chapter 1. By this time Forsyth had been replaced as compere of the show by Jimmy Tarbuck, hailing from Liverpool and resplendent in mop-top haircut, Beatle boots and a genuine Scouse accent, he was an indication of ITV's intention to continue to represent the new classless society and move with the times.

⁴¹ See Dayan and Katz (1992).

Hoggart (1957) and Williams (1958) but it is McLuhan (1964) who throws the idea of media into the mix in a dramatic way. The original idea that the media makes happen rather than makes aware can be traced back to McLuhan, and this is important within the context of a thesis on representation, providing as it does a rationale for using the media as a location in which to examine social changes for men.

In chapter one a rationale was provided for the use of the Beatles as a case study in masculinities and this contains a number of arguments about their social and cultural significance. Earlier drafts contained musings on what the Beatles were, if they were not just a pop group like any number of others, drawing the conclusion that they were “a thing”⁴². Further research led to the conclusion that not only can they be read as “the perfect McLuhanites” (MacDonald, 1994 : 20) simply because they were a good fit with the cool medium of TV (the-right-place-at-the-right-time-thesis) but that they are, in McLuhanite terms, a medium in themselves; a medium through which changing representations of masculinity in the 1960s can be read.

In the final section of this chapter the relationship between the Beatles and the 1960s is examined.

The Beatles vis a vis the Sixties

Introduction: icons, heroes and principal cast members

Muncie (2000 : 35) states that “the Beatles have long been viewed as one of the key icons – perhaps *The* key icons of the 1960s”, while Marwick (1998 : 3) sees “the Beatles as the heroes of the age” and Inglis (2000b : 8) describes them as “the undoubted principals in the cast of the ‘Swinging Sixties’”. It is certainly true that whenever the sixties is re-presented in terms of TV documentary or social history the Beatles are always one of the key images presented to represent the era⁴³. It is the

⁴² These inarticulate ramblings did not make it into the final draft!

⁴³ Sandbrook’s (2005) *Never Had it So Good – A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles* uses a picture of the Beatles on the front cover while his *White Heat* (2006) has a large photograph of the Beatles on the back cover.

intention in this section to explore the question of why the Beatles have become synonymous with the sixties as a period in Britain's social history. The arguments here are presented in conjunction with those in chapter one.

The Beatles as a sixties discourse began to circulate almost as soon as their appearance as cultural icons on the national stage had been established by the UK Press. On 6th December 1963 the *New Musical Express* explained:

“In the distant future, when our descendants study the history books, they will see one word printed against the year 1963 – Beatles! ... this year will be remembered for posterity for the achievement of four lads from Liverpool”

(Anon, 1963 : 2)

Inglis' (2000a) work outlined in chapter one is, perhaps, the best attempt at explaining why this might be. Other authors (MacDonald, 1994; Marwick, 1998; Sandbrook 2005; 2006) have made an attempt to draw together some of the arguments on the topic. A recent TV series on the UK Living Channel, *The 60s, the Beatles decade* (2008), also looked at some of the reasons why the Beatles and the sixties seem to be synonymous. Many of these accounts draw on ideas about newness, modernity, the Beatles' media-friendliness and, above all, the way in which they came to be part of the discourse of freedom and change at work in many accounts of the 1960s (Marwick, 1998).

Inheritors of possibilities

There are many examples of quotes of the “The Beatles changed the world” variety⁴⁴. The argument presented here is that this perception of their role in social change is as important a part of that process as the key political changes in the decade, an extension of the arguments outlined earlier in the chapter about the role of the arts in social change, and that the world that the Beatles found themselves in, the period of social change that was the 1960s, was reflected by and through them as they became a representation of what Churchill had referred to in the early 1950s as the New

⁴⁴ See Appendix 1.

Elizabethan age (Sandbrook, 2005). In this sense they became a cultural symbol, the inheritors of the possibilities of the late 1950s (Sandbrook, 2005), a symbol of what Macmillan had referred to as “this strange modern age of space and science” (Sandbrook, 2005 : 689) and Wilson’s “jet age” (Sandbrook, 2005 : 737). Their role as a new kind of cultural symbol for Britain is not to be underestimated, particularly in terms of UK/US relations. Marwick (1998 : 456) states:

“If there was one single critical event in the establishment of the hegemony of youth-inspired British popular culture, it was the two week tour of the United States by the Beatles in 1964.”

While Britain’s financial dependence on the US, based on debts from World War II, would dog the Wilson government and frustrate its attempt at modernisation throughout the 1960s (Sandbrook, 2006), the Beatles US tour of 1964 marks a change in cultural interdependence⁴⁵. Previously British audiences had looked across the Atlantic for cultural icons of the entertainment industry. The Beatles’ success in the States reversed that trend. The Britain of 1963 was, according to Sandbrook (2005 : 715), “the gleaming new Britain of Sean Connery and Paul McCartney” and the Beatles, it seems, represented the possibilities of new freedoms and generational change. “With the Beatles we realised we weren’t going to be our dads” said Liverpool playwright Alan Bleasdale (UK Living, 2008) while Marshall (2000 : 173) argues:

“Their inner lives became an expression of cultural anxiety, journalistic shorthand for understanding generational change. Because of their overwhelming popularity the Beatles were seen – and used – as beacons from which to understand the contemporary”.

This also reflects the ideas advanced in Frith’s (1978 : 144) later analysis of the role of the pop musician as celebrity and cultural symbol and the way that it is “not just about the music but also about the things and attitudes that the music embraces.”

⁴⁵ See Chapter 6.

The perceived significance of The Beatles in relation to the 1960s was succinctly summed up by Paul McCartney in an interview given to *Uncut* magazine in 2004:

“... looking back there was a time in the mid ‘60s when everything was about the Beatles. We were simply everywhere you looked. There was no other frame of reference. When we started, we just thought about playing rock ‘n’ roll, being involved with ... showbiz. We didn’t consider the wider possibilities. They were thrust upon us ... we were the symbol for everything that was happening – free love, free sex, free thinking. I still think it was the events of the ‘60s that lit the touch paper, and we were just part of it. But, to so many people, it is still all about the Beatles.”⁴⁶

(Wilde, 2004 : 50)

MacDonald (1994) echoes many of the arguments made in chapter one regarding the cultural significance of the Beatles, and argues that the Beatles provided a focus, a place where the influences and “happenings” of the 1960s were pulled together and made accessible and popular. He sees this as a particularly British phenomenon, tied in with the UK's rising cultural significance in the period.

“In America, a gulf of distrust exists between ‘intellectual’ rock and intellectual art, a divide less noticeable in England.”

(MacDonald, 1994 : vii)

The influence of mid to late 1960s’ counterculture, he argues, is clearer and more accessible to a wider audience in the Beatles music than the work of others, with the *Sgt Pepper* (1967) album probably the best example of this.

A particularly British version of an institution which became prominent in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the art school⁴⁷ is seen as key to the changes in popular music in the period, allowing, as it did the introduction of “the concept of ‘concept’ into pop,

⁴⁶ The reason for the inclusion of such a long quote is to fully reflect Paul McCartney’s retrospective take on how the Beatles have come to represent the 1960s.

⁴⁷ In addition to John Lennon, art school products include Pete Townsend of the Who, Ray Davies of the Kinks and Syd Barrett of The Pink Floyd.

along with other post-modern motifs like eclecticism, self referentiality, parody and pastiche” (MacDonald, 1994 : viii). As the Beatles’ work developed⁴⁸ it became multi-focal and part of a resurgence in the arts in the 1960s (Moore-Gilbert and Seed, 1992), in line with the new multi-media feel of the decade, “reflecting the *collage* spirit of an instantaneous, simultaneous, chance-embracing new-age” (MacDonald, 1994 : 21).

Be Here Now

What also makes the Beatles seem synonymous with “the sixties” is their “newness”, reflecting what MacDonald (1994 : 18) refers to as “the revolutionary present: the now in which all protest demands were ritually required to be met”. The lyrics of their early songs are immediate, careless and instantaneous, a rejection of the prudent 1950s and in time with the never had it so good times of the early 1960s.

(MacDonald, 1994; Sandbrook, 2005). As they developed, their refusal to do the same thing over again in the studio, always looking for new influences and ideas, also reflected their position at the centre of the “newness” of the culture of the time.

Lennon later reflected on this and saw it as a result of his discovery of LSD (MacDonald, 2003), but their seeming ability to be in tune with and a reflection of the times predates this. Their “buoyant, poignant, hopeful love-advocating songs” (MacDonald, 1994 : 33) have come to represent this particular aspect of the 1960s as it is re-presented today, and while MacDonald (1994 : 32) refers to their work as “a cultural document of permanent significance” it can be argued that this phrase can be equally applied to the Beatles as a cultural event.

Like Marwick (1998), who sees the 1960s as a period of radical social change, MacDonald (1994 : 24) reads the decade as “an historical chasm between one way of life and another”, and again, like Marwick (1998), a contested decade fraught with contradictions, with John Lennon as an illustration of this. MacDonald (1994 : 26) sees Lennon as

⁴⁸ See Chapter 1.

“... a temperamental socialist who voted conservative to guard his money, he embodied all the tensions and contradictions inherent in the transitional sixties and, as such, was a shrewd choice – by Desmond Morris – as ‘man of the decade’.”

Another reason for their seeming to be synonymous with the 1960s is that the arc of their story at times seems to reflect the arc of the popular 1960s’ narrative (or has, perhaps, been constructed as such). Starting with the enthusiasm and optimism of Macmillan’s never had it so good and Wilson’s *White Heat* early 1960s, mirrored by the enthusiasm of the Beatlemania period, through the economic uncertainties of the mid 1960s and the changing cultural and social scene that constitutes MacDonald’s (1994 : 21) “revolution in the head” to what Sandbrook (2006 : 725) refers to as the end of the Labour adventure as the 1960s came to a close. Sandbrook (2006) sees the defeat of Wilson by Heath in 1970, England’s defeat in the 1970 World Cup (after the triumph of winning it in “swinging” London in 1966), and the break up of the Beatles as the three key events marking the end of the decade. “... No other group better captured the sound and the spirit of the sixties” (Sandbrook, 2006 : 725) he states in the final chapter of *White Heat* which is entitled *The Carnival is Over*.

Their “multiplicity of voices” (Inglis, 2000b : vxii)⁴⁹ throughout the decade, though, provided a stark contrast to those of 1950s’ man as described by Ehrenreich (1983) and Segal (1988)⁵⁰, and were, it will be argued, highly influential in challenging the voices and discourses of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) and hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) predominant at the beginning of the decade. Later chapters will explore this idea in some depth. Suffice to say, at this point, that the 1960s is the period in which these alternative discourses fully emerge in popular culture and, rather than reading the changes for men in the 1960s as part of the crisis discourse (Tolson, 1977; Kimmel, 1987; Whitehead, 2002), an alternative reading, through the Beatles, is one in which not only do a “multiplicity of voices” (Inglis, 2000b : xvii) in relation to masculinities emerge, but so do a multiplicity of representations, often based on the pleasures of masculinity. This will be explored in more depth though an analysis of the Beatles’ films in Chapter 6.

⁴⁹ See Chapter 1.

⁵⁰ See Chapter 3.

Don't Start Me Talking About the Beatles

In June 2006, as part of a series of programmes to tie in with Liverpool's year as European City of Culture, Radio Two produced two half hour programmes, *Don't Start Me Talking About The Beatles*, based on interviews with members of the public, asking them for their memories of the Beatles. The quotes here illustrate the way in which discourses around the Beatles as representative of freedom, liberation and change continue to operate. As discussed in Chapter 1, part of the proposal for this thesis contained the following quote as an illustration of the way in which this discourse seemed to operate.

"It didn't feel sexual as I would now define that. It felt more about wanting freedom. I didn't want to grow up and be a wife and it seemed to me that the Beatles had the kind of freedom that I wanted. ... I wanted to be something like them, something larger than life."

(Lewis, 1992 : 22)

Respondents in the Radio Two interviews gave similar explanations.

"... for men they maybe represented more freedom, more ability to be part of a huge worldwide phenomenon ... and so I think they influenced men more than they influenced women because they had broken away from the establishment ..."

"As a child it gave you this big cause to believe in."

"You kind of thought this is a possible way that we could live. They seemed to open all the doors to, you know, being yourself."

"It gave you confidence to be who you were because that's what they did, you know, they were just being themselves."

“For John Lennon to take a politicised stance ... that seemed ground breaking at the time.”

Examples of this discourse are also to be found elsewhere in the literature. Cooper (2006 : 299) in Skinner- Sawyers’ *Read the Beatles* says:

“The Beatles set me free. The first time I saw them on TV, at age seven, I started thinking about going places, of doing something as exciting as what they were doing”

Interviewed for the Beatles *Anthology* series, McCartney, again, seems to recognise this:

“Paul: I think we gave some sort of freedom to the world. I meet a lot of people now who say that the Beatles freed them up”

(The Beatles, 2003)

Their position as a symbol of social change and the way that people interpreted this is contained in the preceding quotes and their appearance at a time when debates about the old versus the new and discourses around the space age, progress and technology were beginning to circulate can either be read as fortuitous or inevitable. Marshall (2000) argues that fame based on achievement or heroics in a traditional sense⁵² had previously been juxtaposed with the inauthentic fame of celebrities such as film stars or singers. However, it can be argued, that within the context of the old versus new debates of the early 1960s, this was inevitably also going to be challenged. Marshall (2000 : 170) states:

“... the former elites of state and church were no longer in complete control of those who might be celebrated or venerated. What the Beatles signified was a re-reading of the cultural value of fame and celebrity ... The Beatles became a democratic celebration of the new power of fame.”

⁵² See Chapter 3.

Thus, their self commodification, in interviews and in their films⁵³ can be read as an understanding of their new found cultural significance within the context of other discourses circulating at the time. As Marshall (2000 : 170) explains:

“The commodity could no longer be seen as some form of corruption of artistic practice, but it was more part of the artistic process.”

However, commodification, for them, encompassed things which had not previously been part of the commodification of a pop group. Their commodification also included Frith’s (1978 : 144) “things and attitudes” and Inglis’ (2000b : 1) Beatles as “men of ideas”⁵⁴ concept.

In this sense, then, because of their position in the national consciousness through the phenomenon of Beatlemania, 1963 is a pivotal year in establishing the Beatles as synonymous with the 1960s and it is from this point that their “men of ideas” (Inglis, 2000b : 1) role would develop. Sandbrook (2005) sees the Tories selection of Lord Home as successor to Harold Macmillan as leader of the Conservative Party in 1963 as the key event in Labour’s victory in 1964. By making this choice, he argues, the Tories presented themselves to the electorate as rooted in the past and tied to “the establishment” allowing Wilson to present himself as a representative of the new, modern, classless Britain.

“For those who ... had read the novel of C.P. Snow, and Anthony Simpson’s book *Anatomy of Britain* or had watched *Beyond the Fringe* and *TW3*, the elevation of Lord Home seemed simply another episode in the history of the inbred, incestuous, class-ridden elite that had controlled British politics and society after the war.”

(Sandbrook, 2005 : 713)

The Beatles’ position as cultural symbols who represented the antithesis of this type of elite stuffiness, represented by the establishment, was, then, established in 1963

⁵³ See Chapter 6.

⁵⁴ See Chapter 1.

and it is worth exploring, then, the Beatles' position in relation to the establishment and the satire movement of the 1950s and 1960s which formed a challenge, certainly in cultural, if not political terms, to the "old ideas" at work in British society.

The Establishment

According to Sandbrook (2005), the term "establishment" was coined by historian A.J.P. Taylor in 1953 and developed two years later by conservative journalist Henry Fairlie in the *Spectator* to describe "the matrix of official and social relations by which power is exercised", while in 1956 F. R. Leavis defined it as "those who have the institutional positions and the power in the institutional system." (Sandbrook, 2005 : 560). Thus around this time an exploration of the term began to develop and an analysis of the way in which a closed world of mainly Oxbridge-educated men constituted a power elite in the UK. This analysis took a number of forms including unprecedented questioning of the monarchy in essays by Lord Altrincham and political commentator and media personality Malcolm Muggeridge (Sandbrook, 2005), the publication, in 1957, of *Declaration* a collection of essays challenging "establishment" values, provided by authors such as playwright John Osborne,⁵⁵ novelist Doris Lessing and critic Kenneth Tynan. Sandbrook (2005 : 556) describes them as "a hotchpotch of wildly different ideas linked by a nominal sense of bitterness against contemporary Britain". Some of the authors were already established as part of the "angry" movement and some would go on to form part of the British new wave cinema of the early 1960s⁵⁶. Sandbrook's (2005) idea of a hotchpotch is probably accurate in describing, then, the emergence of a number of attacks, from various cultural sources, on the "old" values in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Elsewhere, Sampson's (1962) *Anatomy of Britain* with its analysis of the struggle between meritocracy and aristocracy, summed up "the establishment" in the following statement:

"... the hereditary establishment of interlocking families which still has an unprecedented social and political influence on the Conservative Party,

⁵⁵ See Chapter 4.

⁵⁶ See Chapter 6.

banking and many industries, has lost touch with the new worlds of science, industrial management and technology, and yet tries to apply old amateur ideals into technical worlds where they won't fit."

(Sampson, 1962 : 635)

The Lady Chatterley trial⁵⁷ can be read as part of the same movement as can the satire boom which followed in its wake. The emergence of satire as a particular mode of mounting a cultural attack on the values of the establishment is generally seen as something which happened in the early 1960s when it reached a mass audience through TV (Sandbrook, 2005). However, it has to be read as another strand of the previous discussion, part of the hotchpotch of challenges and critiques and something which starts in the early 1950s with the *Goons*⁵⁸ radio show. *The Goons* provides a particularly good example of the way in which the challenges to the establishment inherent in satire in particular, and some branches of the 1960s' arts in general, are also challenges to the values of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) and hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell 1995; Hearn, 2004). Much of its humour draws on the discourses of war and heroism popular in British cinema at the time, subverting these through parody. One of the key characters, Major Bloodnock, for example, is a gross caricature of the John Mills/Kenneth More cinema war hero while Hercules Grytpype-Thynne was an aristocratic cad. This tradition is also at the heart of what is seen as, perhaps, the key event in British satire (Sandbrook, 2005), the *Beyond the Fringe* review, which launched the careers of Peter Cook, Dudley Moore, Alan Bennett and Jonathan Miller. First performed at the Edinburgh Festival in 1960, it later transferred to the West End and a run on Broadway⁵⁹. The revue was described in the Daily Mail as a demolition of "all that is sacred in the British way of life" (Sandbrook, 2005 : 573) and included Cook's impersonation of Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, a means by which to ridicule the values he represented, plus Alan Bennett parodying war hero Douglas Bader, made famous by Kenneth More's portrayal in *Reach for the Sky* (1956), again using the Second World War, itself a sacred national discourse, as a scenario through which to challenge the masculinist (Brittan, 1989) values at work in British society. In October 1961 Peter Cook opened

⁵⁷ See Sandbrook (2005), Preface, for a full account.

⁵⁸ The Goons: see Chapter 6, footnote 3.

⁵⁹ Performances of *Beyond the Fringe* in the West End were attended by the Queen and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan and in New York by John and Jackie Kennedy.

his wittily named satire venue, The Establishment, as a private club, meaning that the content of the material performed there was outside of the censorship laws applicable to regular theatres. Cook also bought into *Private Eye* in 1962, a satirical magazine which started from a rather elitist premise but grew to take in a broader audience as the 1960s progressed. Also in 1962, TV producer Ned Sherrin brought satire to the masses, launching *That Was The Week That Was* (or TW3) on BBC TV with a cast including the then unknown David Frost⁶⁰, journalist Bernard Levin, *Private Eye* contributor Willie Rushton and singer and dancer Millicent Martin. The show attracted contributions from a number of high profile authors and playwrights,⁶¹ while Frost's nasal, classless transatlantic accent set the show apart from the rather elitist approach of *Private Eye* or *Beyond the Fringe* (Sandbrook, 2005) and placed it within the meritocracy discourse (Sampson, 1962) emerging at the time. The mockery of national institutions on the BBC was itself controversial and the show was one of the triggers for the emergence of Mary Whitehouse's National Viewers and Listeners Association and her long running battle with the BBC Director General Hugh Carleton-Greene⁶².

“Mary Whitehouse, at this stage merely an obscure housewife but subsequently to become famous in her own right, thought that it was ‘the epitome of what was wrong with the BBC-anti-authority, anti-religion, anti-patriotism, pro-dirt and poorly produced’.”

(Sandbrook, 2005 : 587)

The programme only ran for two years but it paved the way for Peter Cook and Dudley Moore's *Not Only But Also* and the emergence of *Monty Python's Flying Circus* later in the 1960s. *Spitting Image*, in the 1980s, and contemporary satire such as *Have I Got News For You*⁶³ and *Mock The Week* can be read as its descendents. Sandbrook's (2005) account of the satire movement's seeming demise around 1963 underestimates its importance in setting the cultural context that followed and the anti-establishment discourses that would emerge around the Beatles and their

⁶⁰ Frost's transatlantic blandness was amusingly summed up by Malcolm Muggeridge's wife Kitty, who described him as having “risen without trace”.

⁶¹ These included Malcolm Bradbury, Jack Rosenthal, Peter Shaefer, John Braine, Dennis Potter and Kenneth Tynan.

⁶² See footnote 26.

⁶³ *Have I Got News For You* team captain Ian Hislop is also editor of *Private Eye*.

contemporaries. The Beatles' links to the satire movement are explored as part of the analysis of their films⁶⁴. It is worth, here, then, examining their perceived position in relation to the establishment and masculinist (Brittan, 1989) discourses.

The Beatles: Inside and Outside of “The Establishment”

As Inglis' (2000b : 8) “undoubted principals in the cast of the ‘Swinging Sixties’”, The Beatles' representation as oppositional to the establishment fulfils an important function in the context of discourses about the 1960s as previously discussed. Their films⁶⁵ certainly contain many juxtapositions between The Beatles and establishment figures and locations. However, there are also some interesting contradictions contained within the “reality” of the 1960s' narrative. Their 1963 appearance at The Royal Variety Show, an “establishment” event of the showbiz old-school, is seen as the starting point of Beatlemania⁶⁶ and their rise to fame brought financial wealth, large houses, Aston Martins and E-type Jaguars, the trappings of the rich and famous. This can be read, and was certainly interpreted at the time, as the rise of a new meritocracy, wealth based on talent rather than privilege, but the keeping open of Harrod's after hours in 1965 so that The Beatles could do their Christmas shopping was a privilege usually reserved for Royalty.

“This year the group were given the freedom of Harrod's, one of London's most noted ‘upper-class’ stores, noted the New Musical Express.”

(Smith, 1965 : 3)

Their association with royalty was cemented two years later with the award of their MBEs, having been recommended by Prime Minister Harold Wilson, a media friendly P.M. who recognised the significance of McLuhan's (1964) prophecies over 30 years before Tony Blair attempted to turn political media literacy into an art form. Wilson had cannily associated himself with the Beatles in the previous year through a range of photo-opportunities. As Member of Parliament for Huyton, Liverpool, Wilson grasped this association for all it was worth, seeing the political advantages of a

⁶⁴ See Chapter 6.

⁶⁵ See Chapter 6.

⁶⁶ See Chapter 1.

Labour Prime Minister associating himself with these new popular cultural icons, representatives of the new classless society (Sandbrook, 2005). Wilson had, in 1964, invited them to a presentation ceremony for the Royal Variety Club Awards. In recommending them for the MBE he sparked a controversy which struck at the heart of class politics in the UK and which was significant in allowing the Beatles to question their comfortable association with “the establishment”.

“Ringo: We all thought it was really thrilling. We’re going to meet the Queen and she’s going to give us a badge. I thought this is cool.”

(The Beatles, 2000 : 181)

“John: We had to do a lot of selling-out then taking the MBE was a sell out for me. We thought being offered the MBE was as funny as everybody else thought it was. Why? What for? It was a part we didn’t want ... Then it all just seemed part of the game we’d agreed to play.”

(The Beatles, 2000 : 182)

Wilson’s assertion that it was for services to British export (George Harrison was later to say it was for selling a lot of corduroy [The Beatles, 2003]) held no water for several previous recipients who returned theirs in protest (as John Lennon would famously do several years later [Norman, 1981]). An article in *The New Musical Express* from June 1965 tackled the issue:

“... as for the men who refused to be associated with ‘nitwits’ and ‘nincompoops’ – well, this I regard as sheer downright snobbery. It has long been the practice for a certain toffee-nosed section to regard pop music as being beneath their dignity ... What is even more relevant is the recognition which has been conferred upon the acting, ballet and ‘serious’ music professions ... who could prove that the Beatles’ music will not be regarded as culture by generations to come? And since when has culture taken precedence over prestige?”

(Johnson, 1965 : 10)

This article itself touches on the issues of class, fame and the cultural significance of the Beatles. To some, their appearance at the Palace marked a significant and positive moment in class politics and cultural politics; to others it seemed as if the walls were crumbling and the old values dissipating:

“John: Lots of people who complained about us getting the MBE received theirs for heroism in the war. Ours were civil awards. They got them for killing people. We deserve ours for not killing people.”

(The Beatles, 2000 :184)

“Paul: There was only one fella who said ‘I want your autograph for my daughter – I don’t know what she sees in you.’ Most other people were pleased about us getting the award. There were one or two old blokes from the RAF who felt it had devalued their MBE’s, these longhaired twits getting one. But most people seemed to feel that we were a great export and ambassadors for Britain. At least people were taking notice of Britain; cars like Minis and Jaguars and British clothes were selling. Mary Quant and all the other fashions were selling and in some ways we’d become super salesmen for Britain.”

(The Beatles, 2000 : 184)⁶⁷

McCartney and Harrison wore their MBE’s on their bandsmen’s outfits on the cover of *Sgt Pepper*, an extension of the military chic apparent in the film *Help!* (1965) and this can be read as a subversive act in itself (Hebdidge, 1978)⁶⁸.

⁶⁷ The MBE awards are at the heart of the Beatles’ acceptance by yet subversion of the Establishment and marks the beginning, it can be argued, of a period of controversy. See Chapter 1.

⁶⁸ Interestingly, their ability to upset the establishment (via their acceptance within it) seems undiminished. A documentary on Yoko Ono’s purchase of Mendips, John’s childhood home and her donation of it to The National Trust (BBC4, 2003) features an interview with Tim Knox, Head Curator of The National Trust (checked shirt, pullover, upper-crust accent) who appeared outraged that the donation of this house (and the previous acquisition of Paul McCartney’s Forthlin Road home) caused normal Trust procedures to go to the wall. “People seem to roll on their backs as far as the Beatles’ houses are concerned”, he fumes. He expresses horror that these houses are in possession of the Trust and describes them as “not serious acquisitions” as the camera cuts to the refurbishment of a stately home. And, in case we still don’t get it, he describes the refurbished Mendips – an attractive semi – as recreating a “post-war dinge”. Shelagh Johnson, former Beatles’ Secretary and now adviser to Yoko

Pot at the Palace

Their visit to the Palace was controversial not least because of the “Pot at Palace” riddle over the Beatles” (The Beatles, 2000 : 182) which made headlines following the event. George Harrison always maintained that they smoked a cigarette in the Palace toilets to calm their nerves but that through media exaggeration it became a joint, providing a shocking revelation; drug crazed pop stars meeting the Queen, having the audacity to smoke (pot) in the Palace etc (The Beatles, 2000). They were certainly using the substance heavily by this time. In retrospect, given more recent revelations about the activities of Charles and Diana, butlers, footmen and equerries in the Palace, it seems relatively tame. In its historical context it was a huge scandal. The Beatles themselves disagree as to whether this event took place (The Beatles, 2000) but it is part of the subversive nature of the myth which is important in establishing the Beatles as inside yet outside the British establishment in the mid 1960s.

“John: We, however, were giggling like crazy because we had just smoked a joint in the loos of Buckingham Palace, we were so nervous.

Ono, expresses the view that the house has a national significance akin to that of Warwick Castle or the Tower of London. Knox, needless to say is having none of this, his normal acquisition procedures having been upturned. Bommers and Wright (1982) have characterized the concept of national heritage and its institutional representation – the National Trust – as “the historicized image of the establishment” (Bommers and Wright, 1982 : 271). They state:

“... National Heritage works to create its own constituency of support. This constituency plays its part in the reproduction of existing social relations. As we have suggested in our discussion of hegemony, the modern state strives to create a single collective will and identify in the face of social differences.”

Their characterization of the National Trust and the British Heritage movement as a place where the “preservation of privilege and heritage go together” (Bommers and Wright, 1982 : 265) provides a socio-political context in which this example of the Beatles’ subversive nature can be read. The fact that their childhood homes are seen as part of ‘the national heritage’ can also be read as an “establishment” attempt at democratization, although it is apparent that if you are not aristocracy you have to be exceedingly famous and culturally significant to enter the club.

Thirty eight years on from the pot at the Palace incident, the Establishment, it seems, was alive and well and still upset by John Lennon.

George: We never smoked marijuana at the investiture ... we were so nervous that we went to the toilet. And in there we smoked a cigarette – we were all smokers in those days. Years later, I'm sure John was thinking back and remembering 'oh yes, we went in the toilet and smoked' and it turned into a reefer. Because what could be the worst thing you could do before you meet the Queen? Smoke a reefer! But we never did.

Ringo: I'm not sure if we had a joint or not. It's such a strange place to be anyway, The Palace."

(The Beatles, 2000: 181.3)

In many ways the "pot at the palace" story provides a succinct illustration of the Beatles' position in mid 1960s UK society, drawing together themes around the new classless society, challenges to masculinity (Brittan, 1989) scandalous counter-cultural behaviour in an "establishment" setting, and the role of myth and celebrity in the ever-developing world of 1960's mass media, The Beatles at the heart of the strange place that was mid-1960's Britain, a place, it seems, where they remain, in retrospect.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to pull together a number of works which chronicle the contradictory and contested nature of "the sixties", focussing in particular on social changes for men, the role of the developing field of mass media in the 1960s and the Beatles as cultural icons who have tended to act as a focus, in some way for the social changes of the decade.

For authors such as Sheila Rowbotham (2001 : 255) the 1960s offered "the promise of a dream." For others Macmillan's jet age and Wilson's white heat promised technological advance which would be life changing. BBC's *Tomorrow's World* was

on hand to translate the talk into practical examples explaining that soon robots would be able to do the work of 10 men and that the consequent leisure time would be spent flying over the modern new towns of Britain using your own personal jetpack. These examples may seem flippant, but they are an illustration of the way “the future” was conceptualised in terms of linear advancement and an optimistic outlook on a battlefield populated by the capitalists bedding in (MacDonald, 1994), fighting advancing ideas of counterculture and rejection of the capitalist ideology (Marwick, 1998). The 1960s is a decade in which the discourse of “the future” became dominant but, in retrospect, it is argued here that the 1960s, in many ways, **was** “the future” and the future which seemed to be on offer only really existed in the 1960s for a short period of time. In terms of technology, the visions of the British new towns were made real for a short-time before longer term (unforeseen) problems emerged. The Hovercraft, Concorde and US space travel all represent the pinnacle, not the beginning, of new technological development. In cultural terms the 1960s, it has been argued, offer a melting pot of ideas like no other decade (Marwick, 1998) with debates about social change, the capitalist economy, gender, race, class and sexuality coming to the fore and leading to a new kind of issue based politics.

The 1960s is also where media and cultural studies was born, where challenges to traditional ideas around research began, where representation through the new media brings new questions about particular groups in society and debates on what is and is not acceptable to be seen in people’s living rooms, become public. Rapid changes in popular culture; music, art, fashion design, the emergence of a classlessness discourse and a democratization of style and the coupling of low and high art, epitomised for some by The Beatles *Sgt. Pepper* (Melly, 1970) all adds to the argument that the notion of ‘the future’ discussed in the 1960s stayed, in many ways, in the 1960s.

There are, of course, counter-arguments in terms of men and masculinities, it can well be argued that men’s visual appearance, their “to-be-looked-at-ness” (Mulvey, 1975; 18) continued into subsequent decades, leading to a higher visibility of gay-ness in society and the subsequent blurring of gay/straight boundaries (see Edwards [1997] and Simpson [2004; 2008]). Moreover, Hunter S. Thompson’s (1972) high water mark thesis, Sandbrook’s (2006) notion of the carnival being over, Nixon’s 1968 victory in the USA (the end of JFK and LBJ’s new frontier) Wilson’s defeat in the

UK in 1970, signalling the end of the Labour vision of the future, add weight to the conceptualisation of the 1960's as a self contained period like no other; Marwick's (1998; 3) "cultural revolution" or MacDonald's (1994: 24) "Revolution in the Head" exploring the notion of culture rather than politics as a key force for social change.

The role of the cultural arena as a site where many of the emergent ideas, both academic and popular, played out, particularly through the new medium of television, has been highlighted as an area of particular significance. The use of television, bringing challenge and counterculture to the masses, and holding up new ideas to the light, providing an assault on the "establishment", providing representation of changing relations between the sexes, popularizing new modes of culture, dress, visual style and expanding and democracratizing horizons, is one of the key developments of the decade. The increased popularity of television also provides a good example of Martin's (1981 : 98) notion of a shift to "private states" and MacDonald's (1994) argument that the 1960s is where individualism linked to capitalism takes a firm hold, a medium which is experienced within the domestic environment, bringing the outside inside. 1960s' television also provides material to debate Marwick's (1998) sixties as cultural revolution against Sandbrook's (2005; 2006) sixties as continuity. Through Carleton -Greene's "golden age" BBC TV output via *Dad's Army* and the *Black and White Minstrel Show*, nowhere is the contested and contradictory nature of "the Sixties" more on show than in the TV products of the decade.

The chapter has also examined the Beatles position within this, arguing that the first stirrings of McLuhan's (1964) global village coincided with their rise to fame and, therefore, their role as "perfect McLuhanites" (MacDonald, 1994 : 20) placed (and continues to place) them at the centre of debate about social change and the 1960s and created a discourse around how they changed the world⁶⁹. In addition, though, they provided an interesting model of interdependence at a time when the "I" culture was beginning to take hold, a time when capitalism truly bedded in (MacDonald, 1994).

⁶⁹ See Appendix 1.

“We’re a community” Paul McCartney states in *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) and in many ways their homosocial gang-ness and their sum-of-the-parts-greater-than-the-whole-ness provided a challenge to the rise of individualism in the 1960s. An analysis of their films in Chapter 6 will explore these ideas further and will, in some detail, look at examples of the way in which they, as globally popular men, through their “to-be-looked-at-ness” (Mulvey, 1975 : 18), were important both to the notion of reading changing representations of masculinities in the decade and providing a challenge to the representations of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) and hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) that had gone before, making the 1960s a site where the pace at which images of masculinity (single) become images of masculinities (plural) [Brod, 1987] accelerates at a speed not seen in any previous or subsequent decade.

Chapter 3: Men and Masculinities

Naming Men as Men

Introduction

Introducing a screening of *Gone with the Wind* (1939) as part of a *29 Days of Oscar* (2004) film showcase on TCM, the actor Stephen Fry described Clark Gable (as Rhett Butler) as “the epitome of masculinity”. It is interesting to ponder for a moment what this means and why it is important. For a well known “out” gay man, renowned for his intellectual ability, to suggest, in the so-called post-modern era, that there is something that can be recognized as “masculinity” when it is represented on the screen is intriguing and important to this study. Whitehead (2002: 3) talks about “the multiple ways of being a man and the multiple masculinities now available to men in ... the post-modern age” while authors such as Edwards (1997) and Simpson (2004) have explored the concept of gay masculinities. Yet Fry’s comment would indicate that “masculinity” still has a specific meaning for many people. A viewing of *Gone with the Wind* (1939) reveals Gable as Rhett Butler to be smart, well groomed, a loner - his own man, rebelling against the conventions of the day; drinking, gambling and hanging out in houses of ill repute. At the same time he is compassionate, heroic in the sense of brave and, at times, selfless, overtly sexually domineering and in the end, quite frankly my dear, he doesn’t give a damn. These, then, are the qualities that Fry seems to equate with a ‘traditional’ view of masculinity and in this chapter the nature of this with particular reference to the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) and Brittan’s (1989) concept of masculinism will be examined.

The “traditional” male hero is a mainstay of the golden age of Hollywood cinema. Indeed the 1930s, ’40s and ’50s are often seen as a golden age for this very reason (Spicer, 1997). However, as Spicer (1997) notes, films from this period also offer a glimpse of the complex and multiple masculinities that academics would write about many years after their production (Connell, 1995; Whitehead, 2002; Hearn, 2004).

This brief introduction serves to establish the importance of representation, as being central to the study of men and masculinities. Representation is discussed more fully in the next chapter but in a thesis which has a particular focus on representation, it is useful to make the point here.

This chapter explores some of the key debates around men and masculinities, including those around biological determinism, sex/gender relations, power and hegemonic masculinity, the development of ideas around masculinities (plural) rather than masculinity, discourses of masculinity, culturalist approaches to masculinity and, in the next chapter, how these lead to particular representations of men and masculinities in the mass media. Accepting that gender studies grew out of the feminist movement and that it is writing on women by women that made gender visible in the first place (Kimmel et al., 2004), the chapter includes an examination of two pieces of work by feminist authors. Barbara Ehrenreich's work on the male revolt (Ehrenreich, 1983) and Lynne Segal's examination of men in the 1950s (Segal, 1988) provide a framework for an exploration of what happened to, for and through the activities of men in the 1960s, the central focus of this study.

Cultures of Masculinity

As Edwards (2006 : 1) states:

“The canon of studies of men and masculinities is now vast, even sociologically, and the task of reviewing all of this is simply not within the scope of a single project.”

This chapter, then, does not claim to provide a review of the entire body of literature now available in this area of study, but rather explores some of the key theoretical developments with particular reference to the research questions central to this particular study (see Chapter 1).

Edwards (2006) identifies three waves in the field of the critical studies of men, the first wave being led by authors such as Farrell (1974), David and Brannon (1976) and

Tolson (1977) with an emphasis on the socially constructed nature of masculinity and masculine identity. This work had a particular focus on the sex role paradigms of the 1970s and is rooted in a sociological approach.

The pro-feminist structuralist approaches of authors such as Kimmel (1987), Connell (1995) and Hearn (1987) constitutes a second wave, with what Edwards (2006) conceptualizes as culturalist, post-structuralist, media-driven approaches as a third wave.

He observes that these approaches, although united by exploration of the social and cultural construction of masculinities, often operate within those bounded categories with little intertextuality. Here it is the intention to outline some of the key developments of these different “waves”, although, it has to be said that such rigid categorization is not necessarily useful to a study which seeks to transgress some of the traditional academic disciplinary boundaries. For example, it is true that some structuralist approaches do seem to ignore or underplay the actual interpreted meanings and lived experiences of men in relation to the concept of masculinity. It is equally true, though, that some culturalist approaches ignore or underplay the question of power and sometimes fail to address the “so what?” questions raised by discussions on the commodification of masculinity.

There follows, therefore, a review of some of the literature on men and masculinities which will inform the documentary and interview stages of the research.

What is a Man?

As Hearn (2004: 49) has stated “studying men is in itself neither new nor necessarily radical”. Hearn (2004) and Connell et al. (2004) provide a comprehensive guide to the development of gendered work on men¹. This is what Collinson and Hearn (1994 : 2) refer to as “naming men as men”, an idea first advanced by Hanmer (1990).

¹ Connell et al (2004 : 1 - 12) provide an overview of the development of the study of men and masculinities including a categorization of approaches, development of journals, book series’ etc.

Hearn (2004) documents the development of work on men from the birth of men's studies in the 1980s to the more recent critical studies of men, and the multi-disciplinary nature of this work, which often transgresses traditional sites or venues (King and Watson, 2001) for the study of men.

The Crisis in Masculinity

The appearance of this work is often characterized as a response to a discourse of "crisis" in masculinity. The 1950s/1960s can be read as just one historical period in which the idea of "crisis" has been explored, notably by Ehrenreich (1983), and her notion of the male revolt is explored later in this chapter². Brittan (1989 : 25) argues that the notion of "crisis" is "founded on the observation that both men and women deviate from the master gender stereotypes of their society." Kimmel (1987) sees it as a reaction to changing definitions of femininity while others, such as Edwards (2006), see the whole concept as being somewhat unclear. Here it is the intention to provide a brief outline of the different accounts and explanations for the crisis in masculinity. These are generally divided into three categories: the structural, psychoanalytical and post-structural (Edwards, 2006).

Structural accounts tend to focus on economic change as a trigger for crisis. Benyon (2002) provides a comprehensive account which has a focus on the idea of work as a key component of male identity. Changes in the industrial processes at various points in history – the industrial revolution of the 19th century, the depression of the 1970s, post World War 2 developments, or the decimation of manufacturing industry in the UK in the 1980s are all examples. Kimmel (1987), for example, looks at the past 200 years and identifies a number of key points at which crisis is said to occur. Others, such as Pleck (1981) draw a link between changes in male power in both the home and the workplace as a key factor. This is discussed in relation to the work by Segal (1988) on the 1950s later in this chapter. More recent work (Lightfoot, 2000) has examined the gender gap in educational attainment as a further development of the "crisis".

² See Ehrenreich (1983).

Psychoanalytical accounts of crisis tend to be rooted in Freudian analysis, thus conceptualizing masculinity as being in a permanent state of crisis, with uncertainty about role modeling in a society within which gender roles are shifting being seen as a crucial “crisis” trigger. Brittan (1989: 27) asserts that “the dominant orthodoxy in the discussion of masculinity has been heavily overlaid by psychology.” Work by Chodorow (1978) and Dinnerstein (1987) provides some interesting discussion which explores the reverse analogy of the Freudian position on the importance of same sex identity and provides a link to post-structuralist accounts, which see social change and contested notions of gender roles as providing “crisis” trigger points. MacInness, (1998), for example, identifies a contradiction in the arguments around modernity and equality in relation to the patriarchy at work in late capitalist societies. He argues that crisis is inevitable once this incompatibility is recognized. As Brittan (1989: 183) argues, once men became “uncertain’ about their potency, their heterosexuality, their status-worthiness” then “crisis” is inevitable.

Franklin (1984) identifies a number of “versions” of masculinity: chauvinist classical man; routinely masculinist man, acknowledging gender differences; humanist man, recognizing sex role equality and anomic man, exposed to 2nd wave feminism and in “crisis” as a result. Franklin (1984) sees structuralist accounts as over simplistic, asserting that an acceptance of multiple masculinities means that there can be no one “crisis” but allows for the possibilities of sub-crises, dependent on social and economic change and negotiation of power and gender roles. An acceptance of gender as socially constructed (Burr, 2003) [see later discussion] or performative (Butler, 1990), rather than a static, fixed category, leads to the idea that changing representations of masculinity in the media can also lead to the notion of “crisis”. Edwards (2006) argues that this crisis in representation, in which images of male “perfection” come to predominate, presenting new definitions of masculinity, is now an important field of study and this has resonance with the aims of this thesis.

What has emerged from all of this work is an in-depth examination of the concept of masculinity, its role in establishing and reproducing male power and an exploration of the ways in which key institutions operate in this process of reproduction.

Petersen (1998) draws on the work of Derrida (1978) in outlining the binary distinctions drawn in the production of categories.

“Any definition or category involves the drawing of inside/outside distinctions ... western philosophy is seen to be built upon a foundation of first principles which involves the ordering of reality into dualisms. This dualistic ordering of knowledge always involves the privileging of one side of the dualism over the other.”

(Petersen, 1998: 21)

These dualisms include nature and culture, self and other and male and female. There is a growing body of work which traces the development of the biologically constructed categories “men” and “women” and the socially constructed (Burr, 2003) gender categories “male” and “female”. (Foucault, 1981; Haraway, 1989; Butler, 1990). Laqueur’s *Making Sex* (1990) outlines the way in which the mapping of the body and the production of an anatomical atlas, in the period of Enlightenment in the 18th century created a two sex model. He states

“... sometime in the eighteenth century, sex as we know it was invented. The reproductive organs went from being paradigmatic sites for displaying hierarchy, resonant throughout the cosmos, to being the foundation of incommensurable difference ... organs that had shared a name – ovaries and testicles – were now linguistically distinguished. Organs that had not been distinguished by a name of their own – the vagina, for example – were given one.”

(Laqueur, 1990: 149)

According to Laqueur (1990) the period brought about a reinterpretation of the relationship between male and female bodies. New scientific “discoveries” of the differences between the male and female bodies led to a re-establishing of what constituted male and female. He sees the development of new terminologies and new language to talk about parts of the body as being vital in this process. For example, for thousands of years before the Enlightenment period it had been asserted that the male and female genitalia were the same but existed in a binary opposition of

inside/outside (Laqueur, 1990). The search for difference and the naming of these differences interpreted them as fundamental to making a distinction between men and women. This is not to say that the previous one sex model had not contained any sort of binary opposition (Petersen, 1998). The view had been advanced by Galen in the second century A.D. (Laqueur, 1990) that women were the imperfect man. However, the arguments about biological difference advanced in the 18th century rooted their differences in “nature”.

“The dominant, though by no means universal, view since the eighteenth century has been that there are two stable, incommensurable, opposite sexes and that the political, economic, and cultural lives of men and women, their gender roles, are somehow based on these “facts”. Biology – the stable, ahistorical, sexed body – is understood to be the epistemic foundation for prescriptive claims about the social order.”

(Laqueur, 1990: 6)

The insistence on this dualism, based on biological differences rejected all ideas of complexity. Thus biological essentialism was born. Fuss (1989: 2) describes this as:

“... a belief in the essence – that which is most irreducible, unchanging, and therefore constitutive of a given person or thing.”

Grosz (1995) distinguishes between biologism, men and women in essence being defined by biological capacities, for example, women as naturally “caring” and men as “naturally” competitive and aggressive, the “fact” of men and women having some sort of “god-given” nature, and a universalism which is biologically rooted but expressed in social terms, such as the division of labour. The latter, it is argued, implies that this is a natural state of being at all times and in all contexts. Grosz’s (1995) explanation is useful in that it draws attention to the complex interaction between these different theories and approaches all of which serve to draw distinctions between “men” and “women”, “male” and “female” and what constitutes “masculine” and “feminine”.

However, Garlick (2003) draws on Butler's work (1990) and a body of "queer theory" (Bemny and Eliason, 1996; Brookey and Westerfelhaus, 2002; Simpson, 2008) to point out the relationship between "masculinity" and "heteronormativity" (heterosexual masculinity as "the norm") and challenges the distinction made in both writings on feminism and masculinities between "sex" and "gender". He argues that the category "man" actually intertwines both "sex" and "gender" and, implicitly suggests that much valuable time is wasted in determining the relationships between categories rather than how these categories impact on power relations:

"The slippages often made between categories such as 'male' and 'masculine' or 'males' and 'men' are not so much errors to be eliminated through greater conceptual tidiness as they are a reflection of the fact that these are not terms that refer to discrete entities. Everyday language often uses them interchangeably and here, we should perhaps listen to what our language reveals to us."

(Garlick, 2003 : 160)

Similarly, Petersen (1998) argues that the nature nurture debate is no longer useful, with biological determinism as a "red herring" that does not explain how difference translates into inequality, and he outlines how distinctions between, for example, homosexuality and heterosexuality or the sex/gender distinction have been subject to intense scrutiny and discussion.

However, these debates appear to have done little to reduce the real inequalities between the sexes nor radically alter ideas about "masculinity" and "femininity" in the mass media. (King and Watson, 2005). Kimmel's (2000) concept of invisible masculinity states that men have come to see themselves as genderless, despite the privileges of masculinity and points to the fact that the invisibility of gender then reproduces inequalities, while Collinson and Hearn (1994 : 2) have also emphasised the importance of "naming men as men", of looking at men as gendered subjects in order to explore this process further.

Wittig (1983: 64) adds:

“Gender is the linguistic index of the political opposition between the sexes. Gender is used here in the singular because indeed there are no two genders. There is only one: the feminine, the ‘masculine’ not being a gender. For the masculine is not the masculine, but the general.”

The Hegemony of Men

Connell (1983) and Carrigan et al. (1985) were the first to introduce the concept of hegemonic masculinity, drawing on Gramsci’s work (1971)³ and arguing that dominant conceptualisations of masculinity were reproduced through key institutions such as the state, education, the workplace and the family. (The mass media could be added as another if not **the** key institution in this sense).

Carrigan et al. (1985) explain how hegemonic masculinity is not just about men in relation to women but is a particular type of masculinity. They characterise hegemonic masculinity:

“... not as ‘the male role’ but as a variety of masculinity to which others – among them young and effeminate as well as homosexual men – are subordinated.”

(Carrigan et al., 1985: 586)

A key feature of hegemonic masculinity is that it is explicitly heterosexual (Butler, 1990; Garlick, 2003). Carrigan et al. (1985) see hegemonic masculinity as the way in which men reproduce their dominance, through particular groupings of powerful men. The importance of this theoretical development cannot be underestimated. It is their introduction of Gramsci’s (1971) cultural –Marxist perspective which examines notions of class and power along with gender that is particularly important. Gramsci’s (1971) concept of hegemony is summarised by Bocoock (1986: 63) as:

³ See Chapter 4.

“... when the intellectual, moral and philosophical leadership provided by the class or alliance of class faction’s which is ruling successfully achieves its objective of providing the fundamental outlook of the whole society.”

Carrigan et al. discuss how “*particular* groups of men” (Carrigan et al., 1985: 179, original emphasis) come to hold power and this is important in starting to unpack the grand narrative of patriarchy, for example, and begins to unravel the complexities at work where gender and class intersect. It is a concept which encompasses the notion of power being contested between groups (Gramsci, 1971; Foucault, 1980) and Connell (1995) builds on this, idea and advances the notion of resistance and change (a key point of discussion in the case study in Chapter 6). He argues that “many men live in some tension with, or distance, from, hegemonic masculinity” (Connell, 1995: 3) and that hegemonic masculinity is supported by the collusion of dominant forms of femininity. Whitehead (2002: 90) advances the view that it is the “nuanced account” offered by the debate around hegemonic masculinity and its ability to signal the contested nature of male practices within a gender structure that distinguishes it from and makes it a more useful concept than patriarchy.

The debate around hegemonic masculinity then, has become central to the field of critical studies of men (Kimmel, 2000). Hearn (2004 : 57) has argued that, as definitions of hegemonic masculinity have developed, they have come to incorporate a relationship between “the cultural ideal and the institutional power as in state, business and corporate power.” Earlier critiques such as those by Donaldson (1993) who saw the concept as obscuring economic and class issues and Whitehead (1999: 58) who saw it as unable to explain “the complex patterns of inculcation and resistance which constitute everyday social interaction” or the different meanings attached to “masculinity”, have been absorbed into an ever developing conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity. However, Hearn (2004) has more recently argued that the term is restrictive and that a return to the term “men” rather than “masculinities” would be useful when studying men.

“... it is time to go back from masculinity to men, to examine the hegemony of men and about men. The hegemony of men seeks to address the double

complexity that men are both a social category formed by the gender system and dominant collective and individual agents of social practices.”

(Hearn, 2004 : 59)

He argues that this will focus study more closely on Gramsci's (1971) original concept of hegemony but also, in questioning the formations/ groupings/constructions of “men” as a category, engages with the work of Butler (1990) and Laqueur (1990) discussed earlier in this chapter. Hearn sets out to explore what it is that “sets the agenda for different ways of being men in relation to women, children and other men” (Hearn, 2004: 60), as opposed to a focus on what constitutes masculinity or hegemonic masculinity. He goes on to argue that this would entail looking at social processes, categorizations and distinction, agenda setting, men's practices and their taken-for-grantedness, and the relationship between these elements, “placing biology and biological difference firmly in a cultural frame” (Hearn, 2004 : 61), a frame which would include the complexities of 21st century advanced Western societies. This would necessarily entail including the notions of political pluralism, multiculturalism, diversity and the mixed capitalist economy rather than relying on Gramsci's (1971) class based version of hegemony or Bocoock's (1986 : 83) conceptualisation of hegemony as “a fundamental outlook of the whole society”.

Masculinism

Arthur Brittan's (1989) ideas around masculinism provide an alternative perspective on the debate around masculinity, which is particularly pertinent to this study with its assertion that “both masculinity and femininity are continuously subject to a process of reinterpretation” (Brittan, 2001: 51). Allowing for the notions of resistance, change and plural masculinities, Brittan (1989) proposes a distinction between masculinity and masculine.

“Those people who speak of masculinity as an essence, as an inborn characteristic, are confusing masculinity with masculinism, the masculine ideology. Masculinism is the ideology that justifies and naturalizes male domination ... masculinism takes it for granted that there is a fundamental

difference between men and women, it assumes that heterosexuality is normal, it accepts without question the sexual division of labour and it sanctions the political and dominant role of men in the public and private spheres.”

(Brittan, 2001 : 53)

He goes on to argue that masculinism is resistant to change, whereas he sees masculinity as referring to “those aspects of men’s behaviour that fluctuate over time” (Brittan, 2001: 53). Therefore the concept of plural masculinities began to emerge to encompass change. He uses the example of men’s hair length (which will be discussed further in the case study in chapter 6) and different styles of self presentation (e.g. androgyny, popularized and, perhaps, epitomised by David Bowie in the early 1970s or by contemporary comedians Russell Brand and Noel Fielding).

He concludes:

“... the fact that men have a multitude of ways of expressing their masculinity in different times and places does not mean that these masculinities have nothing to do with male dominance ... Even when there is a great deal of gender and sexual experimentation, as was the case in the sixties and the early seventies, masculinism was never under real attack because gender relations remained relatively constant.”

(Brittan, 2001 : 54-5)

Brittan’s (1989) ideas, however, have had less impact on the field of critical studies of men than the literature on hegemonic masculinity.

Whitehead (2002) has argued that the importance of Brittan’s (1989) perspective is that it reintroduces the subject as central to his arguments and allows for a more complex debate around power to take place. He contrasts this to the structural arguments advanced by others (Connell, 1995: Messner, 1997) and argues that they are not really useful “within a sociology of masculinity that seeks to emphasise the possibility of change, resistance and transformation” (Whitehead, 2002: 99).

While still essentially part of a structuralist approach, Whitehead (2002 : 98) argues that Brittan's (1989) ideas offer:

“a more nuanced and subversive account of power, one that recognises the subject as an important actor”

In this sense Brittan's (1989) ideas can act as a theoretical tool for post structuralist approaches as it links to Foucault's (1988) later position on the subject (see Chapter 4). Post-structuralists can, according to Whitehead (2002) conceptualise masculinism as a dominant discourse rather than a dominant ideology, with its nuanced account of power allowing for the possibility of change and resistance, therefore recognising the complexities in the operation of male power in a way that is not always apparent in accounts of hegemonic masculinity.

The concept of hegemony was developed within the context of Marxist analysis (Abercrombie and Turner, 1978), drawing on two different ideas at work in Marx's analysis of the way in which ideology operates. Firstly it draws on the idea that social being determines consciousness, with an emphasis on the experience of class as a determinant of the ideas of its members.

The second theory drawn from Marx is that economic structure determines the legal and political structure of society, the notion that the ideas of the ruling class become the predominant ideas of society. Gramsci (1971) developed this (see Chapter 4) into the concept of hegemony, examining the relationship between the operation of material and intellectual forces, seeing the cultural/intellectual realm as the most important feature (Abercrombie and Turner, 1978). This idea, then, follows from Marx's second theory of ideology but also draws on the first.

This work has been further developed in a post-structuralist context, particularly by Laclau and Mouffe (1985; 1987) where work at the intersection of Marxism and poststructuralism explores the relationship between the material and the discursive and the ways in which hegemony is discursively constructed.

Whitehead (2002: 97) also draws the conclusion that:

“Masculinism is the point at which dominant forms of masculinity and heterosexuality meet ideological dynamics and in the process become reified and legitimized as privileged, unquestioned accounts of gender difference and reality.”

Perhaps Brittan’s (1989) most useful contribution to a thesis which aims to explore the idea of resistance through the representation of masculinities (see Chapter 4) and the emergence of different “versions” of masculinity in the public arena is his statement that:

“we cannot talk of masculinity, only masculinities”

(Brittan, 1989 : 1)

It is this assertion, made at a time when writing on men and masculinity was in its early stages, that makes Brittan’s (1989) work a useful tool in the analysis of representation and his conceptual framework is used in the discussion of The Beatles’ films in Chapter 6.

The introduction of the subject and the conceptualisation of masculinities as a set of values which are often associated with, but not exclusively available to men and therefore, often talked/written of or approached as if they are linked, in some inextricable essentialist way, to masculinity, is a useful development in the field. Two examples which illustrate how this might operate are Elizabeth I and Margaret Thatcher. Laqueur (1990: 122) describes how “Elizabeth I brilliantly exploited the tensions between her masculine political body and her feminine private body”, proudly proclaiming her “body of weak and feeble woman but the heart and stomach of a king, and a king of England too.” White (1997) sees Margaret Thatcher⁴ as a female Prime Minister exhibiting all the signs of masculinism, citing particularly her coining of the term ‘wets’ for those members of her Cabinet who did not agree with her hard line policies.

⁴ In the 1980s’ satirical puppet show *Spitting Image*, Mrs Thatcher was always portrayed as a masculine figure, dressed in a suit, speaking in a deep voice and using the urinal in the gents toilets.

He states:

“What is important to recognise is that those outcomes are not coincidental, but derive from the fact that the economic policies followed are inscribed in a particular model of masculinity. It is also vital to note that this ‘macho’ style of politics did not simply serve to advantage (some) men over (some) women, but to reproduce and intensify much broader patterns of domination by race and class as well.”

(White, 1997 : 20)

Hall (1998) has argued, similarly, that Blair’s New Labour project was merely a continuation of this type of “macho” politics, based on those notions of traditional “masculinity” referred to by Stephen Fry in the introduction to this chapter, notions in the UK which are inevitably linked to Christianity, so-called family values, the work ethic and the centrality of the monarch as head of state. These are key arguments in linking “masculinity” with a set of values which, in the period under study (the 1960s) were commonly referred to as belonging to “the establishment”⁵.

Culturalist Approaches

Culturalist approaches to the examination of masculinity are marked by a shift from production to consumption and the concept of the commodification of masculinity (Edwards, 1997). These approaches take, as a starting point, the idea of consumption as traditionally associated with the feminine rather than the masculine:

“The equation of fashion with the feminine, with the not masculine, with the effeminate, as well as with the homosexual, remains a chain of socially constructed and perpetuated links that are decidedly difficult to overcome.”

(Edwards, 1997 : 4)

⁵ See Chapter 2.

This approach is, therefore, aligned with that of the social constructionists but culturalist approaches also draw on other areas of the Academy, drawing further ideas from fashion, art and design and media and cultural studies. The focus on image and representation is, therefore, vitally important (Edwards, 2006) and this links to ideas on “the gaze” in relation to the male body discussed in Chapter 4 (Mulvey, 1975; Cohan, 1993; Neale, 1993).

Several authors see the social changes of the 1980s and the rise in production and consumption of men’s fashion as a key period in which the objectification of the male body in film, TV and advertising becomes more visible and, therefore, see this period as key to the production of different conceptualisations of masculinities (Mort, 1996; Edwards, 1997; Nixon, 1997). Edwards (2006), for example, sees the rise in production of men’s magazines in the 1980s and 1990s as a key development in this process of commodification, reading this as a response to second wave feminism and part of a wider process of social change in this period. Edwards (2006) cites the rise of style/fashion magazines such as *ID* and *The Face* in the 1980s as a turning point, contrasting these with previous magazines aimed at particular mens’ interests. By the early 1990s around a dozen such magazines existed and the post-feminist new man, interested in fashion, style and grooming gave way to the pre-feminist new lad with the emergence of *Loaded* (“for men who should know better”). *Loaded* seemed to herald a reclaiming of pre-feminist masculinity an attempt to construct a hyperreal (Baudrillard, 1983) masculinity, what Hunt (1997 : 8) has termed “a male heterosexual utopia”. *Loaded* constructed a world where it was ok for men to behave badly, a world of booze, birds and big sideboards, featuring articles on “real” men from a bygone age; Bond, Bestie, Michael Caine in *The Italian Job etc.* Filled with cool “stuff” for men (not unlike its 1950s predecessor *Playboy*, discussed later in this chapter), the magazine brought together commodities and a series of masculine images which seemed, on the surface, at any rate, to represent a post-modern approach to the representation of masculinities. However, an empirical investigation into the consumption of magazines by Jackson et al (2001) found that men had somewhat contradictory attitudes towards such representations, didn’t always like them at face value, were both engaged and disengaged and often ambivalent about the ideas and attitudes professed. Thus, while the production of *Loaded* and other such organs can be read as part of a social change with reference to masculinities, an

explanation of how it is consumed seems to give a less clear picture, a finding also produced by Benwell's (2003) edited collection.

While the 1980s provides a focus and a starting point for many culturalist approaches, a number of authors provide a comprehensive history of the development of the male as consumer as context (Mort, 1988; 1996; Osgerby, 2001; Edwards, 2006). For instance, Mort (1988 : 194), in discussing football-related fashions of the 1980s, states:

“A new bricolage of masculinity is the noise coming from the fashion house, the marketplace and the street.”

There is, however, an acknowledgement that this is not entirely new and, in a later work, Mort (1996) provides a historical perspective which sees the expansion of advertising, with a style imported from the US in the late 1950s, as being a key point in the rise of male consumerism in the UK. Mort (1996) identifies this period as the point at which “lifestyle” becomes a key concept. He also provides a comprehensive outline of what designer Hardy Amies described as the “peacock revolution” in the 1960s, seeing the growth of Burton's as a high street chain aiming to provide fashionable attire for younger men as a precursor to the growth of Next in the 1980s, as discussed by Nixon (1997), for example.

Osgerby (2001) draws on the work of Ehrenreich (1983) [see later in this chapter] to examine the rise of *Playboy* magazine in the US in this period, conceptualising it as “a glossy eulogy to young, masculine consumption” (Osgerby, 2001 : 4) and seeing the concepts of “footloose bachelor” and “vibrant youth” (Osgerby, 2001 : 3) as firmly rooted in 1950s' post-war consumerism. Osgerby's (2001) work explores some of the complexities and contradictions inherent in the construction of the new male consumer within the “crisis” discourse, discussed elsewhere in the chapter. There is a particular emphasis in his work on the way in which the reading of culturalist approaches as subverting traditional ideas about masculinity needs to be tempered by the fact that the commodification of masculinity exemplifies the way in which advanced consumer capitalism can adapt such subversions (Osgerby, 2001). He cites the way in which the style of the 1960s' counterculture (see Chapter 6) was soon

incorporated into the fashion industry. For example, while flared trousers were the height of radical chic in 1967, by 1971 high street tailors were producing suits with flared trousers for the respectable executive.

Interestingly, Osgerby's (2001) list of bachelors who represented the *Playboy* lifestyle includes musicians like Sinatra, Dean Martin and the rest of the Rat Pack and '60s' spy heroes such as Bond, The Men from UNCLE and The Saint, which corresponds to the type of male heroes featured in *Loaded*. His conclusion that "The Playboy ethic was always more of a dry martini rather than a Molotov cocktail" (Osgerby, 2001 : 204) seems to summarise some of the contradictions at work around the representation of the commodified male in that while, as Mort (1996) argues, the market can be seen as a force for transforming male identity and redefining masculinity there is often an inherent conservatism at work. Both Mort (1996) and Nixon (1997), for example, cite the rise of Next for Men in 1984 as one such example, yet the conservative style of the Next range (the return of the 1950s' double breasted suit and matching accessories) can be read as a Thatcherite artefact. On the other hand, the emergence of baggy fashions, the new ecstasy driven psychedelia and its associations with a return to childhood (see Chapter 6) in the late 1980s, represents, it can be argued, a more radical refashioning of 1980s' masculinities.

Much of this work is pertinent to the discussion of the representations of masculinities at work in The Beatles' films in Chapter 6. Both Mort (1996) and Edwards (1997) provide a history of the development of male fashion which pre-dates the 1950s and this is also relevant to the discussion of images of men in the 1960s which is the focus of this thesis. In discussion of the films, in Chapter 6, an examination of the Beatles takes place in both a retrospective and contemporary context. For example, it is argued that Simpson's (1996) 1990s' invention, the metrosexual, is pre-empted by The Beatles in *Help!* (1965) and that their style, appearance and artefact-filled homosocial living space, coupled with their "playboy" lifestyle, makes them metrosexual before it had been invented (see Chapter 6).

Simpson's (1996) metrosexual has become a concept well recognised by the popular media, commodified, well-groomed modern man, straddling the gay/straight divide, a direct descendent of Ehrenreich (1983) and Osgerby's (2001) 1950s' playboy and

Nick Kamen removing his Levi 501s in a 1980s' launderette (see Edwards, 1997). Simpson (1996; 2004) has famously cited David Beckham as the über metrosexual and Cashmore's (2004) work on Beckham explores this phenomenon in relation to the representation of masculinity in the 21st century. Cashmore's (2004) work is contextualised by Rojek's *Celebrity* (2001) which posits an explanation of the 21st century celebrity as being linked to "a society that cultivates perceived style as the antidote to formal democratic equality." (Rojek, 2001 : 9).

Thus, the idea of the commodified male is contextualised within a society "that valorizes the superficial, the gaudy, the dominance of commodity culture" (Rojek, 2001 : 90) and Rojek (2001) argues that "celebrities humanize the process of commodity consumption." He sees the decline of religion, the rise of democratic societies and the commodification of everyday life as the key factors leading to the modern-day obsession with celebrity. Rojek (2001) advances three accounts of celebrity: subjective i.e. "the best" discourse; structural, such as accounts advanced by Adorno (1991), which see celebrities as part of the process of social control or Marshall (1997), who sees celebrity as a means of focusing on individuality/consumption; his third category is post-structural, with the emphasis on representation and image (Dyer, 1993). All have resonance with the discussion in Chapter 1 on The Beatles. His notion that "the audience responds to the celebrity through abstract desire" (Rojek, 2001 : 47) links to the discussion on Beatlemania, for example. Cashmore (2004), in his examination of Beckham, explores the importance of his relationship to his audience and the idea that he is both extraordinary and ordinary which, again, links to previous discussion on The Beatles. Whitley (2001), for example, asserts that The Beatles provide an early example of knowing self-commodification.

Beckham's importance in the context of a discussion on culturalist approaches to masculinity, however, is bound up with his global fame, self commodification and the notion that he is "perfect for our times" (Cashmore, 2004 : 7). Chapter 7 contains some discussion on George Best and his transgression of the traditional boundaries associated with the male footballer in the 1960s. However, as Cashmore (2004) points out, the commodified nature of 21st century football, achieved through a process including the rise of Sky Sports, huge advertising revenue, superstar status

and wages and the import of highly skilled foreign players into the English Premier League, provides a different context for Beckham's global fame and his projection of urban metrosexuality.

Cashmore (2004) sees Beckham's metrosexuality as key to his global fame and his global fame as a platform for his "flouting the conventions of football machismo" and presenting "a type of manliness" (Cashmore, 2004 : 20) to the world. He sees Beckham as "sweet natured, caring, nurturing, full of soft human touches" (Cashmore, 2004 : 20) , with his gay following and the fact that his hairstyle, clothes and jewellery have all been fetishised by gay men as key to his representation of a different version of masculinity. Cashmore (2004) also sees the fact that his commodified masculinity and celebrity status – the Beckham brand – is carefully managed by wife, and former Spice Girl, Victoria as significant. According to Cashmore (2004 : 120) her influence has "changed him from a footballer into a demi-god".

The fact that Beckham's commodified masculinity seems perfect for a culture obsessed with image, illusion and fantasy (Cashmore, 2004) , that it is difficult to gauge whether his global adoration is more about his wealth than his metrosexuality and whether his heterosexual 1950s – style family-man values really mean that he is a truly transgressive character are questions left largely unexplored in Cashmore's (2004) account, a good illustration of the point made by Edwards (2006) discussed earlier in the chapter. This type of question requires further exploration of the relationship between structuralist and culturalist approaches to masculinity. Wealth, fame, power and commodification are all at work in the different versions of masculinity presented by the 21st century media in the personas of David Beckham, Simon Cowell and Sir Alan Sugar. Whether distinctions can be made between these "versions" of masculinity and the significance of these distinctions for the field of critical studies of men is, it seems, a question requiring a more intertextual approach to the subject matter, an approach which draws on both structuralist and culturalist accounts.

The Language of Sex and Gender

Laqueur's (1990) *Making Sex* makes it apparent that discourse and language i.e. the ways in which new "facts" about the biological differences between men and women were presented and the "naming" of body parts using a binary model (Petersen, 1998) were vitally important in establishing the notion of sex and gender differences.

Laqueur (1990: 27) describes this as "a great linguistic cloud" which was linked to new forms of visual representation, through the anatomical atlas, which then produced a new discourse around sex. The next chapter will focus on questions around how and where masculinity is produced and made relevant, given the contested nature of masculinity as a given "thing", its relationship to power and gender, and will explore ideas around the socially constructed nature of gender (Smith, 1990; Burr, 2003) with particular reference to the work of Michel Foucault. His concept of discourse theory and the discursive subject as socially and historically constructed, will be further examined. Foucault's ideas on power and the subject were open to change and development between his mid-1960s' work on madness and civilisation and his work power and knowledge in the 1980s, for example.

Foucault's (1980) concept of discourse and discursive power and its subsequent use in the field of representation by authors such as Hall (1997) can be usefully combined with ideas around hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) and masculinism (Brittan, 1989) to give an understanding of how male power operates, its relationship to "traditional" ideas about masculinity (often based in essentialist terms) and masculinism and its relationship to class and "establishment" values. The creation of resistant discourses and whether or not these can have material effects is something which is explored in the case study in Chapter 6. This study focuses on 1960s' man and the changes in representations of masculinities that took place in "the sixties". The next section of this chapter examines the position of men in the 1950s as a backdrop to the case study.

1950s' man - in crisis or in revolt?

Introduction

In considering representation of and reflections on masculinities through “The Beatles” it is important to examine the context of “1960s’ man” and take a retrospective look at what was happening in terms of gender as the 1950s became the 1960s, and to examine whether the changes in this period can be read as crisis or revolt. The 1950s and 1960s are a key period in British history in terms of social change (Segal, 1988; Marwick, 2003; Sandbrook, 2005; 2006) and, within this context, what was often described in popular culture as the “battle of the sexes” (Ehrenreich, 1983) came to be debated in both academic writing and popular culture. In the 1950s the role of men in childcare, homecare or violence in the home, for example, was not on the political agenda. By reflecting on this state of affairs in terms of definitions and ideas around men and masculinities at this particular historical moment, the changes that occurred over the next decade are brought sharply into focus.

Lynne Segal (1988) outlines the importance of the revolt of the “angry young men” in the UK and reads this as a response to the plethora of academic studies and popular writings of the time which emphasized the new domestication of men in 1950’s post war Britain. The discourse of “togetherness, harmony and equality between men and women in the home” was the dominant theme in these writings (Segal 1988 : 70). Studies by Young and Wilmott (1962) and Newson and Newson (1963) emphasized the new-found domesticity of the 1950s’ male. However, separate roles and domains were a given (Segal, 1988) and the illusion of togetherness and new roles was created by excluding key areas of debate such as the division of labour. Hoggart’s (1957) work, *The Uses of Literacy*, for example, outlines starkly the separate sphere of home and work and the separate worlds of men and women.

Essentialist arguments (Butler, 1990; Laqueur, 1990) were joined by the emergence of psychology as a key academic discipline in what feminists such as Segal (1988: 77) have described as an alliance for “policing mothers at all times”.

Bowlby's *Childcare and Maternal Deprivation* (1953), with its concept of maternal deprivation and its stress on the need for the mother-child bond and continuity of maternal care for toddlers, was highly influential in this respect. Read by many as part of a strategy to return women to the home and their "correct" roles after wartime working (Lewis, 1978) it played a key role in constructing discourses around women's role in the home and the family. Thus, what Segal (1988) and Ehrenreich (1983) have characterized as the male revolt of the late 1950s can be seen as a revolt against conformity (symbolised by domesticity) and a response to the reification of mothers. Segal (1988 : 80) states:

"... men who felt at odds with their time, who, despite its greater affluence, felt bored and dissatisfied, were to turn their anger against the ideals of hearth and home. In particular, they turned against women, against the powerful mother in the house."

(Segal, 1988 : 80)

Angry Young Men

Segal describes the male heroes of Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960) and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1959) as "tough, amoral, anarchic working-class heroes" (Segal, 1988 : 80). Women, she argues, represent "the establishment" and are seen "as part of the system trying to trap, tame and emasculate men" (Segal, 1988 : 80).

John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* (1957) is, perhaps, seen as the key text and the springboard for the "angry" movement and its anti-establishment stance. Theatre critic Kenneth Tynan welcomed its "anarchy", "instinctive leftishness" and "automatic rejection of 'official' attitudes." (Sinfield, 1983 : 4). However, the play has a misogynist strand to it with the central character, Jimmy Porter describing his wife thus:

“She’ll go on sleeping and devouring until here’s nothing left of me ... Why do we let these women bleed us to death? ... No, there’s nothing left for it, me boy, but to let yourself be butchered by the women.”

(Osborne, cited in Sinfield, 1983 : 2)

Similarly, Sillitoe’s Arthur Seaton talks of “the hell that older men call marriage” (Sillitoe, 1960 : 23).

Film versions of these, and many other popular “angry” novels and plays came to be seen as an important development in British Cinema in the early 1960s, labelled the British new wave, and seen as direct descendants of Hoggart’s *Uses of Literacy* (1957) featuring, as they did, the chronicling of working-class life or working class life as art (Stafford, 2001). Segal’s (1988) critique raises some previously undiscussed arguments around the central characters’ representation of masculinity and the ways in which women came to be the focus of anger.

It is the mix of anti-establishment anger and its focus, eventually, on the female characters as sites on which to play out the male revolt that Segal (1988) puts in focus. To give but two examples: Arthur Seaton (portrayed by Albert Finney in the film version of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* [1960]) rails against his mundane job, his boss, and the older generation of men worn down by the war, but his most violent action is reserved for Ma Bull, the neighbourhood gossip and representation of the dominant working class woman (at one point he shoots her in the rear end with an air gun). Factory girl Doreen (played by Shirley Ann Field, resplendent in hound’s tooth check suit) represents temptation combined with the constant threat of settling down and an end to his wild ways.

John Braine’s *Room at the Top* (1957) and *Life at the Top* (1962) chart the rise of grammar school boy Joe Lampton from town hall clerk, to marriage to the rich factory boss’s daughter and the trappings of the male role via an affair with an older married woman. The novels provide an insight into the British class structure in the 1950s and early 1960s, but Lampton’s success and failure in the narrative is dependent on his relationships with the key female characters and much of his anger and resentment stems from this fact. *Room at the Top* (1957), in particular, operates around a bad girl

(fun and sex), good girl (love and marriage) binary discourse, with Lampton eventually “trapped” into marriage and domestication through pregnancy, a common theme in what were to become known as the kitchen sink dramas (Spicer, 1997; Stafford 2001), popular in UK cinema from the mid 1950s and generally considered to have come to a close with the release of *Billy Liar* in 1963 (Stafford, 2001).

1963 also saw the discharge of the final UK National Service recruit. National Service was a compulsory two year conscription for all able bodied 18 year old men, a practice which had provided what Johnson (1973 : 210) referred to as “a crash course in growing up.” 1950s’ man was, therefore, subject to this process. The military is an institution which can be read as a key agency in propagating societal hegemony (Gramsci, 1971), hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) and imbued with Brittan’s (1989) masculinism. Royle (1986) describes effeminacy as the ultimate soldier’s crime while drawing attention to the phallic nature of military hardware. Segal (1988 : 86) sees the use of the binary opposition male/female in military training as a way of “hardening and cementing the prevalent cultural links between virility, sexuality and aggressiveness” while Morgan (1987) sees his own experiences as a conscript as being a method of learning about identifying what masculinity was and becoming a certain kind of man⁷. This process may have been instrumental in allaying some of the anxieties emerging around masculinity at this time (Hacker, 1957) and the ending of the practice is, therefore, a significant event, meaning that the experiences of teenage boys in the 1960s were going to be quite different from those of the 1950s (Johnson, 1973; Sandbrook, 2005) and, perhaps, a reflection of social change and emergent debates around masculinity in this period, both in academia and in the cultural texts of the late 1950s. Significantly for this thesis, Paul McCartney sees the ending of national service as highly significant for men of his generation.

“... without that, there could have been no Beatles. ... it meant that we were the first generation for so many years that did not have that make-a-man of you threat hanging over them”

(Wilde, 2004 : 47)

⁷ First-hand accounts of experiences of national services include those by Johnson (1973), Royle (1986) and Morgan (1987).

Hacker's (1957) US study *The New Burden of Masculinity* saw homosexuality and its increasing visibility as a manifestation of men's flight from the masculine role and associated expectation. Debate and concerns around homosexuality were prevalent by the late 1950s, culminating in the *Wolfenden Report* of 1957 in the UK.⁸

The Male Revolt

Barbara Ehrenreich's (1983) *The Hearts of Men* offers a number of examples of the flight from commitment by 1950s' man, and, despite its emphasis on the US experience, is a key text in understanding debates around men and masculinities in the late 1950s⁹.

Ehrenreich (1983) argues that the male revolt preceded second wave feminism and that, by the late 1950s, men were increasingly coming to see the traditional masculine role, particularly the "breadwinner" role, as a trap. According to Ehrenreich (1983) the advantages accruing to men through gender inequalities, to be outlined by 1960's second wave feminism, were beginning to seem, to the post-war baby boom generation, as something less than an advantage, more like a burden, with marriage and women as representation of domestication (as seen by the "angry young men" in the UK) and as a trap. She quotes Yale Professor Charles Reich's *The Greening of America* (1976a) as a key text in introducing some of the key ideas of 1960s counterculture¹⁰ to middle class America, and in his novel *The Sorcerer of Bollinas Reef* he recounts experiences from his own life:

"Marriage meant staying permanently in my present job. It meant children, a concept I was utterly unprepared for ... It meant being 'adult', which meant no more hope of excitement, no more fun – a sudden and final leap into middle age. It would have been like a prison sentence."

⁸ The Report of the Departmental Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution was published on 3rd September 1957.

⁹ Interestingly, the 1950s saw the traditional Hollywood hard-boiled hero represented by Humphrey Bogart and James Cagney, replaced by the rise of tender sensitive leading men such as Rock Hudson, James Dean and Montgomery Clift, all of whom played traditional heterosexual romantic leads whilst playing out different versions of masculinity in their private lives (see Cohan and Hark, 1993).

¹⁰ See Chapter 2.

(Reich, 1976b : 77)

Ehrenreich argues that assumptions of a male breadwinner society and women's economic dependence on men in the 1950s were bound up in the values and norms of the capitalist state and that discussion of the battle of the sexes and gender roles must take place in the context of wider debates about power. Ehrenreich (1983: 52) also cites the Beat rebellion in the US, exemplified by the work of novelist Jack Kerouac and poet Allan Ginsberg, as an emerging challenge to the traditional ideas about men and the nature of masculinity.

“Writing almost a decade before the emergence of a mass counterculture, before Marcuse, before Woodstock, before hippies and flower children, Kerouac's heroes didn't have to work for the privilege of consuming...”

(Ehrenreich, 1983 : 25)

Kerouac (1958: 77) characterized the American male as a slave to commodities “all of them imprisoned in a system of work, produce, consume, work, produce, consume”.

The Angries and the Beats came to represent a rejection of what has retrospectively been termed hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn 2004) linking the expectations and confines of the male role to the capitalist system. By the mid 1960s the “grey-flannel dissidents” (Ehrenreich, 1983 : 29), the educated middle class, would also be challenging conformity and materialism. However, societal norms provided discourses of responsibility and growing up, which included marriage and support of a family. As Ehrenreich (1983 : 12) points out, “the man who willfully deviated was judged to be somehow ‘less of a man’.”

Expert opinion (sociological, psychological, medical) and public opinion was brought to bear to reinforce these norms. Thus, academic opinion and popular culture came together in the US, as in the UK, to reinforce these values and the mass media, through film, newspapers and the increasingly popular medium of TV played a vital role (the family based TV sitcom for example, began in the 1950s and was hugely popular [Neale and Krutnick, 1990]). The pressure for men to conform is well summed up in this quote from leading US psychologist Dr. Hendrik Ruitenbeck (1966 : 12):

“Contemporary America seems to have no room for the mature bachelor. As a colleague of mine once remarked, a single man over thirty is now regarded as a pervert, a person with severe emotional problems, or a poor creature fettered to mother.”

The Rise of *Playboy*

However, Ehrenreich (1983) also argues that the rise of the inherently conservative *Playboy* magazine was a key development in the male revolt. Founder Hugh Hefner laid out the philosophy of his new magazine for men. It centred around a new kind of good life for men, men who Hefner characterized as having been driven out of their living rooms and dens, and for whom the outdoors represented escape via “the golf course, the fishing hole or the fantasy world of the westerns.” (Ehrenreich, 1983 : 44)

However, Hefner was intent on reclaiming the indoors:

“In 1953, the notion that the good life consisted of an apartment with mood music rather than a ranch house with barbecue pit was almost subversive. Looking back, Hefner later characterised himself as a pioneer rebel against the grey miasma of conformity that gripped other men.”

(Ehrenreich, 1983 : 44)

Nine years before James Bond appeared on screen, *Playboy* outlined the possibility of the playboy lifestyle open to the single man. The positioning of pictures of naked women within the magazine was, therefore, crucial in establishing the reader’s heterosexual credentials and, thus, provided an alternative discourse on the single male to that provided by psychologists like Dr. Ruitenbeck. As Ehrenreich (1983) argues, the philosophy embraces capitalism and consumerism and also represents a move towards the male as consumer (Edwards, 1997), which was to become a key issue for the debate on men and masculinities by the early 1960s.

The naked “playmates” and the Bunny Girls, working in the clubs that Hefner later tied in with the product, provide a stark contrast to the mythical “wife”, offering the promise of excitement without the trappings of marriage, a precursor to the 1960s’ sexual revolution. As in the more intellectual work of the Beats or the Angry Young Men, the Playboy rebel focuses his anger on women. An editorial from 1953 states:

“It is often suggested that woman is more romantic than man. If you’ll excuse the ecclesiastical expression – phooey! ... All woman wants is security. And she’s perfectly willing to crush man’s adventurous, freedom – loving spirit to get it.”

(Zollo, 1953 : 37)

Escape was on offer in a number of ways. A US edition of *Playboy* from June 1967, for example, offers articles such as *007’s Oriental Eyefuls* by Roald Dahl (!) and John Paul Getty’s *Business is Business*, as well as advertisements for “masculine” products such as beer, malt whiskey, watches, cars, motorcycles, tyres, shirts, cigarettes, cameras, luggage, pipes and cologne. An advertisement for potential advertisers shows two young ivy-league type young men with accompanying sports cars and young women. The text reads:

“What sort of man needs Playboy? For this take charge young guy, the newest model is just his speed and a pretty girl is standard. Facts: PLAYBOY leads all magazines in delivering adult males under 50 who plan to buy a new convertible next ... go with PLAYBOY where the automotive market is.”

(Anon, 1967 : 79)

Playboy then represents a male revolt within the bounds of a consumer culture (unlike the Beats and the hippies that followed). *Playboy* readers were rebels in the sex war but they were not communists! Far from it. Hefner played up *Playboy’s* spirit of acquisitiveness and its role in the American economy and Ehrenreich (1983) sees the ability of the capitalist economy to incorporate what seemed like radical changes for men into marketing opportunities as a key stage in containing resistant masculinities. This is also reflected in later work on the “new man” and consumerism (Edwards,

1997; Nixon, 1997) and Simpson's (2004) metrosexual can be read as a logical product of this process.

However, *Playboy's* role in the male revolt and the moves towards non-conformity and a questioning of traditional values is important, its emphasis being escape rather than erotica, the naked women performing an important role in relation to the reader's masculinity.

“When, in the first issue, Hefner talked about staying in his apartment, listening to music and discussing Picasso, there was the Marilyn Monroe centrefold to let you know there was nothing queer about these urban and indoor pleasures.”

(Ehrenreich, 1983 : 51)

One interesting aspect of Ehrenreich's (1983) work, is that it documents the relationship between the “male revolt” of the 1950s and 1960s and second wave feminism, a symbiotic relationship similar to that of feminist texts of the 60s and 70s and the emergence of writing on men and masculinities in the late 1970s (Snodgrass, 1977; Tolson, 1977). The drawing together of Hefner's masculinism (Brittan, 1989), and second wave feminism (Friedan, 1963) illustrates some of the complexities of the debates around gender that were to emerge in the 1960s.

Crisis or Revolt?

To conclude, what was happening in the “battle of the sexes” in the late 1950s and men's position within that, can be read in two distinct ways. Men and the social changes affecting them can be seen to be victims of an early crisis in masculinity (Tolson, 1977; Horrocks, 1994; Connell, 1995; Whitehead, 2002) or active agents of revolt. The crisis discourse is contextualized within a period which saw the beginning of Marwick's (1998) long sixties (1958 - 1974), a period in which some have conceptualised the Suez crisis as the end of British power and imperialism (Tolson, 1977; Marwick 1998; Sandbrook, 2006), and the emasculation of her empire. The beginning of a decline in British manufacturing and traditional male industry, the

stirrings of second wave feminism and the range of social changes that would happen between 1960 and 1970¹¹ can all be seen as reasons for a “crisis”. Ehrenreich (1983) outlines the case for active revolt. The question of agency is key here and central to whether what happened next is conceptualised as positive or negative and the beginning of a journey which had already led, by the early 1980s, to an academic interrogation of men and masculinities. This journey had already begun by the time Ehrenreich’s work emerged and she certainly presents a case for seeing this journey as a positive development.

“As the male revolt moved past paternalism (represented by the ‘good’ husband and provider) and then past a kind of macho defiance (represented by *Playboy* and the Beatles) it moved towards an androgynous goal that most feminists - or humanists - could only applaud.”

(Ehrenreich, 1983 : 170)

What, then, is the significance of the Beatles’ “macho defiance”?

The Beatles vis a vis Masculinities

Introduction

“I declare that the Beatles are mutants, prototypes of evolutionary agents sent by God with a mysterious power to create a new species - a young race of laughing freemen. They are the wisest, holiest most effective avatars the human race has ever produced.”

(Leary, cited in Norman 1981 : 787)

The quasi-religious nature of the Beatles relationship to their fans is discussed in Chapter 1. Timothy Leary’s analysis of the Beatles as something beyond “normal”

¹¹ See Chapter 2.

man may be a position at the extreme of a continuum. However, McKinney (2003) points out that belief in the new, the exciting and the evolutionary (and revolutionary) was a part of the social change culture of the 1960s and that a belief that “The Beatles were avatars of evolution’s next turn, heralding a whole new mode of style, thought and action” (McKinney, 2003 : 322) fitted with this conceptualisation of a changing world. Their role as “men of ideas” (Inglis, 2000b : 1), breaking out from the normal expectations of what a male pop artist might do, a global representation of Ehrenreich’s (1983) male revolt, is discussed in chapter 1. This is also an important argument when considering the Beatles as men, or naming the Beatles as men (Hanmer, 1990; Collinson and Hearn, 1994).

As actual, real-life men, it can be argued that the Beatles exhibited many signs of “traditional” masculinity. Seemingly heterosexual¹²; all four married (twice) and had children. Paul McCartney’s 21st century fame, particularly for a younger generation, emanates from his involvement in an acrimonious divorce dispute (Cummins, 2008a; 2008b; 2008c). Lennon, by his own admission, began the 1960s as a man of violence¹³ and ended it as a man associated with peace¹⁴ (The Beatles, 2000).

It is their representation and their role in representation of masculinities, however, that is central to this thesis and this emphasis reflects a shift in writing on men and masculinities which has moved interestingly towards seeing the study of representation of men and masculinities as a key area for study (Fejes, 1992; Dyer, 1993; Whitehead, 2002; Hearn, 2003; 2004). The chapter on the Beatles’ films,

¹² See Chapter 1; Chapter 6.

¹³ Lennon’s violence towards his first wife, Cynthia, is well documented (Norman, 1981; Goldman, 1988) and admitted by Lennon himself “I used to be cruel to my woman and physically – any woman. I was a hitter. I couldn’t express myself and I hit. I fought men and I hit women. That’s why I am always on about peace you see.” (Sheff and Golson, 1981 : 182). His relationship with Yoko Ono and McCartney’s with Linda Eastman is discussed later in this chapter.

¹⁴ There is an interesting moment in the film *Imagine* (1972) which documents the making of Lennon’s *Imagine* album (1971) and contains footage of his honeymoon bed-in for peace. An American cartoonist, Al Capp, enters the room in which Lennon and Yoko Ono are holding the bed-in and meeting with journalists. He begins an offensive racist tirade about Ono and Lennon reasons with him through gritted teeth. It appears that he wants to get out of bed and punch the man, (Paul McCartney comments on the clip in the Beatles Anthology interviews [The Beatles, 2003]) but given that he is holding a bed-in for peace seems to realise that this would not be a good move. It is the Beatles publicist, Derek Taylor, who almost comes to blows with the offensive cartoonist, at which point Lennon intervenes, tells Taylor the man is there at his invitation and continues to respond to questions and comments. It is arguably a moment in which Lennon is caught between two versions of his own masculinity – the man of violence become the man of peace (The Beatles, 2003; Badman, 2004).

(Chapter 6) explores this in more detail, with the social construction (Burr, 2003) of their Beatle-ness at the heart of the analysis. As Paul McCartney, somewhat confusingly, stated in an interview in 1966 “we can’t tell you about our image. Our real image is nothing like our image” (McCartney, 1966 : 7), seemingly, a recognition of the socially constructed nature of the Beatles’ image. McKinney (2003) describes *Help!* (1965) for example, as:

“unlike the real world, anyone’s real world ... the Beatles are spherically encased and unmoored from any but a symbolic sense of their relationship to the real world.”

(McKinney, 2003 : 73)

Similarly, *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) is a representation of a day in the life in a mock-documentary style. *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) sees the cartoon - like Beatles recreating a working-class coach outing to the English countryside through an acid-tinged lens. Their extraordinariness as Beatles is juxtaposed with their role as ordinary passengers on a coach trip¹⁵. The documentary style used by director, Michael Lindsay-Hogg on *Let it Be* (1970) is viewed by many as a successful attempt to document ‘the reality’ of the Beatles’ break up and the disintegration of “the gang’s” homosocial relationship (O’Gorman, 2004). However, it can be argued that careful editing to emphasize conflict and discord, makes the film as much of a social construction of the reality of the Beatles’ existence as *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964).¹⁶

¹⁵ In an interview in the Beatles’ *Anthology* (The Beatles, 2003) Lennon describes how they were pushed around by security guards on their departure from Manilla Airport in 1966, being told that they would be treated like ‘ordinary’ passengers. Lennon comically questions whether ‘ordinary’ passengers would be kicked, punched and pushed around, but the clip draws attention to the Beatles’ extraordinariness.

¹⁶ Not having seen *Let it Be* (1970) for a number of years prior to this research I was struck by the fact that myth of its gloominess is dispelled on viewing. The climax of the film, the Apple rooftop concert, in particular, with its quasi-religious overtones (McKinney, 2003), can be read as a celebration of the Beatles’ popularity and creativity rather than a documentation of their disintegration (Norman, 1981). Outtakes from the film on the *Beatles Anthology* DVD (2003) show that Ringo’s wife, Maureen Starkey, and Linda Eastman and her daughter Heather also visited the studio during filming which somewhat subverts the traditional ‘Yoko as interloper discourse’ (see Chapter 6 for further discussion).

Fluidity of Gender

Their representation of a version of masculinity that was resistant to the norm and their playing with gender roles through visual appearance is discussed extensively in Chapter 6, as is their retrospective characterization as four different aspects of masculinity, the narcissistic Paul “with his baby eyes and baby face” (McKinney, 2003 : 323), the acerbic and intellectual Lennon (Goldman, 1988), George as spiritual and inward looking (MacDonald, 2003) and Ringo, the ordinary one (Melly, 1970; Stark, 2005).

Pop music, particularly as it transmogrified into rock music in the late 1960s, is often characterized as a male domain (Cohen, 1997; Bannister, 2000). Cohen (1997) outlines how gender roles are clearly defined within the music “scene” and that rock music in particular is produced as male, with men taking the leading role in performing, management and the organization of “the scene” (Cohen, 1997 : 18) while the traditional role of spectator (or even groupie) is assigned to women. This issue of men and the creation of a discourse of maleness and their involvement in, knowledge of and, at times, obsession with music is dealt with in Nick Hornby’s (1995) novel *High Fidelity*.

It is against this backdrop that the Beatles’ ability to shock through their resistance to formal representations of masculinity is juxtaposed. Through a reading of their films, (see Chapter 6), an exploration of their style (Hebdidge, 1978; Bruzzi, 1997), their groomed appearance (Edwards, 1997; Nixon, 1997), their pre-metrosexuality (Simpson, 2004) and a public obsession with their hair (Mäkelä, 2004; Stark, 2005) takes place.

Many commentators have commented on the Beatles’ challenge to traditional sex and gender roles. Ehrenreich et al. (1992 : 535) describes the Beatles’ appeal to early 1960s’ America as being centered on their representations of gender fluidity, claiming “... the group mocked the distinctions that bifurcated the American landscape into ‘his’ and ‘hers’”. Conversely a study of the causes of Beatlemania by A. J. W. Taylor concluded that the Beatles’ masculine image was part of their appeal to young girls (Taylor, 1968). Stark (2005) argues that it is their lack of connection to the groin-

centered rock that came before (1950s' Elvis) and afterwards (1970's heavy metal) and a connection to their female fans that provides a challenge to the usual masculine discourses at work in the music industry (Cohen, 1997). Bannister (2000 : 173) states that "The Beatles eschewed an aggressive, individualistic masculine mode of performance" and this is supported by a statement from John Lennon illustrating that they made a deliberate decision to take up a different position: "The Beatles didn't move like Elvis, that was our policy, because we found it stupid and bullshit." (Wenner, 1971 : 34). Ehrenreich et al. (1992) see Beatlemania as having the characteristics of a social movement centered on young women and girls and argue that it marked the beginning of a sexual revolution for young women.

“... it gave young white women, in particular, a collective identity, a space in which to lose control and assess their sexuality...”

(Ehrenreich et al., 1992 : 532)

Their female audience, it is argued, formed a connection to them as fans, forming themselves into a fan club on a global scale (Mäkelä, 2004, Stark, 2005). The relationship with the fan club was unique with the Beatles producing and performing Christmas shows and producing flexi-disc Christmas records containing messages to the fans, all included in the price of fan club membership (McKinney, 2003). In addition, The Apple Scruffs were a group of fans, immortalized in a song on George Harrison's first solo album¹⁷, who used to camp outside the Apple offices and various Beatle homes in the late 1960s.

There were then, a number of other ways in which they related to the female audience which contribute to this idea of gender fluidity. Stark (2005 : 133) sees them as "more feminine in their group dynamic" due to their lack of a macho-style leader and Lennon and McCartney's collaborative writing style, particularly in the early stages. A number of their early songs, are written from a female point of view (Whitley, 2000; Stark, 2005) with lyrics that suggest vulnerability and an indication that they felt the same way as the fans (Stark, 2005). Many of the songs on their first album

¹⁷ *All Things Must Pass* (1970) features a song called *Apple Scruffs*. See also Bedford, (1984).

can be interpreted this way¹⁸. Their refusal to change the lyrics to the song *Boys* (1963) for example, a song originally recorded by an American female group vocal (Bannister, 2000) makes it sound as if it is a man signing to and about other men¹⁹. In *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) Lennon sings the opening lines “If I fell in love with you would you promise to be true” directly to Ringo, one of the many “queer” moments in this text²⁰. *She Loves You* (1963) has an unusual (for the time) third-person lyric, which is essentially a dialogue between two men discussing a relationship, something which would have been seen as much more of a female activity. “Apologise to her” goes the caring refrain. This is a long way from groin-centred rock (Stark, 2005). Other early songs such as *From Me to You/Thank You Girl* (1963) their second single, seem to communicate directly to the fans. A lot of the early compositions draw on traditional boy meets girl scenarios but these examples illustrate the ways in which a certain gender fluidity is at work. Bannister (2000) also notes that some of Lennon’s early compositions, for example, *No Reply* (1964) and *Ticket to Ride* (1965) are written from the perspective of abandonment, what Bannister (2000) claims is a feminized position, influenced by the work of Roy Orbison.²¹

Mäkelä (2004 : 65) claims that pop stars “ought to be situated in a continuing and shifting cultural debate about gender and sexuality” and that, in the case of the Beatles, this was made possible by their position in McLuhan’s global village (McLuhan, 1964). Savage (1991 : 161) sees them as a challenge to the “stud/passive boys love cliché” and reiterates Lennon’s position as resistant to the hegemonic masculinity at work in pop music. He cites his resistance to the wearing of the suit (The Beatles, 2000) and his minor rebellion (top button undone, tie loose), as evidence of this. Lennon was also resistant to wearing his glasses (until his mid-1960s self reinvention)²² and uncertain about the mop top hairstyle. Mäkelä (2004 : 76) sees playing with gender as “an essential part of the group” and this is discussed

¹⁸ Cover versions of Goffin and King’s *Chains* (1963) or Arthur Alexander’s *Anna, go to him* (1963) would be examples of this.

¹⁹ Bryan Ferry did the same thing on his solo album *These Foolish Things* (1973). His cover of Lesley Gore’s *It’s my party* (1973) retains its original lyric so that it becomes a man singing to a man. Ferry has stated that this was an acknowledgement of his gay following (Balfour, 1976).

²⁰ See Chapter 6.

²¹ Roy Orbison is renowned for his high falsetto vocals (and his ability to sing in three octaves). Songs such as *Crying* (1962) and *It’s Over* (1964) can be read as a man writing from a feminized perspective.

²² See Chapter 6.

at greater length in the chapter on the Beatles' films (see chapter 6)²³ along with Brian Epstein's influence on the group's style and presentation and Ann Shillinglaw's (1999) "queer reading" of *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and *Help!* (1965).

Girl Groups

An affinity for, and an identification with, American female vocal groups can also be seen as adding to the Beatles early non-macho persona. Seemingly unworried by a friend's comment that singing in question-and-answer phrasing and falsetto voices made them sound like "a bunch of poofs" (Stark, 2005 : 26), The Beatles pursued a "cuddly androgyny" (Stark, 2005 : 130) by covering five songs by American girl groups on their first two albums²⁴. Producer George Martin actually described them to Liverpool's *Mersey Beat* in 1963 as sounding like "a male Shirelles" (Stark, 2005 : 131) and Warwick (2000 : 162) identifies "girl-groupisms in The Beatles' oeuvre" as being important to their early sound. These "girl-groupisms" (Warwick, 2000 : 162) include vocal style, phrasing, harmonies and falsetto backing vocals (the "oohs" in *She Loves You* [1963] are a good example [Ellen, 2002a]). Their matching outfits, in their early dressed-by-Brian period, can also be seen as a link to the girl-groups. The fact that female fans responded positively to this anti-masculinist (Brittan, 1989) presentation is particularly interesting and indicates, as suggested by Ehrenreich et al. (1992) that this was part of their appeal.²⁵

Banister (2000 : 169) argues that "... by singing songs originally sung by women, they occupied a number of highly ambivalent subject positions, especially in terms of gender". This is not to say, for example, that Lennon, always wrote from a feminized position. A song like *Run For Your Life* (1965) for example can be read as

²³ Elsewhere Sheila Whiteley (1997) has written about Mick Jagger's gender fluidity in the same vein. She discusses his "complex gendered identity" (Whiteley, 1997 : 67), his use of his body (and dance) as a site of pleasure and his wearing of unisex clothes in the late 1960s and early 1970s as taking sexual ambivalence to another level. Mäkelä (2004 : 64) also comments on Jagger's ability to mix "macho, misogyny and androgyny."

²⁴ These are *Baby it's You* and *Boys* (The Shirelles), *Chains* (The Cookies), *Please Mr Postman* (The Marvelettes) and *Devil in her Heart* (originally *Devil in his Heart*) by the Donays [Bannister, 2000 : 169].

²⁵ A good example is a performance of *She Loves You* (1963) in the film *A Hard Day's Night* (1964). Each time McCartney and Harrison come together at the microphone to provide the falsetto "oohs" and shake their hair the screaming gets louder.

misogynistic and *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) is written from a traditional male perspective - working man returning home to woman waiting for him. However, it is the shifting between these positions that means their early work, in particular, reflects an unusual gender fluidity. Stark (2005 : 132 - 3) says of Lennon and McCartney:

“... their background, the loss of their mothers and their love for one another allowed them to transcend stereotypes and write songs that girls and women could take as liberating in ways that hadn't been true in the past.”

The Beatle Women

Lennon and McCartney's losing of their mothers at an early age has been well documented (Norman, 1981; *The Beatles*, 2003; McKinney, 2003) as has its influence on their song writing. Lennon's abandonment songs have been discussed previously. *Julia* (1968) on *The Beatles* (1968) is an interesting song, mixing an ode to his dead mother with references to “ocean child” (the English translation of Yoko Ono) while *Mother* (1970) on his first solo album *The Plastic Ono Band* is an attempt at post-Janus primal scream catharsis²⁶. McCartney's *Let It Be* (1970) is probably the best example of his “mother” songs the reference to “mother Mary” often mistaken for a direct religious reference within the quasi-religious atmosphere of the song (MacDonald, 1994; McKinney, 2003). The song actually references his own mother, Mary, with *Let It Be* being a phrase she used to use to him as a child (MacDonald, 1994; *The Beatles*, 2000).

Their real life relationships with women often surfaced within their song writing. McCartney's often angst ridden relationship with actress Jane Asher (Norman, 1981) and his reported dislike of her being away on tour (representational gender fluidity meeting traditional macho reality) is reflected in songs like *We Can Work It Out* (1966) and *I'm Looking Through You* (1965) [MacDonald, 1994]. Asher can be seen as an emerging independent “modern woman” in this phase and McCartney's songs about her swing from a reflection of conflict to the traditionally romantic, *Here, There and Everywhere* (1966) being a good example of the latter. Some of Lennon's later

²⁶ See Goldman (1988).

songs, such as *Don't Let Me Down* (1970) replace the actual abandonment of the early songs with a fear of abandonment, having found a soul mate in Ono (MacDonald, 1994; McKinney, 2003), while *The Ballad of John and Yoko* (1969)²⁷ provides an interesting (yet angry) reflection on his new found happiness and the grief created by the media around it.

The Beatles' connection to their fans has already been discussed as a factor in their positioning on the continuum of masculinities (Hearn, 2004) and the way in which they "both sustained and revised notions of masculinity" (Mäkelä, 2004 : 76). Their relationship to individual women is also important here. As stated previously, traditional state approved marriage was something they all entered into, despite the received wisdom of the day. In 1963, for example, an article in *The New Musical Express* claimed "Wedding bells spell death for the big names" (Roberts, 1963 : 10). John Lennon had married his girlfriend Cynthia Powell in August 1962, in a Northern kitchen sink doing-the-right-thing-after-getting-a-girl-pregnant scenario. Manager Brian Epstein initially concealed this fact from fans thinking that it would damage their popularity (Mäkelä, 2004) but eventually the press got hold of the story. There is a clip of a press conference in 1964 on *The Beatles Anthology* DVD (2003) where a journalist asks about Lennon's wife to which he responds "Who, who?" and Starr, in a deadpan tone, informs the reporter that no-one is supposed to know. However, in the first appearance in the US the *Ed Sullivan Show* in 1964, the captions shown on the screen included one, accompanying a shot of Lennon, saying "Sorry girls, he's married" (Stark, 2005). Lennon is reported as saying that he did not think that his marriage had affected his or the group's popularity (Mäkelä, 2004). George Harrison married actress and model Pattie Boyd in 1965 (they had met on the set of *A Hard Day's Night* [1964]) and Ringo Starr married long term girlfriend Maureen Cox the same year. Paul McCartney's relationship with actress Jane Asher was also well publicised at this time and McCartney lived with the Ashers in London for a time. His connection to the Ashers and the entry it offered into the world of the arts and Harrison's connections to Boyd and the world of modelling, perceived to be central to

²⁷ Although released as a Beatles single, *The Ballad of John and Yoko* (1969) is essentially a Lennon solo effort with McCartney on drums and backing vocals (MacDonald, 1994). My 11 year old self particularly loved the way my parents bristled and tutted at the use of the word "Christ" and the phrase "they're going to crucify me" when the song came on the radio, another example of the Beatles (and Lennon, in particular) as quasi-religion (McKinney, 2003; Mäkelä, 2004).

the swinging London scene (or myth) [Melly, 1970] made these women an asset to the Beatles. Given that Asher and Boyd had their own independent careers they can be seen as early feminist role models, on the one hand, or glamorous accompaniment, on the other. Either way, they can be seen as women who female fans might want to emulate. Lennon's meeting with Yoko Ono in 1966 which eventually developed into a fully fledged relationship and marriage can be viewed in the same way. Ono was already a well established performance artist (Norman, 1981). However, the fact that her work was controversial, often with a focus on sex and the body (Jørgensen, 2008), and avant-garde did not play out well with the media and the fans (Stark, 2005). Their appearance naked on the *Two Virgins* (1968) album cover and their avant garde offering on *The Beatles* (1968) *Revolution No 9*, added to this controversy and a gnashing of teeth in the press on the theme of what has happened to Beatle-John (The Beatles, 2003). This relationship with Ono, however, is central to his development as a man of ideas (Inglis, 2000b) and his journey from man of violence to man of peace (The Beatles, 2000), and, therefore, to his changing versions of masculinity and the representation of such in the global media. Stark (2005) reads the gender equality apparently at work in Lennon and Ono's relationship (and later in McCartney's with Linda Eastman) as being ahead of its time with Lennon and Ono as the first real celebrity couple on an equal basis²⁸.

McCartney's relationship with Eastman certainly led him into an "alternative" lifestyle, as a hill crofting vegetarian, pursuing the post-countercultural dream away from the trappings of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) that may have seemed to be his destiny when the 1960s began (Sutcliffe, 2004). A well known photographer on the music scene before she met McCartney (Miles, 1997), her alternative lifestyle, lack of makeup and seeming disinterest in clothes made her a target for press comment (Sutcliffe, 2004) as did his insistence on her membership of his post Beatles project, Wings, after their marriage (Gambaccini, 1976). Her highly successful venture into vegetarian food production made her wealthy in her own right. Subsequent accounts of the Lennon/Ono and the McCartney/Eastman relationships (Ingham, 2003) would seem to support the arguments that, they "both sustained and revised notions of

²⁸ Fans of Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor may disagree.

masculinity” (Mäkelä, 2004 : 76) in ways which have been emulated by some heterosexual men since.

The Beatle women were often disliked by fans, just for being Beatle wives or girlfriends, or by the press for being interlopers in the Fab Four myth (Stark, 2005). However, it is Linda and Yoko’s “otherness” (Hall, 1997) that attracts most criticism. Their refusal to confirm to stereotypical notions of femininity, their non-Britishness, which in Ono’s case led to public racism, (Badman, 2004) and their independence and seemingly equal status with two of the world’s most famous men makes them important players vis a vis the Beatles and masculinities. Cynthia Lennon and Maureen Starkey always kept a low profile as wives while Jane Asher and Pattie Boyd, as representatives of Swinging London with dolly-bird status (Melly, 1970) also exhibited approved female behaviours. Eastman’s and Ono’s lack of glamour, their ‘masculine’ looks and behaviours were certainly disapproved of in media circles, despite the social changes of the 1960s and the high profile of the women’s movement by the end of the decade (Greer, 1970). The importance of specific women in their lives is made explicit in the promotional film for *Something* (1969) [a song written by Harrison about his wife]. Made on the verge of the break up of the group, it features all four Beatle wives with their partners, with the couples literally and metaphorically heading off in different directions, a far cry from Brian Epstein’s hush-hush approach to their matrimonial status in the earlier part of the decade.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an outline of the literature in relation to the key debates around the concept of masculinities, chronicling the emergence of particular ideas around masculinity ranging from essentialist to post-structuralist positions. Particular attention has been paid to theories around hegemonic masculinities (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) and masculinism (Brittan, 1989) and those ideas will be explored in further depth in relation to the Beatles’ case study in Chapter 6. The chapter also provides a link to Chapter 2, looking explicitly at 1950s’ man, and to Chapters 1 and 6, in that it also examines material on the Beatles vis-à-vis masculinities.

Chapter 4: Representations of Men and Masculinities

Representations

Introduction

In Chapter 2 the rise of the mass media and the emergence of media and cultural studies as an academic discipline in the 1960s was identified as a key component of the social changes that occurred in that particular period. The role of the mass media in wider society and the various theoretical perspectives on the role of the media are well documented elsewhere (Torfing, 1999, Gripsrud, 2002; McQuail, 2002; King and Watson, 2005). It is not the intention here to rehearse these arguments or go into detail about competing theories. Rather, the intention of this chapter is to provide a rationale for the study of representation in particular texts as a key component of this thesis and to explore the complex issue of how media representations operate to reflect and/or produce reality and the resultant impact on the society in which they operate. More specifically, this chapter aims to explore the relationship between representation and identity. In the context of this study this means examining how representations of men and masculinity may influence how men behave and feel about themselves and how this process contributes to social change for men.

A further aim of the chapter is to prepare the ground for the methodology chapter by providing a review of the literature and debates on representations and to present the case for the use of a discursive approach, the detail of which appears in Chapter 5.

The Role of Representation

“Representation is the process by which members of a culture use language (broadly defined as any system which deploys signs, any signifying system) to produce meaning. Already this definition carries the important premise that things – objects, people, events, in the world – do not have in themselves any

fixed, final or true meaning. It is us – in society, within human cultures – who make things mean, who signify.”

(Hall, 1997 : 61)

Hall’s definition of representation sets out some of the key issues to be addressed in this chapter. There are a number of debates about how the media represents or re-presents reality and a number of theories drawn from the disciplines of psychology, linguistics and media and cultural studies, which seek to explain the relationship between the mass media and society.

Here some of these debates are outlined and the inter-disciplinarity inherent in this area of study will be explored. A number of theories and positions on “representation”, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive, will be examined in the context of this study, leading to a discussion on why representations of masculinity in the media are key to understanding the way that ideas about masculinities operate and circulate within society.

The representation of different groups or issues has become a key focus of study for scholars of media and cultural studies (Hall, 1997; Gripsrud, 2002). The question of whether the media reflects or constructs reality is central to the debate on representations. Branston and Stafford (1996 : 78), for example, claim that the “reality” represented in the media is “always a construction, never a transparent window”. Kellner (1995 : 117) argues that within media culture “existing social struggles” are reproduced and that this has a key impact on the production of identities and the ways in which people make sense of the world.

Hall (1997) explores the relationship between meaning, language and culture and distinguishes between three types of accounts: the reflective, the intentional and constructionist approaches.

“Does language simply reflect a meaning which already exists out there in the world of objects, people and events (reflective)? Does language express only what the speaker or writer or painter wants to say, his or her, personally

intended meaning (intentional)? Or is meaning constructed in and through language (constructionist)?”

(Hall, 1997 : 15)

It is the final category which has become a central area of study in the field of media and cultural studies and it is the constructionist approach that will be examined further here.

Semiotics

There are two key elements to this approach; semiotic approaches which emerged from the field of linguistics, and, in particular, the work of de Saussure (1960) and Barthes (1972), and discursive approaches, which grew mainly from sociology/psychology and, in particular, the work of Michel Foucault (1973; 1977; 1980; 1984). de Saussure developed a concept which has become key to the analysis of media texts, the idea of language as a system of signs (these can include written words, images, paintings, photographs), which communicate ideas which can be understood in a particular cultural context. The actual form – word, image etc – which he called the signifier, then acts as a trigger for a concept in the head – the signified. It is the relationship between them that is important for the concept of representation and this shifting relationship results in the shifting of meaning and language (Hall, 1997). Hall (1997) gives the example of the reclaiming of the term “black” as a word with positive connotations (“black is beautiful”) rather than its common negative usage (dark, evil, devilish). de Saussure’s work has been developed by others, in particular Barthes (1972), to become the more generalized field of semiotics, the study of signs and the social production of meaning through sign systems. Semioticians introduced the concept of the referent – the actual thing referred to.

“The underlying argument behind the semiotic approach is that, since all cultural objects convey meaning, and all cultural practices depend on meaning, they must make use of signs and in so far as they do, they must work like a

language works and be amenable to an analysis which basically makes use of Saussure's linguistic concepts."

(Hall, 1997 : 36)

Thus, semioticians developed the idea that meaning is not only contained in language but also in film, TV, photographic images, clothing and many other visual signs. Signs are said to denote - the word red refers to part of the colour spectrum, for example; and also connote - the colour red is linked to other ideas or concepts – romance, passion, danger (Branston and Stafford, 1996; Stevenson, 2002). In this sense signs are said to be polysemic.

These concepts are by no means uncontested. Ellis (1975) has pointed out that the codes at work in media texts may have a class or gender bias and their interpretation may well depend on these facts as well on the cultural experiences of reader/viewer. Despite the cultural Marxism inherent in Hall's (1997) work some have criticized this approach for divorcing analysis of media texts from the reality of power relations in society. Greg Philo and David Miller from the Glasgow Media Group, for example, claim that "... the division between language and reality is a false dichotomy" (Philo and Miller, 2000 : 5) and question the argument that intrinsic meaning does not exist in texts. However, an exploration of Hall et al.'s (1980) cultural Marxist approach presents an opportunity to counter such criticism.

Cultural Marxism

The British Cultural Studies movement, founded at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies under Richard Hoggart in the 1960s and Stuart Hall in the 1970s, has been highly influential in the development of media and cultural studies as a discipline, with a new approach to media studies which focussed on culture in relation to power, knowledge and an initial emphasis on the role of social class. However, later work explored gender and race in relation to power relationships and thus, the concept of intersectionalities (McClintock, 1995), drawing on the work of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1971) and his concept of hegemony. Torfing (1999) describes the work of the CCCS as a key step forward in using

Gramsci's (1971) work to examine power relations, the concept of resistance and how the mass media is a key institution in shaping these relationships.

“Gramsci's notion was that particular social groups struggle in many different ways, including ideologically, to win the consent of other groups and achieve a kind of ascendancy in both thought and practice over them. This form of power Gramsci called hegemony. Hegemony is never permanent, and is not reducible to economic interests or to a simple class model of society. This has some similarities to Foucault's position, though on some key issues they differ radically.”

(Hall, 1997 : 48)

The Mass Media and Discourse

Foucault (1980) was concerned with the production of knowledge (rather than just meaning) in society through discourse (rather than just language). Focussing on the human and social sciences and their focus on finding “true” meaning, he developed the concept of discourse related to ideas of power and knowledge, and the question of the subject. Rejecting grand narratives such as Marxism, which claimed to explain power relations in terms of social class, and linguistic and semiotic approaches which focussed on language and dialogue, Foucault developed the idea of discourse as a system of representation:

“Discourses are practises that systematically form the objects of which they speak ... Discourses are not about objects; they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention.”

(Foucault, 1972 : 49)

Foucault's concept of discourse, as “a group of statements which provide a language for talking about a particular topic at a particular historical moment ...” (Hall, 1997 : 291), links language and practice. Discourse defines what and how things are talked about, influences ideas and is used to regulate, ruling in and ruling out different ways of talking about ourselves, the world and relations between groups (Hall, 1997). The

concept of discursive formations refers to the way in which different statements, texts or actions come together. Foucault argues that knowledge and meaning are produced through these discursive formations. This is a key concept when analysing media texts. Geertz (1983) for example, has developed this idea in looking at the notion of “common-sense” as a constructed concept and raising awareness of its ideological and political dimension.

There are many similarities, it can be argued, between Foucault’s concept of discursive formations and Gramsci’s (1971) concept of hegemony which will be discussed later in the chapter. The defining difference between the two, it would seem, is the idea of location of power. Gramsci takes a Marxist perspective on power, seeing it, to some extent, as being top-down, state produced and controlled, whereas Foucault sees power as located in various relationships within society e.g. gender or race relations, and not just social class. This idea that nothing has meaning outside of discourse has often been misinterpreted by his critics who claim that he denied that **things** exist outside of discourse. It is this sort of semantic argument that critics such as Philo and Miller (2000) have picked up on. Wetherall et al. (2001) provide a comprehensive review of these debates.

However, Foucault’s works on madness (1973), punishment (1977) and sexuality (1978) have been highly influential in demonstrating how talking about certain topics is regulated, gains authority, produces subjects which embody the discourse, (the madman; the criminal), becomes “the truth” and produces actions to deal with the subjects of the topic area based on the discourse itself. Foucault, therefore, indicates how influential discourse is in producing social policy and regulation. Foucault also advanced the contentious notion that there is no historical continuity in the way that discourses operate:

“Things meant something and were ‘true’ he argued, only within a specific historical context. Foucault did not believe that the same phenomena would be found across different historical periods. He thought that, in each period, discourse produced forms of knowledge, which differed radically from period to period, with no necessary continuity between them.”

Knowledge (and resultant practices), according to Foucault, are historically and culturally specific. He later developed these ideas around the way in which this knowledge and resultant power is used to regulate behaviour. Foucault's linking of the concepts of knowledge and power is central to the universe of his work and his argument that the application of knowledge produced through discourse becomes the truth, and has the power to make itself truth, is a compelling one (Hall, 1997)¹.

As previously mentioned, the other unique feature of Foucault's work is his conception of power as something which circulates, rather than being top-down. He sees power relations as existing within various societal institutions – the family, the workplace, the law, political spheres – rather than monopolised at the centre. His work on the body (Foucault, 1965) gives examples of the way in which the body becomes the site around which these power relations operate, in the context of crime and punishment and sexuality, for example. Foucault's ideas on “the subject” also set him apart from other theorists of representation. In Foucault's initial work the subject no longer has a privileged, autonomous position in the production of meaning through language, but rather subject positions are produced through discourse.

However, what is particularly interesting about Foucault's work is that his ideas developed and his ideas about the relationship between the self and power changed over a period of time. His early work with an emphasis on the body as a site of power and control (Foucault, 1965), despite its differences with Gramsci (1971) about the location of power, can still be interpreted as owing much to the grand narrative of Marxism. The development of the concept of the discursive subject, a social and historical construct, comes in a second period (Foucault, 1978; 1980) in which he explores the relationship between power and resistance, thus acknowledging the subject as individual. He then develops his ideas around agency within discourse. As Whitehead (2002 : 101) states: “He comes to see the self as created as a ‘work of art’ ... through the self disciplining techniques of the ‘practices of self’ that are at the

¹ Analysis of the “good versus evil” discourses around war and terrorism in the Tabloid Press or, similarly, coverage of paedophilia provides a good contemporary illustration of Foucault's ideas at work. His concept of a regime of truth is often to be seen at work in the tabloid newspaper and TV environment of the 21st century.

disposal of the individual.” In this later work (Foucault, 1988) he reflects back on his earlier ideas and how they have moved from a focus on how power impacts on individuals to what he terms “the technology of self” (Foucault, 1988 : 19).

Foucault’s developing work and shifting position is one of the things that makes it so interesting and useful in examining the role of discourse in society. Many authors have criticized Foucault on the grounds that his theory does not allow for the concept of agency of the subject within discourse but in this statement from his later work he clearly outlines a different position on agency from that in his earlier works and introduces the ideas of the ways in which discourses that are resistant to the dominant can emerge as part of a process of social change. He argues that while discourse is active in producing a dominant power structure in society it “also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it” (Foucault, 1984 : 10). Whitehead (2002 : 5) interprets this position as seeing the subject “as being connected to discourse but able to discursively reflect on this condition, depending on discourses available and at its disposal in any setting.”

In relation to this particular study, then, the way in which discourses produce beliefs, rituals and “truths” about masculinities that become dominant will be explored and, by taking a post-structuralist position on discourse and ideas about the way in which language operates, the relationship between the subject as an individual and the formation of identity will be examined. This is a framework bounded by discursive practices, the role of power and resistance and the impact of discursive practices on the “reality” of lived experiences, all of which are up for analysis.

As Whitehead (2002 : 100) states:

“... as Foucault himself pointed out, his ideas are best deployed as a ‘tool box’, whereas the theorist picks, mixes and ‘bends’, if necessary, his array of intriguing, often illusive concepts.”

Wetherall et al.’s (2001) discussion of the debates around discourse has been taken into account when considering the “tool box” approach. For example, they point out

the difference between cultural discourse analysis, and a Foucauldian approach centring on a Marxist perspective, with the debate about whether there is a “real” world independent of discourse or whether all “things” are constructed and constituted in language. As Hall (1988) has pointed out, academic work is a social discursive practice in its own right, often becoming wrapped up in intertwined theoretical debates and sometimes losing site of the notion that discourse has new and fresh things to say. The position taken within this study is that the “toolbox” approach is a valid starting point and, the literature having been considered, using Foucault’s work in conjunction with cultural discourse analysis such as that suggested by van Dijk (1993) and Fairclough (1995) is a considered position and is, therefore, the basis of the methodological approach to this study which will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

In looking at the work of de Saussure, Barthes, Foucault and Hall et al. the historical development of the ideas around representation which have informed an interdisciplinary process in examining media texts can be traced. Hall (1997: 6) describes these as “a set of complex, and as yet tentative ideas in an unfinished project”, while Whitehead (2002) argues the case for the use of the “toolbox approach”, drawing on these ideas in ways which are useful within particular pieces of research, particularly with reference to the ideas that men may draw on particular discourses of masculinity at different times and that representation of men and masculinities also operate in this way (Whitehead, 2002).

Torring (1999) sees this work on discourse as important in bridging the gap between traditional communication studies, with an emphasis on the production, distribution and consumption of media texts and messages, and the text-centred analysis of cultural studies. He views what he calls post-structuralist cultural studies as being able to draw on a number of methods which cross disciplinary boundaries and he advances the notion that mass media and discourse relate in three different ways. Firstly, discourse about mass media, focussing on political/theoretical discourse and the overall function in society of mass media. He sees the way in which mass media is perceived in relation to the production and reproduction of the social order as being a key area of study. Discourse of mass media, examining the form and content of the

discourse produced by the mass media is seen as a second area of study. Here, content and other linguistic analysis of media texts would be included but this does not take into account the concepts of power and resistance. Finally, he sees mass media as discourse as a separate category. Torfing (1999) claims that this is the approach of the Birmingham School (Hall, 1980), van Dijk (1985), and Fairclough (1995). They argue that study of the media needs to look at micro, meso and macro levels. The micro includes the analysis of syntax, semantics and presentation of text, the meso, examines the forms of production, distribution and consumption of mass media messages. At the macro level the political regulation and economic ownership and control of the mass media is examined.

He asserts that it is the centrality of the notion of power and resistance present in the work of the Birmingham Centre and in Foucault's work, that moves the field of study from an archaeological study of form and content of texts to the genealogical study of hegemonic configurations. He states:

“What is important is that the analysis at all three levels is concerned with discursive terrains i.e. socio-political terrains comprised of discursively constructed meanings, rules, norms, procedures, values, knowledge, forms etc.”

(Torfing, 1999 : 213)

The usefulness of this whole framework, it can be argued, is that it does not devalue the different methodological approaches available to media and cultural studies theorists but rather sees them as useful parts of an overall whole, an idea akin to Foucault's toolbox approach (Whitehead, 2002). This is exemplified by Fairclough's (1995) notion of ideology and the concept of what Torfing (1999: 16) refers to as “the textual presence of pre-constituted presuppositions in the service of power”.

Fairclough (1995: 14) advances the view that:

“... ideologies are propositions that generally figure as explicit assumptions in texts, which contribute to producing and reproducing unequal relations of power, relations of domination.”

Much of the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies is concerned with opposite side of this coin – the scope for resistance.

“What we need to ask is: what scope is there for pursuing political strategies of resistance, dissent and pragmatic experimentation in the field of mass media in order to change the state of affairs so it accords more with the values we cherish?”

(Torfing, 1999 : 223)

It is within a framework suggested by these ideas using the toolbox approach suggested by Foucault’s developing work, that the analysis of the Beatles’ films takes place², with particular reference to their representation in terms of resistance to dominant discourses of masculinity prevalent both at the time and in contemporary society.

The Audience

Kellner (1995) examines the notion of the all-powerful media in 1960s’ and 1970s’ media texts, seeing the mass media as an institution able to impose ideology through its messages. However, he argues that work since the 1970s has shown the complexity of the relationship between audience and mass media and the opportunity for resistance. Gripsrud (2002), however, takes a different view, seeing the media as being “almighty” up to the 1940s, with the development of propaganda techniques via radio and film, “powerless” between the 1940s and 1970s and “mighty” or agenda-setting since the 1970s. The theories developed in these periods, examining the relationship between the mass media and its audience will now be explored. The notion of resistance is invariably linked to the ways in which audiences relate to media texts. This is a growing area of research and a number of texts cover the broad

² See Chapter 6.

range of this research (Hall, 1980; Alaasutari, 1999; Davin, 2005). Different models advanced range from the work of the Frankfurt School (Strinati, 1995) with its development of critical theory, based initially on work around Nazi propaganda (Strinati, 1995), to work on politics and the audience (Lazarsfield et al., 1944), and violence (Branston and Stafford, 1996). The uses and gratifications model developed in the USA in the 1940s was based on the idea of viewer and user of the media as “consumers” with the media providing certain satisfactions (Morley, 1986). The implications of free access, choice and empowerment inherent in this term have led to criticisms of this approach (Strinati, 1995). The semiotic approaches previously discussed, were applied to audience research in the 1960s, mainly through the journal *Screen*, basing its ideas around psychoanalytical theories (e.g. Mulvey, 1975), seeing the spectator as being “positioned” by media texts into voyeuristic or scopophilic positions. Whilst much criticised, this approach offers, some interesting ideas, especially around gender, sexuality and mass media texts, (Screen, 1992).

The work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies has many implications for the relationship between audience and media texts. Much of their work argues that audiences are involved in decoding media texts. Morley’s (1980) work on the Nationwide audience (viewers of an early evening national news programme) used Gramsci’s (1971) work combined with Hall’s (1980) work on coding to assert that there are different types of audience readings of texts : dominant – hegemonic where an audience recognizes the “preferred” dominant message and broadly agrees; oppositional – where the audience rejects the dominant message on cultural, political or ideological grounds; or negotiated – where the audience may accept, reject or refine elements of a text depending on previously held views. Kitzinger’s (1998) empirical study on the receipt of HIV/AIDS messages adds weight to the concept of negotiated readings and resistance. More recent work by Davin (2005) draws similar conclusions about different, sometimes contradictory, readings of texts by the audience. Ideas about single preferred meanings and the concept as the media as a conveyor belt for messages have also been subsequently questioned by Morley (1993) himself.

The idea of active audience has, however, been subjected to criticism from some quarters. Philo (2000 : 1), for example, raises questions about how many different interpretations audiences can make of a message:

“some theorists go beyond this to suggest that audiences create their own meanings from the text ... In this approach, all definitions of reality are just that – merely definitions which are constantly changing with each new interpretation of what is real or what has occurred ... There is no way of saying that reality is distorted by media images since there is no fixed reality or truth to distort.”

Philo’s position illustrates the problems of separating audience reception studies from other areas of media research. The domestic context, for example where and how we consume media texts (Gray, 1992; Davin, 2005), is a research area in its own right.

Bourdieu’s (1984) work on “cultural competence” which examined the concepts of “high” and “low” culture in relation to class and education, has since been applied to TV soaps, looking at the skills and knowledge viewers require to engage with so-called ‘low’ status programming. Davin’s (2005) work on audience engagement with ‘ER’ is in a similar vein. Jane Shattuc’s (1997) work on audiences and American TV chat shows ranging from the more traditional 1980s’ *Oprah* to the more extreme 1990s’ versions such as *Jerry Springer* and *Ricki*, engages with a number of debates about the “audience as spectacle”, exploitation versus visibility of certain “minority” groups in such shows, and the positive nature and uses of internet chat-rooms associated with the shows. Authors such as Hardey (2005) have examined further the use of the internet in relation to audience and identity.

It can be argued, therefore, that acceptance of Gramsci’s (1971) concept of hegemony at work in media texts or Foucault’s (1980) idea that discursive formations produce a particular view or way of speaking about a topic in the media can co-exist with the idea that audiences may accept, reject, resist or subvert the dominant “message”. It is

this willingness to accept a truly transdisciplinary approach to examining media texts that has led to the development of multi method studies and this is the approach that has been taken in this study, based on the ideas and debates outlined here. The relationship between the Beatles and their audience, both at the time and retrospectively, is a key aspect of the study, as is the ways in which audiences related to their representations and masculinity and read the Beatles as men in particular ways.

Representation and Identity

“The media contribute significantly to the definition of the world around us, and thereby also to the definition of ourselves ... They present parts and dimensions of the world that we ourselves have not experienced directly, and may never come to experience directly. As recipients of all this we simply have to form some sort of opinion about where we are located, so to speak, in the complex landscapes presented to us.”

(Grisrud, 2002 : 5)

Grisrud (2002) argues that the media plays a crucial role in the self perception or identity of individuals and groups. Building on the ideas on discourse offered by Foucault's (1973; 1977) work he argues that the media is crucial in creating (real or imagined) communities based on ideas of what it is to be British, Northern, black, male, etc. A study by Peter Hamilton (1997), for example, examines work done in France after World War II, by French documentary photographers, producing a body of work which came to represent ideas about post-war “France and Frenchness” as a national identity. What is particularly interesting, is the way in which issues or groups are represented in the media, the ways in which discourses around particular groups or issues are constructed and the ways in which, in particular historical periods, there may be resistance and political struggle over representation (Gripsud, 2002).

How, then, are particular groups “re-presented” through the media or how do images of particular groups in the media represent or stand-for those groups in reality, a reality which Underwood (2003 : 56) argues “is not in any sense ‘given’ it is constructed; media texts do not reflect reality they are a construction of reality”. Here, then, the question of reflection or construction in the media raises its head. Dyer (1993: 1) argues strongly that there is a direct link between representation and reality, especially in relation to minority groups:

“... how social groups are treated in cultural representation is part and parcel of how they are treated in life ... that poverty, harassment, self-hate and discrimination (in housing, jobs, educational opportunity and so on) are shored up and instituted by representation ... How we are seen determines in part how we are treated.”

Dyer is clear in his belief that the media’s representation of groups in particular ways has an impact on public perception and social policy (Dyer, 1993). There is a growing body of work which similarly looks at the way the media influences policy through its representation of key health and social issues³. Dyer’s work is interesting because he engages with the issues outlined earlier in this chapter – power, discourse and the audience – a debate succinctly summed up by Berger and Luckmann (1967: 127): “he who has the bigger stick has the better chance of imposing his definitions of reality.” Dyer, however, emphasises the complexities at work in this type of analysis. Much work has been done on the representation of women and other minority groups in the media (Screen, 1992; Brunson, 1997; hooks, 1997). Dyer argues that the anger generated at negative representations in some of this work can be self defeating. Gripsrud (2002), has identified the political and ideological struggles at work around representations and Hall’s (1997) work sets out the political framework in which these struggles occur. Dyer adds to this debate by pointing out that the whole concept of representation is a complex one and that the reality/representation relationship is not straight forward and often has “real consequences for real people” (Dyer, 1993 : 3). Dyer’s (1993) own work on the film *Victim* (1961) and the complex representations of

³ See Kitzinger (1998) on HIV/AIDS; King and Street (2005) on B.S.E.

and about gay men and ‘gay-ness’ at work in this early 1960s’ work, is a good example of an attempt to come to terms with some of these complexities. Pollock’s (1992) work on the role of ideology in visual representations of women is another good example, as is Kaplan’s (1978) work on re-reading the representation of women in film-noir, in which she re-interprets and re-reads what were formerly seen as “weak” and “exploited” female characters in the film-noir genre as something quite different. However, Dyer acknowledges that in producing “typification” of certain groups the media uses a shorthand coding system in order to represent certain groups. For example, in producing representations of gay men, the media draws on conventional, often stereotypical, signs and dialogue to indicate gayness (Dyer, 1993 : 22)⁴.

This technique is closely linked to the concept of stereotyping as shorthand in representations. While “stereotype” is now almost always used as an insult (Dyer, 1993) in coining the phrase in the 1950s, Lippman (1956) saw the concept as an ordering process, a short cut, a reference to the real world and an expression of “our” values or beliefs. Subsequent work has obviously challenged how these values and beliefs come about and the media’s role in this, as has been discussed. Lippman (1956 : 96) saw stereotypes as a useful concept:

“A pattern of stereotypes is not neutral. It is not merely a way of substituting order for the great blooming buzzing confusion of reality. It is not merely a short cut. It is all these things and something more. It is the guarantee of our self-respect, it is the projection upon the world of our own sense of our own value, our own position and our own rights. The stereotypes are, therefore, highly charged with the feelings that are attached to them. They are the fortress of our tradition, and behind its defences we can continue to feel ourselves safe in the position we occupy.”

The theme of safety in our own positions and values has since been taken up by work on the concept of “other” (Hall, 1997) while Dyer (1993: 16) states:

⁴ See Chapter 7 for discussion on contemporary gay visibility in the media.

“... the role of stereotypes is to make visible the invisible, so that there is no danger of it creeping up on us unawares; and to make fast, firm and separate what is, in reality, fluid and much closer to the norm than the dominant value system cares to admit.”

As well as being part of the maintenance of social order and distinguishing between the “normal” and “deviant”, stereotyping tends to occur around groups with less power, as previously discussed (Hall, 1997). Therefore, the notion of power and exclusion is, once again central and stereotyping can be seen as part of the struggle for hegemony (Gramsci, 1971). Hall (1997) argues that “difference” or “otherness” is a compelling theme in work on representation and that the representation of “the other” draws on the techniques of typification and stereotypes. In this way it links to the ideas advanced by Dyer (1993) and the ways in which dominant value systems, operate, put forward by Gramsci (1971) and Foucault (1980). In his work on “the other”, Hall (1997) also introduces the concept of privileged readings. Despite the debate about the different readings and meanings in texts, Hall (1997) argues that there is often a preferred or privileged meaning attached to a text. Barthes (1977) in his work on photographic images argues that the purpose of the caption with a photograph is to select a particular meaning or reading and present it to the reader. Similarly, Fiske’s (1987) analysis of the presentation of TV news coverage attributes a similar role to the newsreader.

“The central space is that of the studio newsreader, who does not appear to be author of his/her own discourse, but who speaks the objective discourse of ‘the truth’”

(Fiske, 1987 : 288)

Hall (1997) gives a number of examples of representations of “blackness” as “otherness”, looking at the representation of black athletes, the media’s obsession

with black sexuality, and what he calls “commodity racism” (Hall, 1997 : 239) the use of colonial images of black people in late 19th and early 20th century advertising.

These debates, then, provide a backdrop against which identity is constructed and form powerful arguments for the role of the mass media as a key player in this process. Burr (2003 : 49) outlines the relationship between discourses and identity:

“They invite us to think of structures residing inside the person which are part of that person’s makeup and which determines, or at least greatly influences, what that person does, thinks or says.”

She sees this as a two-way relationship arguing that discourses “show up” (Burr, 1995 : 50) in the things people say but also the things people say are dependent on discursive context.

Gripsrud (2002) sees the media as part of the process of secondary socialisation that takes place within the key institutions of society (a notion akin to Foucault’s [1980] ideas on the location of power within different institutions in society) with the family as the site of primary socialisation. The media, he claims, competes for attention with other institutions.

“The media contributes significantly to the definition of the world around us and thereby also to the definition of ourselves.”

(Gripsrud, 2002 : 5)

It is, therefore, influential, he claims, in helping define how people locate themselves, and decide on who they are and would like to be. Weeks (1990: 88) has this to say on identity:

“Identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differences you have from others. At it’s most basic it gives you a sense of personal location, the stable core to your individuality, but it is

also about your relationships, your complex involvement with others and in the modern world these have become more complex and confusing.”

Weeks (1990), therefore, advances the notion of competing components of identities, drawing on gender, race, sexuality and so on, and his ideas link with those of Hoffman (1968) and Butler (1990) who talk about identity in terms of performance, a debate previously outlined in the context of discussion on men and masculinities.

Frith (1978) and Whiteley (1997) have written on the role of music and performers in relation to identity, while the “Waxing Lyrical” section on the Beatles⁵ features many statements about the Beatles as representing something about change, possibility and identity, and, therefore, this study is very much located within a framework that sees a link between the discourses at work in the media and their impact on identity.

Gripsrud (2002) sees sports and pop stars, their lives and achievements made visible by the mass media as individuals who reproduce or reinforce ideological positions in wider society, and identifies the growth of youth culture in the late 1950s and early 1960s as an important period leading to theoretical development and discussion about the nature and formation of identity, particularly with reference to the re-emergence of the work of Freud and the growth of psychology as a discipline in this period (Gripsrud, 2002). He also advances a strong case for the media as a site where gender is constantly under scrutiny and construction, with the concept of similarities/differences as a key binary (Petersen, 1998) constantly at play within media texts. Other binaries, beyond gender, include adults/children and contemporary debates about British/not British.

This section has outlined some of the key issues in relation to the role of the mass media and representation, its links to identity, and presented a case for the use of a discursive approach to the analysis of media texts with reference to the exploration of changing representations of men and masculinities. Whitehead (2002 : 101) sees gender “as a process of identity work, but a process with political implications and manifestations” and some of these issues will be explored in the next section.

⁵ See Appendix 1.

Representations of Masculinities

Hearn (2003) documents the rise in literature on representations of men and masculinity, or on images of men in recent years, arguing:

“... If one is interested in social change in men and gender relations, it is necessary to attend to changing images of men which appear to have shifted considerably in recent decades ... In recent years there has been a large expansion of scholarship on the representation of men and masculinities in a wide variety of media, including film, television, magazines, paintings, fine art, dance, internet, photography and advertising.”

(Hearn, 2003 : 145)

Changing representations of men and masculinities has become a sub-field of study for those interested in critical studies of men, a field of study in which the explicitly gendered nature of men has been brought to the fore and examined critically in a broadly pro-feminist context.⁵ As the field of study has developed there has been a growing realisation that images of men (publicly displayed via a number of media) are a vital area of research in examining how dominant and resistant versions of masculinity operate within society. Wernick (1987) for example, has looked at the shift from voyeur in the 1950s to narcissist in the 1970s, examining the range of portrayals of masculinity in the media, including homosexual and narcissistic, as well as typically heterosexual and hegemonic representations. These ideas will be explored later in the Beatles case study in Chapter 6.

The Gaze

Laura Mulvey's (1975) *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* is seen as a key text in examining the gendered nature of the mass media. Mulvey (1975: 12) argues that “the male figure cannot bear to gaze at his exhibitionist like self” and draws on psychoanalytic theory to argue that in cinema the male gaze predominates, examining

⁵ See Hearn (2003; 2004) for a full account of the development of the field of critical studies of men.

voyeuristic and fetishist looking as well as identification and narcissism as part of the cinematic spectacle.

“In discussing these two types of looking, both fundamental to the cinema, Mulvey locates them solely in relation to a structure of activity/passivity in which the look is male and active and the object of the look female and passive.”

(Neale, 1993 : 16)

Despite many critiques of this work (Ellis, 1982; Buscombe et al., 1992; Stacey, 1992) many of which point to the fact that the concept is deeply rooted in Freudian analysis, which is then privileged because of its “scientific” research status, one is often left, when reading film and TV theory in relation to gender, with the impression that all roads lead back to Mulvey. Here it is the intention to use works by Stacey (1992), Neale (1993) and Cohan (1993), which critique, and also build on, Mulvey’s work in applying it to studies of men in cinema, as a framework of analysis. Neale (1993) argues that heterosexual masculinity in cinema is left, mainly, undiscussed and that while the political and ideological implications of the representation of women have been written about extensively (Pollock, 1992; Tyler, 1995; Brunsdon, 1997; hooks, 1997), where men are concerned, the focus has been on gay men in cinema (Dyer, 1990; 1993)). In discussing the work of Ellis (1982), Neale (1993 : 10) states:

“... identification is never simply a matter of men identifying with male figures on the screen and women identifying with female figures. Cinema draws on and involves many desires, many forms of desire. And desire itself is mobile, fluid, constantly transgressing identities, positions and roles. Identifications are multiple, fluid, at points, even contradictory”

Mulvey (1975) argues that the male gaze, when focussed on male heroes, especially in traditional male film genres such as the Western or action film, is a form of identification with the power and omnipotence of the male hero. A longing for such power over, for example, women and an ability to control events. Others such as Ellis (1982), Stacey (1992) and Neale (1993) argue that it is more complex than this. Studlar (1993), in her work on Rudolph Valentino, argues that his fascination for

women was rooted in the radical subversion of American gender ideals and his feminising traits added to his attraction and mystique. In addition, Hansen (1986: 23) puts forward the view that Valentino “inaugurated an explicitly sexual discourse on male beauty.” Ehrenreich et al. (1992: 535) argue similarly about the Beatles⁶.

Possibilities of Pleasure: The Male as Subject

Rodowick (1982) argues that Mulvey’s denial of the male star as erotic object, assuming identification only in the sense of power and omnipotence is flawed.

“She makes no differentiation between identification and object choice in which sexual aims may be directed toward the male figure ...”

(Rodowick, 1982 : 8)

Stacey (1992) argues more strongly that Mulvey’s work is flawed and that more than one spectator position can exist:

“The first possibility is, ... arguing that the film text can be read and enjoyed from different gender positions. This problematizes the monolithic model of Hollywood cinema as ‘an anthropomorphic male machine’ (Penley, 1985) producing a unified and masculinized spectator.”

(Stacey, 1992 : 245)

She argues that “possibilities of pleasure” (Stacey, 1992 : 249) exist in watching films from different spectator positions and argues strongly that a particular problem with feminist film theory is that it argues for feminine specificity, often falling into the trap

⁶ See Chapter 1; Chapter 6. While it can be argued that men and boys watching *The Beatles in A Hard Day’s Night* (1964), for example, (especially on its release in 1964) may have identified with male heroes who could command such screaming adoration from women, there is something more complex going on which reflects social change for men in this period. The Beatles’ fans were not all women. Their shows at Olympia in Paris in 1964 revealed a new side to their fan base. An article in *The New Musical Express* revealed: “French audiences are largely made up of boys – screams were absent!” (Anon, 1964: 34). Footage of their journey through Amsterdam’s canals on their Dutch tour in the same year shows that it was boys rather than girls throwing themselves into the canal in an attempt to reach their heroes (The Beatles, 2003).

of biological essentialism (Stacey, 1992; Kaufman, 1998). Bruzzi (1997) points out that these are ideas which have become truisms in film theory without ever really being challenged or fully explored:

“The notion of the desexualised male body is a firmly held but flimsily proven truism that can be contested.”

(Bruzzi, 1997 : 69)

Neale (1993) argues that there is a resistance in some texts to “traditional” notions of masculinity and the male role. He explores the idea of the male as subject of erotic gaze and introduces the concept of feminization of the male body. In discussing Rock Hudson in melodramatic roles he argues that:

“Hudson is presented quite explicitly as the object of an erotic look. The look is usually marked as female. But Hudson’s body is feminized in those moments, an indication of the strength of those conventions which dictate that only women can function as the objects of explicitly erotic gaze”

(Neale, 1993 : 18)

Similarly Sweet (2005 : 58) says of British silent film actor Ivor Novello:

“When he gazed into the camera he offered himself as the object of the audience’s desire.”

This argument is taken up by Cohan (1993) in a discussion of *Fred Astaire and the spectacle of masculinity in the Hollywood musical*. Cohan presents the Hollywood musical as a challenge to traditional cinematic gender roles and argues that within the context of a musical (which, The Beatles’ *A Hard Day’s Night* [1964] is, in terms of its structure) men are “on show”, part of a spectacle which, to quote Mulvey (1975: 18), connotes “to be looked at -ness”. This argument can be applied to the Beatles in *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) a film which provides an opportunity to look at The Beatles, a showcase for four men who had become a worldwide cultural phenomenon.

The deal for the film with United Artists was signed purely on the basis that enough of their fans would want to go and “look-at” them on film to guarantee huge profits (Carr, 1996). Cohan (1993 : 46) argues that Fred Astaire’s feminization in his musicals “is a result of a theatrical performance based on show business values such as spectatorship and spectacle.” Astaire’s charismatic star quality is built on what, Cohan argues, are usually considered “feminine” qualities – narcissism, exhibitionism and masquerade. These qualities are also apparent in the Beatles in *A Hard Day’s Night*, (1964) Paul McCartney’s pouting camera awareness and perfect mop-top, John Lennon’s exhibitionism and the masquerade of “dandyish costuming” (Cohan, 1993 : 63) are all present in this text⁷. Thus the concept of feminization is used, not to suggest “effeminacy” or “female” but rather to discuss the placing of male stars in musicals in the traditional female star’s position i.e. enabling them to be the subject of an erotic gaze. By the early 1960s examples of this type of performance had already been seen in the field of popular music. Frank Sinatra’s musical films and Elvis Presley’s early TV appearances⁸ provide examples from the 1940s and 1950s. Cohan describes how in the musicals of Fred Astaire (and indeed any musical) the action stops for a performance, to signify the ability of the male star to exhibit signs of “to be looked at-ness” (Mulvey, 1975: 18).

Discourses around the pleasures of masculinity are an emerging substratum in the literature on men and masculinities (Kaufman, 1998). These 1990s’ texts certainly lay the ground for this as an area for explorations and in discussion of the Beatles, elsewhere, in this thesis, the notion of pleasure both in relation to audience but also in relation to the representation of their Beatle-ness is discussed. Whitehead (2002 : 3) talks of “the multiple ways of being a man and the multiple masculinities now **available** to men ...” (emphasis added) and changing representations of men and masculinities are crucial to this idea of availability. Medhurst (1984 : 6) once asked if “chaps could be pin ups” while Mark Simpson has written, and continues to write on the theme of pleasurable masculinities (Simpson, 2004; 2008), recently on the “to be looked-at-ness” (Mulvey, 1975 : 18) of male sporting stars posing in feminized positions (Cohan, 1993) to sell Dolce and Gabanna underwear. Simpson (2008) has

⁷ See Chapter 6 for further discussion.

⁸ Eventually censors insisted he be shot only from the waist up due to his stage act being seen as too shockingly explicit and full of traditional masculine sexuality (Goldman, 1982).

coined the term sporno (sport porn) for these erotic/sexualised images which draw on gay pornography and play on homoerotic possibilities (Simpson, 2008). This can be seen as a further development of his work on metrosexuality (Simpson, 2004) which is discussed in relation to the Beatles in Chapter 6.

Public Men

Hearn (1992), in his work *Men in the Public Eye* argues that the growth of late monopoly capitalism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries led to the rise of mass consumption, retailing and distribution and consequently mass media, representation and imagery. This led to what he terms “public patriarchies” (Hearn, 1992: 185). Male control of the key institutions (including the mass media) in an expanding capitalist society meant that visual imagery (e.g. in advertising) was also male dominated and controlled, and became nationally and internationally distributed.

“... the reproduction of ‘public men’ is partly in discourse and image, particularly sexual imagery, and in turn these can have an immense impact on men’s sense of ourselves, our masculinities. In that way masculinities are ideology.”

(Hearn, 1992 : 181)

Drawing on Mulvey (1975) and related work (Ellis, 1982; Cohan, 1992; Neale, 1993) he argues that film is an important medium for analysis when examining men and masculinities, in that men are portrayed directly in particular ways and roles, as are women, but women are usually under the direction of men and, thus, positioned relative to men, a way of displaying “men” and “masculinities” “twice over” (Hearn, 1992 : 191). Thus, Hearn (1992 : 194) sees film as “relevant for analysis of change in masculinities”. Mulvey’s (1975) work is by no means uncontested (see previous discussion) and in the Beatles’ case study there will be an examination of these ideas in relation to representations of men and masculinities and the way that these images can be seen to subvert traditional representations of hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1985; Hearn, 2004), creating space for a range of representations of masculinities, some of which can be read as resistant to dominant discourses.

Masculinity as Fact

Fejes (1992) used content analysis of US research on TV, advertising and film to examine how representations of hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) or Brittan's (1989) masculinism dominates these media forms.

“... it is evidenced that men as portrayed on adult television, do not deviate much from the traditional notion of men and masculinity. Men are powerful and successful, occupy high-status positions, initiate action and act from the basis of rational mind as opposed to emotions, are found more in the world of things as opposed to family and relationships, and organise their lives around problem solving.”

(Fejes, 1992 : 12)

Fejes (1992) draws together a number of studies examining the representation of men and masculinity in the media, documenting a range of findings. These include more portrayals of men than women on TV (Durkin, 1985); men more often in starring roles (Dominick, 1979); men more likely to be found in action and drama rather than sit-com and soap operas (Miles, 1975; Miller and Reeves, 1976); men more likely to be shown in high status jobs (Barcus, 1983) and traditionally defined “male” occupations (Seggar and Wheeler, 1973); men portrayed as more dominant (Lemon, 1978) and having greater control of reward and punishment (Downs and Gowan, 1980).

Thus representations of men and masculinity in the media “replicate and reinforce – traditional versions of masculinity” (Fejes, 1992 : 19).

He illustrates this with reference to men's portrayal in advertising:

“... overall, men were portrayed as more autonomous than women, with men being portrayed in many different occupations as compared to women being

shown mainly as housewives and mothers. Men were far more likely to be shown advertising alcohol, vehicles or business products while women were found mostly in advertisements for domestic products.”

(Fejes, 1992 : 13)

Masculinity as Signs

Saco (1992) provides an important link between the work on signs and the debates on hegemonic masculinity/masculinity as fact.

“Our commonsense understandings of gender share with traditional social science studies the view that masculinity is a fact of nature. As interpretive genealogical analysis of these discourse show, however, academic and popular discourses work to naturalize the very concept that has been so unproblematically embraced as fact. What is at issue in these interpretive analyses is the facility of masculinity – how masculinity is constructed, within sign systems, as given and obvious.”

(Saco, 1992 : 23)

She argues strongly that the mass media is instrumental in constituting gender difference rather than reflecting it and that signs and the way they are read in media texts are a key component of their process. She states the importance of mannerisms, clothes etc which “help to make a human being as a gendered subject.” (Saco, 1992: 25) She makes some key points about changing representations of masculinity which will be explored further in the Beatles case study⁹. In looking at Hanke’s (1990) work on the popular 1990s’ programme *Thirty Something* she says:

“Male characters in *Thirty Something* are coded with traditionally feminine characteristics, such as being more open to domestic concerns and interpersonal relations.”

(Saco, 1992 : 34)

⁹ See Chapter 6.

These images Hanke (1990) argues represent an attempt to modify elements of the masculinity discourse, making it adaptable and also resistant to counter hegemonic discourses advanced by queer theorists and feminist writers, for example.

Hanke (1990) points out that drawing such conclusions, however, we should be aware of the work on audience (Morley, 1980; Philo, 1990) and the different possibilities inherent in reading media texts (Hall, 1980; 1997).

“These social definitions of masculinity may be activated, resisted, or ignored by some viewers and not others; different strategies of representational practices may articulate (link) in different ways to historically specific ‘subject’ positions, social identities, or social formations.”

(Hanke, 1990 : 245)

This is similar to another key argument she makes about the ability of capitalist society and the discourses which serve to reproduce existing power structures to adapt to new developments. For example, the subject positions “worker” and “mother” were seen as contradictory 50 years ago but now the social identity of “working mother” exists as an adaptation. This is also redolent of Ehrenreich’s (1983) argument that the shift in the focus of the women’s movements in the late 1960s/early 1970s from the goal of “liberation” to the goal of “equality” represented its incorporation and adaptation into a discourse which was understandable and able to be dealt with within the contemporary industrial relations processes. Edwards (1997 : 39) describes the “new man” of the 1980s as “the crystallisation of consequences in economics, marketing, political ideology and, most widely, consumer society”. His exploration of the complex relationship between the “crisis” discourse, increasing gay visibility and the adaptive structures of consumer capitalism provides an interesting commentary on the relationship between representation and reality and the importance of particular historical moments. This is highly relevant to the study of the Beatles in another particular historical moment and some of the ideas advanced in this chapter will be explored with specific reference to the Beatles and the 1960s elsewhere in the thesis. Nixon (1997 : 297) talks about “a conception of masculinities produced as a result of the articulation or interweaving of particular attributes of masculinity with

other social variables”. The importance of the media and its role in this process will also be a key discussion point in relation to the Beatles and representation.

Representations of The Beatles: The Beatles on film

“... the real value of the British pop film is the light it sheds on a culture in transition and transformation.”

(Medhurst, 1995 : 61)

Chapter three looks more broadly at representation of the Beatles through the examination of a range of texts and establishes a rationale for the use of the Beatles as a case study through which to reflect on representations of masculinities. Here the intention is to briefly outline the rationale for using the Beatles’ films¹⁰ as a means of examining their representation and as a way of exploring changing representations of men and masculinities in the 1960s. Hearn (1992) sees film as a relevant medium for the examination of men and masculinities, while Edwards (2008 : 157) states:

“movies have rarely received much serious study within the world of sociology and social science, or even sexual politics, while studies of masculinity still tend to see analysis of such popular cultural texts as films as rather small or trivial fry ...”

Medhurst (1995), however, has argued the case for the pop film, in particular, as cultural artefact and as a way of examining social change. The 1960s was the heyday of the British pop film (Medhurst, 1995; Carr, 1996) yet these artefacts have been mainly ignored by British film theorists and historians. Neaverson (1997) sees this as a result of their “low-culture” status and their generic categorisation with no real attempt to distinguish between those which blatantly set out to make a fast buck from the singing sensation of the day and those which have a more interesting approach and

¹⁰ The cartoon film *Yellow Submarine* (1968) has been omitted from the case study. While the film is an interesting text and has many things in common with *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) the fact that it does not allow an observation of live action and is voiced by other actors makes it unsuitable as part of the case study.

pedigree¹¹. The Beatles' films, then, have to a large extent been disregarded because of their positioning within this genre and have certainly not been subject to the critical and cultural analysis of their recorded works. Neaverson (1997 : 1) regards the films as "the most neglected aspect of the Beatles' output" and "a historical footnote" and beyond his work *The Beatles Movies* (1997) and Roy Carr's *The Beatles at the Movies* (1996) there are no texts that deal specifically with the films.

Lack of availability has also been an issue. Despite the Beatles *Anthology* TV series (1996) and subsequent DVD box set (2003), repackaged versions of the films have been slow to arrive. *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) became available on DVD in 2003 while a remastered boxed set of *Help!* (1965) appeared in 2007. *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) and *Let it Be* (1970) are still not available on DVD. *Let it Be* (1970) did not even receive a video release and has not been seen on TV since the 1970s.

However, the films were chosen as key texts for this study for a number of reasons. Firstly, they provide texts in which to look at and study the to-be-looked-at-ness (Mulvey, 1975 : 18) of the Beatles at various points throughout the 1960s. Neaverson (2000 : 152) states "... their films were vital in communicating and showcasing the group's ever – changing array of images, attitudes, ideas and musical styles." The Beatles can be read as truly McLuhanite (McLuhan, 1964; MacDonald, 2003)¹² in that their fame coincided with an expansion of global media (Gripsrud, 2002) and the films are a central part of their ability to reach the global audience particularly in this historical period. Hoberman (2003) outlines the relationship between US politics, social change and a number of films produced in the 1960s, the films reflecting what he terms "the dream life" (Hoberman, 2003) of the 1960s. In many ways it can be argued that the films of the Beatles can be read as a kind of dream-like version of the 1960s, a way of reflecting on the realities of social change mediated through a fantasy version of what the Beatles actually were. Much of Hoberman's (2003) analysis centres on hegemony (Gramsci, 1971), the clashing of value-sets in general and on hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) and masculinism (Brittan, 1989) at work in film texts and US politics, linking John Wayne

¹¹ *Just for Fun* (1963) would be an example of the former, having no real plot and it is merely a way of showing a number of early 1960s' acts one after another. *Catch us if you can* (1965), director John Boorman's debut film, starring the Dave Clark Five, would be an example of the latter.

¹² See Chapter 2.

with both John F Kennedy's "new frontier" concept and Lyndon Johnson's sweeping welfare reforms. In examining *Shampoo* (1975) a film made about the 1960s in the mid 1970s the different discourses around masculinity at work by this point in 1960's texts intertwine and clash in a plot centring on a love triangle incorporating old masculinity (Jack Warden's old-school politician), new masculinity (Warren Beatty's promiscuous hairdresser) and, at the centre, swinging sixties icon Julie Christie. Christie also stars in the love-triangle plot of *Darling* (1965) a film which can be read as a representation of the upward mobility inherent in the UK's Swinging Sixties dream life. Again Christie is juxtaposed between two competing versions of masculinity represented by her competing suitors; Laurence Harvey's brutal macho business man and a "frightfully lean and intelligent" journalist and man of ideas, played by a gay man (Dirk Bogarde). As will be discussed in Chapter 6 these competing discourses of masculinity are also to be found in the films of the Beatles, their version of the '60s' dream life. The Beatles' TV appearances are also highly significant in this respect, particularly their appearances on the Ed Sullivan show and the broadcast of the 1965 Shea Stadium show in the USA, plus their participation in the first global satellite link-up *Our World* in 1967.

The first two Beatle films, in particular, are central to the rise of Beatlemania as a global phenomenon (Neaverson, 1997; Stark, 2005). Their creative involvement and financing of the later films, combined with Dick Lester's range of ideas at work in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and *Help!* (1965) reflect their status of "men of ideas" (Inglis, 2000b : 1). These two films, in particular, Neaverson (1997 : 177) sees as "thoughtful, anarchic and joyous" with an "anarchic freedom" (Neaverson, 1997 : 119) in keeping with the social changes and ideas of the time. Their stylistic dissimilarity and experimental nature mirrors their approach to album making in many ways and, yet, it is not recognised in the same way. Musical producer and arranger George Martin has often been quoted as saying they never wanted to do the same thing twice and were always looking for new ideas (The Beatles, 2003). Victor Spinetti, who starred in three of the four films, describes them as "eternal students" (Neaverson, 1997 : 118) always wanting to learn more about their craft. Despite United Artists' initial interest stemming from the "fast-buck, exploit them while it lasts and sell a million soundtrack albums" approach, all the films avoid the formulaic approach and are decidedly anti-Hollywood in their varying formats (Neaverson,

1997). Elsewhere arguments around the 1960s as a time of significant social change¹³ are advanced and the films can be read within this context, taking an approach in tune with the times. Neaverson (1997) suggests that a youthful audience, open to new ideas, went with them wherever they choose to go in the celluloid world they created for themselves.

The films also bookend an interesting period in UK/US relations around film production with large US film companies, like United Artists, keen to invest in the British film industry in the early 1960s,¹⁴ while the end of the Beatles as a working group, at the close of the decade, coincided with a decline in US investment. Neaverson (1997; 2000) reads this as significant in that the symbiotic relationship between the Beatles and the 1960s¹⁵ can be seen as the reason that the UK was culturally “fashionable” in this period. The Beatles’ films and those by other groups¹⁶ involved in the ‘British invasion’ of the US around 1964/5 (Sandbrook, 2005) were an important way of reaching an audience in the States beyond those who could get to live shows¹⁷.

As texts they also transcend the period in which they were made. Given the popularity of the Beatles with second and third generation audiences and their continued global fame¹⁸, the films still provide an opportunity for new audiences to look at the Beatles and given the increasingly retro nature of the fashion and music industries their ‘look’ in all four films can be read as strangely contemporary¹⁹.

In *Magic Circles* (2003) Devin McKinney describes a trip with his partner to his local multiplex to see *Yellow Submarine* (1968), the audience of which is mainly made up

¹³ See Chapter 2.

¹⁴ See Chapter 6.

¹⁵ See Chapter 2.

¹⁶ *Ferry across the Mersey* (1964) starring Gerry and the Pacemakers, and *Hold On!* (1966) starring Herman’s Hermits are two such examples.

¹⁷ After they stopped touring in 1966 the Beatles’ promotional films (forerunners to the pop video) for new singles fulfilled the same function.

¹⁸ See Chapter 1.

¹⁹ The TV documentary *The Beatles Anthology* (2003) [first broadcast on TV in 1996] combined with Manchester group Oasis’ well publicised Beatle-worship saw an upsurge in Beatle interest, both music and style-wise, in the mid 1990s, while the idea of Britpop and the Labour Government’s ‘cool Britannia’ concept attempted to recreate, somewhat unsuccessfully, the creativity of mid 1960s Britain in the same period.

of 1960s' Beatles' fans and their children, who he notes are "grabbed" (McKinney, 2003 : 369) by "this, corny dated movie".

"The audience leaves the theatre in a shared glow, and the kids – the kids are so excited. The Beatles have found them; they have found the Beatles.

What wonders await them?

What wonders await them?

The sub sails on in a sea of time."

(McKinney, 2003 : 370)

Director Dick Lester is quoted as having asked for a paternity test when told that his work on *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) made him the father of MTV (The Beatles, 2003). This is just another example of the continued influence of the films and, while they were bounded by the pop musical genre, as Medhurst (1995 : 61) notes, there was "no going back" to the formulaic format of the genre after the Beatles' films. For the reasons outlined in this section, then, representation of the Beatles on film was chosen as a means of reflecting on discourses of masculinity at work in these texts²⁰.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a review of the literature on representation with specific reference to the representation of men and masculinities in the media. The chapter has explored some of the arguments about the ways in which representations of particular groups (in this instance, men) impact on wider society and, in particular, has examined work on identity in this respect.

The chapter includes a number of different perspectives on and theories of representation and contains a lengthy discussion on Foucault's work on discourse, which links to the discussion on methodology in Chapter 5.

An examination of perspectives on audience, again linking to discussion on discourse and agency in Chapter 5, is included. Representations of masculinities has developed

²⁰ See Appendix 5 for an outline of the Beatles' films that were never made.

as an important sub-field of critical studies of men and this development is also covered in the chapter. The key concepts of looking, pleasure, narcissism and the feminized male, all of which emerge as part of the discussion of the Beatles' films in Chapter 6, are examined here. The chapter concludes with a short section on representations of the Beatles and this, again, is linked to discussions on sampling in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Methodology and Research Methods

Introduction

This chapter outlines the key theoretical, methodological and ethical considerations pertinent to the study and will attempt to address the “why?” and “how?” questions inherent in a research study of this nature. The chapter also details the research methods used in both the documentary and interview stage of the study. The study is grounded in questions about social change (with particular reference to men and masculinities) in a context suggested by the Popular Memory Group (1982 : 213) which states: “History – in particular popular memory – is a stake in the constant struggle for hegemony.” The group argues that a sense of history provides a way for particular social groupings (in this case, men) to gain knowledge of the broader context of their struggles and to become capable of transformation, using history as a starting point to generate ideas about change and transformation and to uncover the way in which “common sense” discourses (in this case around masculinities) come into being. May’s (1997 : 16) notion that “knowledge is both local and contingent” was also influential in this sense and his assertion that social research aims to refute, organise and generate theory is also important here. The Popular Memory Group (1982) argues that there is a definite link between knowledge and change, a process through which a challenge to existing ideas and formulation of new ones occurs, as they invoke Foucault’s (1980) notion of the history of the present. May’s (1997: 27) conceptualisation of research as a “reflexive endeavour” can be incorporated within a poststructuralist account such as this, particularly as it draws on the idea of excavating texts in order to discover knowledge about a particular period (May, 1997; McKee, 2003) and qualitative interviewing as a way of excavating private memories (Popular Memory Group 1982; May 1997). For example, May (1997:177) outlines the possible relationship between these two methods in that documents “...allow comparisons to be made between the observer’s interpretation of events and those recorded in documents relating to those events ...”.

Chapter 2 outlined the rationale for identifying the 1960s as an important decade, in the sense that it is a site where social change for men, an increased visibility of representations of men and masculinities in the media, and the emergence of

discourses of masculinities which appear resistant to the dominant can be seen. The personal location and gendered experiences of the author and the rationale for the development of the study are outlined in Chapter 1 with the resultant research questions emerging:

- i. How did representations of masculinities change in “the sixties” (with particular reference to the Beatles as a case study)?
- ii. Can examples of masculinities be identified in this period which appear to be resistant to dominant discourses?
- iii. Do men, in retrospect, recognise “the sixties” as a period of social change for men and can they identify the role of representation within the process of social change?

Research Beliefs and the Location of the Study

“The world of nature as explored by the natural scientists does not ‘mean’ anything to molecules, atoms or electrons. But the observational field of the social scientist –social reality – has a specific meaning and relevant structure for the beings living, acting and thinking within it.”

(Schütz, 1962:59)

This quote from Schütz (1962) succinctly outlines the post-positivist school of thought which emerged to challenge positivism, an approach based in “male scientism” (May, 1997:22) and the basis of what feminist researchers came to label “malestream” research (Hearn, 2004 : 49). In previous chapters it has been argued that the 1960s was a period of radical and significant social and cultural change (Marwick 1998) and it is, therefore, not insignificant that this period is also a site where new and challenging ideas about research and the development of alternative paradigms and world views emerged. Bryman (2004) outlines the way in which emergent post-positivist ideas in the 1960s were not only a challenge to positivism at work in the

natural sciences but also a reaction to the way that it had become dominant in the social sciences in the 1940s and 1950s. Bryman (2004) argues that it is in this period that quantitative and qualitative approaches came to denote divergent assumptions about knowledge, truth and the role of research and the researcher, with “competing views about the ways in which social reality ought to be studied” emerging as “essentially divergent clusters of epistemological assumptions” (Bryman, 2004 : 4). Bryman (2004) sees Kuhn’s (1970) work on the history of science and his ideas on the notion of a paradigm as a set of dictates and beliefs which influence what is studied, how it is structured and how it is interpreted, as a drawing together of a number of ideas which had emerged during the 1960s. This thesis, then, is certainly located within a post-positivist framework using qualitative methods. The fact that there was what Bryman (2004:45) describes as a “surge of interest in its potential in the 1960s”, makes it, perhaps, fitting that the methods chosen emerged as part of the academic, cultural and social changes outlined in Chapter 2.

Langdridge (2004) sees the role of interpretation within a research study as being key. The debate about science and objectivity is well documented by May (1997) and the beginnings of this debate tended to focus on the nature of knowledge and knowing and objectivity within research. These debates, Langdridge (2004) argues, then extended to include discussion about the social construction of knowledge (Burr, 2003) and the ways in which knowledge is historically contained, and, therefore, that interpretation is a key issue. Chapter 4 contains a discussion about representation, social constructionism and Foucault’s concept of discourse, providing a rationale for the methods employed in this study, and Langdridge’s (2004) ideas on interpretation are incorporated within the approach. He states:

“...it is only with recognition of the active involvement of the researcher in the research project that understanding can truly emerge.”

(Langdridge, 2004: 252)

Authors such as van Dijk (1985; 1993) and Mertens (2003) take this argument a stage further by arguing for the making explicit of values in research, a major challenge to the assumptions made about objectivity in the positivist paradigm, leading to methods such as critical discourse analysis (van Dijk, 1985; 1993; Mertens, 2003) which will

be discussed later in the chapter. Thus, social constructionist approaches with notions of historical and social containment, feminist perspectives, which emphasise the recognition of the role of the researcher in the process of data collection and the gendered nature of research, queer theory, which problematises sex and gender categorisation and assumptions and discourse analysis, with its emphasis on construction through language (Langdrige, 2004), all feed into the post-positivist location of this qualitative multi-method study. It is a study based very much on the belief outlined by Willig (2001) that methods are limited by methodology as opposed to the pragmatic approach of some mixed methodologists (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003).

Rationale

It is within the context of the ideas discussed in the previous section and ideas advanced by the Popular Memory Group (1982) about the interaction of public representations of the past, and private memory of that past in the present, that the construction of a multi-method study was chosen. This comprised a case study through which to examine public representation of men and masculinities in the 1960s, and a set of interviews with men, with varying social characteristics, drawing on private memory and, providing an oral history of the period. This was initially driven by more traditional ideas of triangulation (Campbell and Fiske, 1959; Denzin, 1978), the idea of “checking out” representations against “real” memories. This idea, however, will be deconstructed later in this chapter when looking at some of the literature on text, “reality” and the nature of interviews. Instead, further development and research located the study within contemporary debates about mixed methodology (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Bryman, 2004) which has been touted as a third methodological movement, with an emphasis on a pragmatic mixing of approaches to fit the needs of the research. Within a typology of mixed methods, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) identify multi-methods as a distinctive category, in which, usually, more than one method may be used in a study, but this takes place within a particular paradigm or worldview or what Mertens (2003 : 139) refers to as “a conceptual model of a person’s worldview, complete with the assumptions that are associated with that view.” Brewer and Hunter (1989) also support this definition of

multi-method studies. This study, then, is located within a framework which advocates the use of multi-methods but within a particular world-view and within an epistemological framework that, along with that advanced by authors such as Smith & Heshusius (1986), sees some of the pragmatic approaches inherent in mixed methodologies as flawed given that pragmatism, like common sense (Geertz, 1983), is often subject to as much social construction as anything else.

The research questions aimed to explore changing representations of men and masculinities within a period of UK history defined as “the sixties”. A critical approach with values made explicit (van Dijk, 1985; 1993; Mertens, 2003) is implicit in the idea of looking for images of resistant masculinities, while the idea of examining whether men recognized the importance of the role of representation in relation to identity and, indeed, whether they recognized “the sixties” as an important period of social change for men, had implications for the design of the study which went beyond a focus solely on representation using documentary methods.

After considering the methodological issues which are discussed in this chapter (and Chapter 4) the construction of a multi-method approach was chosen. May’s (1997) ideas on comparing individual observations of events with documentary material and the Popular Memory Group’s (1982) ideas on drawing together public representation and private memory were influential in the decision to do this. The focus on representation meant that the choice of a documentary method of research was a logical one and further discussion on the rationale for this choice appears in the next section. Discussion on the choice of a case study approach in order to examine representations of masculinities features later in this chapter, while a rationale for “Why The Beatles?” as a case study through which to reflect on men and masculinities forms part of Chapter 1.

The combination of documentary research and other forms of data collection is not a common approach but it was felt that a qualitative approach to further data collection would fit with the ideas of May (1997) and the Popular Memory Group (1982) previously outlined. The choice of semi-structured interviews was particularly linked to the idea of collecting individual perspectives and private memories. The decision to use trigger materials from the documentary stage (clips from the Beatles’ films)

within the interview process provided a further link between the two stages of the research and this was also part of a multi rather than mixed methods approach (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003).

Part of the process of deciding on a methodological framework for study is to look for examples of work which have set out to examine similar subject matter from a similar epistemological and ontological standpoint. There is a growing body of work in the arena of gender and representation and research uncovered a number of examples which were used in generating ideas in relation to this study. Two useful examples are discussed here. Dorothy Smith's (1990) *Texts, Facts and Femininity: Exploring the relations of ruling*, examines the way in which women actively work out subject positions while negotiating discursive constraints. Palmer (1989:33) states:

“The notion of femininity as a social construct is so rigid that it does not allow for the possibility of change and instead portrays women as passive recipients.”

Within this notion is the idea that both men and women are compliant in this process of social construction of gender. Smith's (1990) study of 19th century advice books for women examines the ways in which discourses of femininity operate within these texts, citing, for example, the way in which reading, as an activity, is presented as dangerous for women and a threat to their femininity. However, she argues, that while dominant discourses of femininity are present in texts, discursive structures are discontinuous, can change over time, due to resistance and reinterpretation, and examples of resistant discourses can be found in 19th century novels contemporaneous with the advice books she studied in her sample. What Smith (1990: 167) uncovered was:

“...a web or cats cradle of texts, stringing together and coordinating the multiple local and particular sites of everyday/every night worlds of women and men with the market processes of the fashion, cosmetic, garment and publishing industries.”

Smith's (1990) Foucauldian influenced conceptualisation of localised power, the ways in which resistance can occur and be identified, and her identification of market processes which link to visual appearance and the construction of identity have all been taken as useful ideas within the analysis in this thesis.

The other particularly useful document in developing this methodology was a special issue of *Feminism and Psychology*, edited by R.W. Connell (2001), and devoted to a number of articles concerned with discursive constructions of masculinity, a reflection of the increasing importance of discursive approaches in the study of men and masculinities (Craig, 1992; Dyer, 1993; Whitehead, 2002; Hearn, 2003). This includes articles examining men's attitudes to feminism, the construction of masculinity within interviews, young men's accounts of identity, the examination of men's health magazines as a site of tension in masculine identity and an exploration and critique of the concept of hegemonic masculinity. The different methodological approaches and methods used within the studies provided a range of ideas which were useful in locating this particular study. The following sections discuss, in further detail, the rationale for the decisions made in choosing particular methodological approaches.

Documentary Research

“Documents inform the practical and political decisions which people make on a daily and longer term basis and may even construct a particular reading of past social or political events. They can tell us about the aspirations and intentions of the period to which they refer and describe places and social relationships at a time when we may not have been born, or simply not present.”

(May 1997 : 133)

May (1997) sees documentary research as a way in which the chronicling of past events can lead to an understanding of the values, attitudes and the social and cultural climate of a period. Documentary research is by no means straightforward as a method, partly because the key question around documentary research is how

documents will be used (Platt, 1981). Discussion on Foucault's theory of discourse (Foucault, 1980; Hall, 1997; Whitehead, 2002) and the debates arising from this theory are discussed in Chapter 4, laying out some of the principles which have guided the analysis within this thesis. Here it is the intention to examine the evidence for the usefulness of documentary research in uncovering discourses around masculinities in a particular historical period.

Within this thesis, primary documents, what May (1997) describes as those written and collected by those who witnessed the events described, have been used as well as secondary documents i.e. those written after the event. The Beatles *Anthology* (2000; 2003) provides a good example of the former while Skinner-Sawyers' (2006) edited collection of writings on the Beatles provides examples of both kinds of texts. May (1997) conceptualises documents as a reflection of a reality, not *the* reality, and this must be borne in mind particularly in the context of Platt's (1981) comments on interpretation. May (1997 : 138) states that documents might:

“... be interesting for what they leave out, as well as what they contain. They do not simply reflect, but also construct social reality and versions of events.”

Documents are never neutral and part of the analytical process may be to uncover intended meanings as well as making a particular interpretation of that document (Hall 1980). Scott (1990) talks about intended, received and internal meanings within a text while Foucault (1984:103) talks about analysing a text “through its structure, its architecture, its intrinsic form, and the play of its internal relationships”. In the next section a rationale for a framework of analysis for the texts used as a case study within this thesis (The Beatles' films) will be discussed.

Scott (1990) outlines a number of questions which researchers should ask when approaching documents. These focus on authenticity and status, whether the text is believable, credible, representative, either defined as typical or atypical (both may be of interest) and meaning. It is not only the final category that is subject to debate and interpretation. “What is it and what does it tell us?” asks Scott (1990:8) and it is clear that this question must be fully answered and a rationale provided for the use of

particular texts. According to Hodder (1998 : 112) texts are artefacts produced under particular material conditions “embedded within social and ideological systems” which may do different things over a period of time. Again, interpretation is seen as the key, with Hodder (1998) arguing that some interpretation may be more plausible than others. The use of documentary research in this study is very much based on Erickson’s (1998) idea of the use of the past in the present and the Popular Memory group’s (1982) concept of documents as public representation. The decision to use 1960s’ texts as a way of examining changing representations of men and masculinities took place, therefore, within a framework bounded by the discussion in this section.

Case Studies

Much of the debate about case studies is rooted in the question of generalisability (Wittig, 1983) and case study methodology, argues Stake (1998), has often suffered because of its presentation “by people who have a lesser regard for the study of the particular” (Stake, 1998 : 91). Stake sees the case study as less of a methodological choice and more of a choice of object to be studied, an object that can then be studied in a number of different ways and, as in the broader debate about documentary research, is open to interpretation within a post-structuralist context. There is a growing acceptance that learning from a particular case can be intrinsically valuable and divorced from the agenda of generalisability and theory building (Yin, 1984, 1989; Firestone, 1993). Stake (1998) distinguishes between the intrinsic case study, which gives a greater understanding of a particular case, the instrumental case study, in which a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory, and the collective case study, where a number of cases are studied in order to inquire into a particular phenomenon, which may lead to theory building.

The choice of the Beatles as a case study through which to examine representations of masculinities and The Beatles’ films as a sample of available texts within this case study was made with reference to the work of Yin (1984; 1989), Stake (1998) and Silverman (2000), using the case as a bounded system, and rejecting the notion advanced by Becker (1988) and others that cases have to be generalizable. Becker (1988 : 67) states:

“Every scientific enterprise tries to find out something that will apply to everything of a certain kind by studying a few examples, the results of the study being, as we say, ‘generalizable’ to all members of that class...”.

The importance of case studies however, is that they can lead to a process of learning about a particular case, which may then have wider application. Stouffer (1941), for example, sees a number of components coming together in case study work, including the uniqueness of particular cases, the making of a case, the historical context and the informants through whom the case can be known. Silverman (2000) describes how a “deviant” case provides the opportunity to study an unusual phenomenon, while Stake (1998 : 101) states:

“...my choice would be to take that case from which we feel we can learn the most. That may mean taking the one we can spend the most time with. Potential for learning is a different and sometimes superior criteria for representativeness. Often it is better to learn a lot from an atypical case than a little from a magnificently typical case.”

The choice of “The Beatles” as an extraordinary case, an extraordinary cultural phenomenon through which to read changing representations of men and masculinities, was made within the context of the ideas advanced here. This would fall into the category of the intrinsic case study, as outlined by Stake (1998) incorporating Silverman’s (2000) notion of the deviant case study, giving a greater understanding of a particular case, with a rationale presented to explain why this case is illuminating in relation to the subject area of representation of men and masculinities as outlined in Chapter 1.

The use of an “extraordinary” or deviant case study within the documentary stage of the research was juxtaposed with a sample of “ordinary” men in the interview stage within a framework of study which aimed to examine both public representation and private memories of men and masculinities in a particular period (Popular Memory Group, 1982).

Yin (1989) also suggests the usefulness of using multiple sources of information, what McKee (2003) conceptualises as texts about the text, in conjunction with the particular case study chosen, and this idea has also been incorporated into this study.

The way in which this decision making process unfolded in relation to this study is presented at a number of points within the thesis. Stake (1998) defines the major conceptual responsibility of the qualitative case researcher as bounding the case i.e. conceptualising the object of study and selecting phenomena, themes or issues i.e. research questions to emphasise (this is done in Chapter 1); seeking patterns of data to develop the issues (this is done in Chapter 6); triangulating key observations (this is done in Chapter 7); selecting alternative interpretations to pursue and developing assertions about the case (this is done in Chapters 6 and 8).

Method: The Documentary Stage

The rationale for using the Beatles as a case study in representations of masculinities is outlined in Chapter 1, while the rationale for using the films as a way of sampling representation is part of the discussion of representations in Chapter 4. The Beatles as a cultural phenomenon fits with Silverman's (2000) idea of using an extraordinary or deviant case study. While The Beatles are an extraordinary male phenomenon, their high profile as public men (Hearn, 1992) in the 1960s (and beyond), it has been argued in a previous chapter, make them a text through which representations of and reflections on masculinities can be read.

Sampling: The Films as Texts

The four live action films provide documentary evidence of changes in style, appearance and attitudes at specific points in the career of The Beatles and at specific points in the decade. Using the films in this way in this study, there is less interest in explaining their influences, as Neaverson (2000), MacDonald (1994) and others have attempted to do, but, rather, viewing them as texts which contain evidence of change and progression. They move from suited and booted loveable mop-tops in the midst of Beatlemania, through the exotic upwardly mobile travelogue of *Help!* (1965),

featuring swinging London (via swinging India, swinging Austria and the swinging Bahamas), *Magical Mystery Tour's* (1967) psychedelic kaftan and beads trip through England's counterculture, to the hairy, bearded, heading-for-the-'70s, up-on-the-roof-one-more-time-ness of *Let it Be* (1970). They are texts which allow a retrospective audience to drop in on this extraordinary cultural phenomenon, explore what was going on at those particular moments in terms of representations of masculinities, explore the idea of the Beatles as a representation of resistant masculinities, and explore the idea of "The Beatles" as a text through which to reflect on, and analyse how these changes can be traced across the 1960s. This approach is in line with McKee's (2003 : 75) assertion that:

“... you need to pick out the bits of the text that, based on your knowledge of the culture within which it is articulated, appear to you to be relevant to the question you are studying.”

These bits of overall Beatle text have, therefore, been chosen as a way of sampling representations of the Beatles at particular points in the 1960s. As discussed in Chapter 3, the films provided a global audience with the opportunity to look-at the Beatles and therefore, as a sample of representations, it can be argued that they are fit for purpose.

Textual Analysis

Post-structural analysis of texts, according to Ellis (2000), is a way of understanding the ways in which representation can operate within texts, can help an understanding of the assumptions behind a text, and uncover a sense of how texts create a reality, all of which the researcher must then interpret in relation to the research questions being asked. McKee (2003:1) states;

“we interpret texts in order to try and obtain a sense of the ways in which, in particular cultures at particular times, people make sense of the world around them”

McKee (2003) conceptualises texts in a similar way to the conceptualising of documents by May (1997) i.e. as a source of knowledge about particular people, places, times etc. the material “traces” (McKee 2003 : 15) or forensic evidence from a time or place when those carrying out the research were not present. He also sees texts as having an active role within social change:

“in particular texts can help change sense making practices in a culture but such change will always be relatively slow.”

(McKee, 2003 : 50)

The analytical framework of the texts, which comprise a case study in this thesis (The Beatles’ films) is set within this context, with the analysis attempting to trace a change in representation of masculinities across the 1960s, but also examining the role of these texts in the wider process of social change. To achieve this, a framework was developed based on the ideas of van Dijk (1985; 1993) and Fairclough (1995) [within the context of ideas about representation and discourse discussed in Chapter 4] using textual analysis within discourse analysis. This decision was taken after initial documentary material (The Beatles *Anthology* TV series [The Beatles, 2003]) had been viewed. In examining a number of approaches to documentary research techniques, and to discourse and textual analysis in particular, the frameworks suggested in the work of van Dijk (1993), Fairclough (1995) and McKee (2003) “made sense” within the context of the aims of the study and the type of material on offer.

van Dijk (1993 : 50) asserts the “role of discourse in the reproduction and challenge of dominance” and argues that, in using critical discourse analysis the researcher does not take up a neutral position but is aware of the role of power in relation to discourse. This, obviously, incorporates ideas from Foucault’s (1972) conceptualisation of discourse and, within the context of this study, acts to examine the ways in which hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) and masculinism (Brittan, 1989) operate through discursive formations and also acts to identify discourses which are resistant to the dominant. This, therefore, supports McKee’s (2003) assertion that some texts have an important role to play in social change.

van Dijk's (1993) framework for analysis includes both text and talk and examines issues of production and reception of texts. This includes examining how discourse within texts operate at a macro or institutional level and a micro or personal level, importantly incorporating the notion of how power operates within texts. Fairclough (1995) builds on this, arguing that using textual analysis within discourse analysis is a key method of social research which requires inter-disciplinarity and a relaxation of academic hierarchical boundaries, combining elements of social science and techniques from cultural studies. He describes textual analysis as: "the 'texture' of the text as opposed to commentary upon its content" (Fairclough, 1995:184), an idea which draws on Foucault's idea of examining "the play of its internal relationships" (Foucault, 1984 : 103).

Thus a combination of linguistic and inter-textual analysis can reveal how available genres and discourses are drawn upon. Critical discourse analysis involves a close analysis of the text, examining both content and form and may include examination of language, genre, discourse and narrative. Fairclough (1995 : 210) summarises this position by saying:

"discourse analysis with a commitment to social and cultural aspects of discursive practice would benefit from a stronger orientation to textual analysis."

Similarly, van Dijk (1993) puts forward a framework for analysis which includes the setting of the text, genre, communication and social meaning within the text, positions and roles of the actors/participants, speech acts, topics (macro semantics) and meaning (who is speaking, and, vitally, what is their position of power in relation to others?) Within this framework of analysis the question "what is happening?" is combined with the "why?" and "how?" questions which examine the text for power relations and resultant social meanings.

Willig's (1999) ideas on applied discourse analysis as social critique were also used in the developing of this framework. Willig (1999) argues that themes within a text emerge through discourse but are also bounded by discourse. Willig (1999) takes the

view that the producers of visual texts (and respondents within interviews) draw on particular discourses (in this case, discourses of masculinity) which allows for the notion of agency. This links to Foucault's later position on discourse, discussed in Chapter 4 (Whitehead, 2002).

McKee (2003) refers to this process as post-structuralist textual analysis, acknowledging the changing debates about the rational model which have their roots in the 1960s, and supports the idea of using semiotic analysis to uncover how discourse is produced, but also argues that other components can legitimately be brought into the framework, namely, other texts which help to contextualise the study. These might be other texts in a series (in this case, the series of the Beatles' live action films), the genre of the text (do the films link to other films in a similar genre?), intertexts about the text (critical writing on the films both in the past and the present) and the wider public context in which the text circulated (accounts of the period in which the films were made). This is what Kristeva (1986 : 39) refers to as "the insertion of history/society into a text and of this text into history". This approach, particularly using intertexts about the film texts, was used extensively in analysing the films within the framework suggested by van Dijk (1993) and Fairclough (1995).

The process of analysing the texts grew out of the original development of the study (outlined in Chapter 1) which began with a viewing of the Beatles' *Anthology* (2003) documentary, a series first shown on TV in 1996, twenty years in the making, and an "official" version of the story of the Beatles. This provided much intertextual material about the Beatles (along with other visual Beatle texts such as the Maysles' *Brothers* documentary on the first U.S. visit [2004], the Shea Stadium concert [1965] and the "extras" on the DVD versions of *A Hard Day's Night* [2003] and *Help!* [2007]). All of these visual texts were watched and notes made, and this material has fed into Chapter 1 and into this chapter. However, for the reasons outlined at the beginning of this chapter, the Beatles' four live action films were chosen as a suitable sample and, having been viewed once as part of the *Anthology* Days (discussed in Chapter 1), they were then approached using the framework previously outlined, taking a critical stance and seeking to uncover discourses of masculinity at work in the films, actively seeking out competing discourses and examining power relationships at work and the ways in which these might be reflective of academic and

cultural developments within the period defined as “the sixties”. A combination of linguistic and intertextual analysis with regard for content and form (Fairclough, 1995) was used incorporating a number of headings suggested by van Dijk (1993), these being; setting, genre, communication and social meaning within the text, positions and roles of the actors/ participants, speech acts, topics and meaning (power relations). All of these things constitute what Fairclough (1995 : 184) calls “the texture of the text” with an approach to analysis which needs to be somewhat organic, in that the process is not the same as coding interviews from a written transcript, but rather retrospectively “coding” aspects of the text (as listed by van Dijk [1993]) in order to identify discourses at work within the text. In the context of this study the purpose of the analysis was to answer research questions (i) and (ii) and this involved identifying representations of masculinities at work in the films, looking for change (and/or consistency) across the period covered by the films, what Whitehead (2002 : 99) refers to as “change, resistance and transformation”, and ascertaining whether discourses could be identified as dominant and/or resistant, providing a rationale for the conclusions drawn.

Questions were asked as part of the supervision process about whether or not the resultant discussion could have been produced without original analysis of the films. Fairclough’s (1995) conceptualisation of critical discourse analysis as an organic rather than a rigid process provides the opportunity for the intertwining of primary data with the analysis of other authors, McKee’s (2003) intertexts about the texts, and, it can be argued, that the resultant discussion, which follows this section, is all the richer for it. Sometimes, what seemed like original ideas resultant from viewing the text (the queer codes at work in *A Hard Day’s Night* [1964], or the quasi-religious nature of the final section of *Let it Be* [1970], for example), turned out to have been recognised elsewhere. In addition, links were made between related discussion/ideas (Mäkelä’s [2004] work on the meaning of John Lennon’s “granny glasses” and psychedelic Rolls-Royce, for example) and a particular film text. Other ideas, drawn from an analysis of the data collected by viewing the texts (The Beatles as metrosexual-before-it-had-been-invented in *Help!* [1965] or the inside/outside binaries at work in the films, and the identification of similarly binaries at work in the early ‘60s’ British new wave films, for example) turned out to be brilliantly original!

Interviews

The rationale for a multi-method study is presented in an earlier section of this chapter and the third research question, also detailed earlier, has a specific emphasis on how men view the 1960s as a period of social change and the role of representation of masculinities within that process, as well as opening up the potential for men, in an interview situation, to draw on memories of the period which may add to the sum total of knowledge generated by the study. Passerini (1979) raises a number of issues around the interview as a site for individual testimony, predominantly, the role of the relationship between the past and the present, the role of the media in re-presenting history and assumptions about “facts” which emerge from interview data which could be subject to memory, ideology, subconscious desire or complex cultural readings. However, within the context of this study, the approach taken recognized the potential for generating interesting ideas within the complexity of this process. The approach taken was inspired by McKee’s (2003 : 145) assertion that the role of the researcher is to “work hard, have fun, ask interesting questions” or, O’Connell- Davidson and Layder’s (1995 : 121) statement that the qualitative researcher can “see the interview as an opportunity to delve and explore precisely those subjective meanings that positivists seek to strip away”. The interview, then, was viewed as a site where different versions of “reality” may well emerge.

In carrying out what Hammersley and Atkinson (1983 : 112-113) call “reflexive interviewing” the aim of the interviewer was to engage with the participant as a reasoning human being rather than a subject to be investigated. Thus, interaction and flexibility is needed in order to elicit full and meaningful responses. Silverman (1985) sees this state of affairs as a reason to think of interviews as a topic of social research rather than a resource for social research with the “internal reality constructed by both parties” (Silverman, 1985 : 165) as part of the process and findings. This study aimed to find out what participants related of their own experiences in the period under study and what their opinions were on some of the social changes that happened in that period. This was not a process in which the interviewer attempted to access data stored somewhere within the participant but rather a process which may have involved a participant delving back into their memories for stories, anecdotes, experiences and

opinions which were relevant to the question being asked. The role of the interviewer, therefore, was to facilitate this process. Haug (1992) talks about interviewing in the context of memory work, seeing it as a process which attempts to inspect everyday lives, uncovering not only stories but also social constructions, mechanisms by which people make sense of the past, interconnections between the past and present and attempts to assess the significance of actions and feelings. She also refers to “coloured subjectivity” (Haug 1992 : 20) in which participants may falsify, reinterpret and forget. She claims:

“...what we can investigate is not ‘how it really was’ but how individuals construct their identities, change themselves, reinterpret themselves”

(Haug, 1992 : 20)

This is particularly pertinent to this thesis. The dialogue between interviewer and interviewee, accepting their position as subjective beings, was especially important in ensuring that the interviewer understood what was being disclosed (O’Connell-Davidson and Layder, 1995) while at the same time maintaining an awareness that what may have been emergent was Haug’s (1992 : 20) “coloured subjectivity”.

Haug (1992) also provides a sound rationale for this type of interviewing, arguing that the experiences of the individual are a productive source of information for the formation of theory. It is a process, through which one can understand the reproductive processes of society and she advances the notion of a cultural politics which includes the hopes, desires, plans and experiences of individuals. In asking men about social change for men, using semi-structured interviews, this study has drawn on Haug’s (1992) ideas. Her claim that interviews of this sort can help discover how people fit themselves into existing studies, construct themselves, identify possibilities of change and can often identify oppressive forces, is something that was borne in mind throughout the interview stage of the research process.

Harré (1998 : 167) has noted that responses in interviews are “the presentation not only of reasons but of oneself”, while Scott and Lyman (1968) have identified the interview setting as a site where people may negotiate social identities and there are,

obviously, studies where this is the explicit aim of the research (Willis, 1977; Spicer, 1999).

The fact that this process seemed to occur within the interviews, while, perhaps, predictable, came as something of a “bonus” and prompted additional thought and discussion about the material generated. The original intention of the interview stage was to ask a sample of men about their experiences of social change and the 1960s, search for a recognition of the role of the Beatles and/or other public men (Hearn, 1992), examine the role of representation in that process and elicit opinion around these issues so the initial focus was on the responses to the questions in these areas. However, the emergence of discourses of masculinity at work within the interview resonated with the results of the analysis of the film texts and the way in which a critical discourse analysis of those texts had uncovered discourses of masculinity at work. In many ways, then, the interviews, partly because of the analytical approach chosen, yielded some unexpected data, absolutely in line with Robson’s (2002:273) “rich and highly illuminating material”, and Miller and Glasner’s (1997) discussion on the inside and outside in the interview process.

In *Unmasking masculinity: A Critical Autobiography*, David Jackson (1990) explores the ways in which men’s stories are rehearsed and often reveal a common sense acceptance of the social world. These stories often comprise of a series of anecdotes, some serious and some trivial, and are not always a “real” attempt to come to terms with the contradictions of their lives as men. Jackson (1990 : 3) states that in order to explore the idea of masculinity men need to:

“...come out of hiding and start excavating in public, the sedimented layers of their own particular and diverse life histories.”

This is in line with the ideas advanced by Haug (1992) and Hearn (2003).

Haug’s approach also has some similarities with that of the work of the Popular Memory Group (1982). For example, the assertion that memory work can access “the more privatised sense of the past which is operated within a lived culture.” (Popular Memory Group, 1982 : 209) and that studying particular periods in history can help us

understand the ways in which the struggles of particular groupings in society play out have also been influential on this study.

The group's ideas on the past-present relationship have been taken into account and are, perhaps, the key to understanding the complex processes that are inherent in this sort of work. There is contradiction in using individual testimony as witness for social change when that individual is also a product of social change and has been subject to the public representation of the past (Popular Memory Group, 1982). Thus, in interviewing subjects about the 1960s one must be aware of the re-presentation of this decade to subjects in the period since 1970, particularly via the mass media, given the discussion in Chapter 4. However, the use of the semi-structured interview provided a forum in which to explore some of these ideas, and for the researcher to take a critical approach to the material.

Semi-Structured Interviews

According to May, (1997) the semi-structured interview allows more flexibility than a standard structured interview where the interviewer asks a series of questions on a schedule, attempting to provide a more structured/standardised interview situation, permitting comparability and attempting to reduce bias. In a semi-structured interview the interviewee is free to probe and follow up responses, perhaps using a mix of broad questions combined with a series of "triggers" as prompts through which to probe for more in-depth responses. Clarification, elaboration and further detail can be sought.

May (1997:124) argues that the semi-structured interview:

“provides qualitative depth by allowing interviewees to talk about the subject within their own frames of reference...drawing upon ideas and meanings with which they are familiar.”

This can provide a greater understanding of the subject's point of view and the meanings that they attribute to events and relationships. The exchange between interviewer and respondent can be an important part of the interview. Pahl (1995)

talks about restructured rather than semi-structured interviews in that the rationale and purpose of the interviews may change, either during the interview or transcription/analysis period and, in some senses, this is what happened within the context of this study.

Some of the disadvantages of this process of semi-structured interviewing, are that the lack of standardization in the process can raise questions about reliability, comparability and bias (Robson, 2002), but these criticisms are framed by the debates discussed earlier in the chapter, particularly the discussion on the rationale for using interviewing as a way of generating qualitative data on the 1960s, representations of men and masculinities within the respondent's own frame of reference (May, 1997) and as a way of excavating private memory (Popular Memory Group, 1982) to complement data on public representation of men and masculinities. These ideas also draw on the work of early post-positivist researchers (Schütz, 1962, Kuhn, 1970) which challenged the "male scientism" (May, 1997 : 22) of positivist approaches, which focuses on comparability and generalisability, and this was not seen as a key component of this study.

May (1997) argues that the establishing of rapport is key in the interview process in order to achieve the aims of the research and to elicit a free-flow of information. Part of the establishing of this rapport is a clarity of information and purpose as outlined in the previous section. A professional approach which includes written documentation and agreement can be part of the process (May, 1997; Robson, 2002) [see Appendix 7]. Spradley (1979) sees the establishing of rapport as a four stage process. The first stage is overcoming apprehension that both interviewer and interviewee may have of the process and may be addressed by initial descriptive questions. In the case of this study initial questions about age and current and former occupations were used to begin the interview. This type of question can then lead into what Spradley (1979) sees as an exploration followed, in a successful interview, by co-operation, where expectations of the interview may be established on either side. Spradley (1979) sees participation as the final stage in which the informant recognises and accepts their role in the process, a realization that what they have to say is of interest to (and may be new to) the interviewer. While Spradley's (1979) framework is based on an ethnographic approach which includes more than one interview with each respondent,

it is a useful tool when undertaking interviews. In a one-off interview the interviewer strives to reach stage four and the successful establishment of rapport is key to this. In this particular study it was recognised that, given the aim of the interview to generate information on personal experiences and opinions and the use of a range of participants to gather this data, each interview may be quite a different type of experience and that not all may achieve “participation” status.

In this study three broad questions were designed (see Appendix 8), relating to the overall research questions and trigger material (film clips) drawn from the documentary stage of the research were used, partly as aide-memoirs in relation to the 1960s but also to create a relationship between the documentary and interview stages. Potential trigger questions (see Appendix 8) were also devised but not used in all cases.

Many of these issues apply both to individual and group interviews. Group interviews have the added advantage of allowing the interviewer to observe group norms and dynamics when addressing particular issues (May, 1997). Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) claim that the typical focus group interview involves 8- 12 participants in a session lasting one and a half to two hours. Circumstances in which smaller or larger groups are used can also be found (May, 1997). Fontana and Frey (1994), for example, give details of five different types of focus group interviews. May (1997) states that group and individual interviews can produce different perspectives on issues and that individual opinions and actions may change or be modified in a focus group setting as in any other interactive situation.

Robson (2002) outlines a number of methodological issues arising from focus groups. The skills of the interviewer (or moderator) and manner of recording the data may be highly influential in the process. Robson (2002) also argues that the subjects under study may produce a poor consensus in attitudes, that data will be related to collective rather than individual phenomena and that generalisability is problematic. This has not stopped them being a key tool in the formation of British Government Policy since 1997 (Johnson, 1996), but Robson (2002) argues that this is because their use in marketing, rather than in social research, has a practical focus. O’Connell-Davidson and Layder (1995) point out that the the interview is a social encounter and argue that

how the respondent answers questions will depend to some degree upon what the respondent and interviewer think and feel about each other.

For positivist researchers this illustrates the problems inherent in using the interview as a way of accessing “hard facts”, in a quest for “the truth” that they are convinced is out there. For post-positivist researchers, schooled in a tradition of qualitative methods, it is just one more consideration to be taken into account as they attempt to generate data from particular individuals or groups. Having considered these ideas, the decision was, therefore, taken to use semi-structured interviews rather than focus groups with particular reference to the Popular Memory Group’s (1982) notion of private memory, seeing the individual interview as an encounter when the specific memories of individuals would emerge and that there then would offer a number of individual perspectives on the research questions. The opportunity to carry out an interview with two friends and one of their nephews did arise, the results of which are included in Chapter 7. However, this could be described as a group interview rather than a focus group. The interaction between participants which is typical of focus groups was at work in the interview, but the small number of participants meant that issues around poor consensus (Robson, 2002) were not problematic. Rather, they provided a stimulus for further discussion.

To summarise, then, May (1997) sees interviews as a way of gaining insight into experiences, opinions, aspirations, attitudes and feelings, and also argues that it is useful when the interviewer is interested in the meaning of a particular phenomenon to participants, where individual historical accounts of the development of a particular phenomenon are needed, and where qualitative data is needed to clarify and illustrate meaning of other findings. All of these criteria were applicable within the context of this research study.

Robson (2002) describes the interview as a flexible and adaptable technique, a window on the world of individuals, and a direct way of finding out what individuals think about a particular phenomenon. One great advantage is the potential for follow-up and exploration that is not offered by more closed techniques such as postal questionnaires. Non-verbal clues can be useful in clarifying even changing meaning and overall and, according to Robson (2002 : 273) “it has the potential of providing

rich and highly illuminating material.” There is a strong case to be made that the material discussed in chapter 7, the data generated from the interview process, fulfils that potential and, as such, is a vindication of this choice of method.

The interviews were all taped (using old-school cassette technology). While tape recording can affect interaction (May, 1997) and inhibit conversation it was decided that the benefits outweighed this potential drawback. These include the ability of the interviewer to focus on the interview, including non-verbal gestures, rather than writing notes and therefore to engage in building a rapport within the interview as suggested by Spradley (1979) and May (1997). This also leads to the ability to produce a verbatim transcript to work from in terms of analysis and the ability of the researcher, particularly if they carry out their own transcription (as in the case of this study), to revisit the data and re-engage with it both in audio and written form.

Method: The Interview Stage

This section provides an outline of the methods used in the interview stage of the study, situated within the rationale for using semi-structured interviews previously outlined, within a rationale for a multi-method approach to the research questions. The broader framework suggested by the Popular Memory Group (1982), using public representations and private memories to excavate data in relation to particular historical periods, has also been outlined elsewhere. A relationship between the documentary/interview and public/ private aspects of the study was established via the use of clips from the material used in the documentary stage within the interviews. The use of visual texts as trigger material helped to structure the interview and was particularly useful in relation to the third research question: “Do men, in retrospect, recognise the 60s as a period of social change for men and can they identify the role of representation within the process of social change?” The discussion (see Chapter 6) on resistant discourses of masculinity at work in The Beatles’ films and the juxtaposition of The Beatles with men who represent hegemonic masculinity, makes apparent the fact that the visual material provided examples of representations at work in the period, as well as acting as a trigger for memory. The first two research questions relate to changing representations of masculinity in the 1960s and the

recognition of dominant and resistant discourses. Both of these questions also formed part of the interview process. An interview guide can be found in Appendix 8. The visual material also provided a way for the men being interviewed to locate themselves on a potential identity continuum and something which emerged from the data was a set of ideas about the ways that men look at other men, see them as heroes or role models and draw on discourses of masculinity at work within wider society to construct their own identity. One “bonus” that came as a result of the interview process was that, in analysing the data, it became apparent that men were, indeed, using the interview situation as a way of establishing their own masculine identity as suggested as Haug (1992) and others and it is the intention to further explore this aspect of the findings beyond the boundaries of this thesis.

Sampling

“... a good sample is a miniature version of the population – just like it, only smaller”

(Fink, 1995 : 1)

Fink’s (1995) definition provides a widely recognised conceptualisation of the use of sampling in research and resonates with the debates about generalizability outlined earlier, perhaps an over simplification of what researchers are looking for when sampling, and an approach more suited to quantitative rather than qualitative research (May, 1997).

Within the context of this study, the purpose of the interview stage was to look for personal accounts and personal opinions in relation to the research questions. Therefore, based on ideas generated by the Duquesne School (Langdrige, 2004) a wide ranging sample (with reference to key social characteristics such as age, social class, ethnicity and sexuality) was sought. The decision was made to ask men about their own experiences of both the historical period under study and the representation of men and masculinities. However, having completed the interviews it was apparent that there was potential to generate interesting material by questioning women on the

same topic, a potential project for the future. Along with gender, age was seen as a key characteristic in obtaining different perspectives on the 1960s, ranging from those who had experienced the period as children, those who had experienced it as teens or adults, to those who were not born in the period under study. The rationale for the use of an age range from 18 to 74 was to gain a range of perspectives and experiences. The inclusion of one non-white respondent and one “out” gay man was based on the same rationale. The sample was therefore purposive, stratified and opportunistic (Robson, 2002) with some of the respondents previously known to the interviewer and some not.

Respondents were also chosen on the basis of social class (based on occupation) and comprised a retired professional footballer, a writer/comedian, a retired academic/mental health nurse, a sales director, a journalist/teacher, an accountant, a retired GPO worker/local councillor, a nurse/NHS manager, a BTEC student, a solicitor and an post-graduate student/freelance photographer. A list of respondents can be found in Appendix 10 and anonymised pen portraits, giving more details on each respondent, and a “flavour” of each individual interview, can be found in Chapter 7.

Procedure

Participants were initially invited to interview via a telephone conversation and this was then followed up with written documentation (see Appendix 6) and a date for interview was set. The participants were offered the opportunity for interview in their own home, at the home of the interviewer or at the interviewer’s place of work (Manchester Metropolitan University). A mix of venues were used and where the interview took place at the respondent’s home, the interviewer took reasonable safety precautions, leaving details of time and venue and expected time of arrival back from interview.

The issues outlined in the written documentation around consent and anonymity were discussed prior to commencement of interview and participants were also asked if they objected to the taping of the interview. There were no objections and no untoward incidents took place within any of the interviews.

Interview Analysis

As part of the multi-method approach to the study much consideration was given to the framework of analysis for the interviews. Having decided on a framework of critical discourse analysis suggested by van Dijk (1993) and Fairclough (1995) but rooted in the ideas of Foucault (1972; 1981) and Hall (1997) [detailed in Chapter 4] for the analysis of the film texts it was decided to apply a similar framework to the interview analysis, rather than, for example, use a thematic analysis framework (May 1997; Robson 2002). Given the debate outlined earlier in the chapter about mixed versus multi-methods and consistency (or not) of world view within a study using more than one method (Tashakorri and Teddlie, 2003), it was decided that the relationship between the film texts and the interviews was such (i.e. both methods were applied to seek answers to the same research questions) that consistency of methodological approach would be beneficial. Fairclough's (1995 : 184) notion of 'the texture of the text as opposed to commentary upon its content' was again central to the process of analysis in that the original aim of the interview was to draw on the memory and opinions of the participants in relation to representations of masculinities, the ways in which discourses operate and the relationship between these discourses and social change.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher, a process which May (1997) and Langdridge (2004) have suggested assists in the process of analysis and interpretation through familiarity with and a revisiting of the data. A coding approach was then taken. Strauss (1988 : 20-1) defines coding as:

“... the general term for conceptualizing data; thus, coding includes raising questions and giving provisional answers about categories and their relations.”

May (1997) and Seale (1999) argue that the researcher should be self aware and self critical when engaging in this process and be willing to be challenged by the data which emerges, even by being willing to modify the aims of the research.

The choice of a tool for analysis of interview data was dependent on the conclusions reached after the debate around the ontological and epistemological framework of a study previously outlined. Authors such as Benney and Hughes (1984) suggest that interview analysis should focus on equality and comparability, an approach once again rooted in the idea of generalisability and a structured, neat approach to data analysis. However, May (1997 : 137) argues that “the convenience of analysis should not be a reason for choosing one (method) rather than another.”

What much of this thesis has been about is complexities; the complexities within the debates around men and masculinities, the role of the representation in the media and its impact on culture and identity, the 1960s as a contested decade in relation to social change and the complexities and changing nature of “The Beatles” as a 1960s’ text through which to study masculinities. The data generated at the interview stage, therefore, is another contribution to this melting pot of ideas and the overall aim of the analysis was to extract interesting ideas and responses to the overall research questions. However, in order to do that some way of making sense of the data was needed.

Coding, according to May (1997), is a way of conceptualizing data, raising questions and providing answers about categories and the relationship of those categories, based on a framework of beliefs and subject to interpretation by the researcher.

Seale (1999 : 104) sees the researcher as needing:

“a vigorous spirit or self-awareness and self criticism as well as an openness to new ideas that is the hallmark of research studies of good quality.”

Bearing these thoughts in mind, a coding framework was designed for a set of interviews based on a semi-structured format which allowed the interviewee space to talk around the topic areas. The result of this was that the interviews did not all follow the same format but were mainly structured around the three key questions on the schedule.

All 11 taped interviews were transcribed manually, a process which enabled the researcher to re-visit the data and regarded by many as an important part of the analytical process (May, 1997; Robson, 2002; Langdridge, 2004). [See Appendix 9 for an example of an interview transcript.]

In approaching the data, the framework used for the analysis of the film texts acted as a reference point, particularly the desire to approach the “texture” (Fairclough, 1995; 184) of the data, going beyond linguistic analysis and contextualising the interview data within the view and position of the respondent. As May (1997 : 100) states:

“What is also required is an exploration of the position of the respondent in terms, for example, of their class, race, gender, occupational position and so on.”

In applying a critical discourse analysis framework to the interview texts, what became apparent was that as well as identifying responses to the questions about men, masculinities, the Beatles and the 1960s, the respondents were not only able to recognise and draw on discourses of masculinities in relation to the subject matter, they were also engaged in constructions of their own masculine identity within the interviews. Harré (1998) talks about this as the presentation of self in interviews, in addition to providing reasoned responses to questions, and sees this as “an index of moral position in a world of discursive values” (Harré, 1998 : 135). Similarly May (1997 : 141) states:

“The analysis of interviews focuses not only on motivations and reason but also on social identities and how these are constructed.”

Silverman (1985 : 165) also sees the interview as a site where construction of “internal reality” takes place. These are all arguments for an examination of the “‘texture’ of the text” (Fairclough, 1995 : 184) but in order to examine what emerges (examples are given in Chapter 7) there is still the tricky business of organising the text and breaking it down to explore what is being

said as well as further examination of what is actually happening in the interview.

Therefore, a three part coding system, suggested by Langdrige (2004) was used. Langdrige (2004) argues for a 1st, 2nd and 3rd order coding system. The first stage, which aims to produce familiarity with the data and may (as in this study) involve the researcher transcribing their own data and coding it by statement. This is a descriptive stage, identifying statements which appear to be relevant to the overall aims of the research. The second stage is interpretive. Here the researcher groups statements in relationships, possibly around topic or theme. The third stage links these groupings to theory and produces a potential framework for writing up the findings. The coding of the interviews for this study identified statements about men, masculinities, the 1960s and the Beatles as stage 1. These were then grouped in Stage 2. Stage 3 then attempted to link these statements to a theoretical framework in that the grouped statements were conceptualised as discursive formations, dividing them into those which were responses to the research questions and those which appeared to be about the construction of some form of masculine identity within the interview. Similar to the analysis of the film texts, this included a consideration of subject positions and power.

In carrying at this type of coding process and then drawing conclusions from the analysis, Parker (1992) argues that the researcher should take the essence of the steps but then draw on their own cultural knowledge to interpret the data. This is similar to May's (1997) approach, while Langdrige (2004) encourages free association as part of the reflective process and engagement with the data.

Coding, then, is a way of organising and making sense of data but, following the ideas of the authors discussed here, analysis and interpretation took place with regard for the interview as a text in itself, a multi-layered artefact, not only the product of memory but of the social context in which memories and opinions were formed and the social context of the interview itself.

Ethical Framework

May (1997:59) states that: “Ethics is concerned with the attempt to formulate codes of principles of moral behaviour.” In terms of applying ethical principles in a research context, this is about notions of expediency and efficiency versus standards of right and wrong. The complexities of ethical issues in research, always dependent on the values of researcher and subject to negotiation between researcher and participant, have been distilled by authors such as Warwick and Pettigrew (1983) into sets of guidelines and considerations. They outline four main ethical concerns in social research; whether there is harm to the participants, the notion of informed consent, invasion of privacy and the avoidance of deception. Such guidelines draw of the deontological approaches of Immanuel Kant (May, 1997), which include not only a consideration of the general research process but also the consequences of that process, for example, following publication of the findings. This deontological approach has been somewhat modified in recent years and this research thesis was guided by the British Sociological Association Code of Ethics (2002). However, as May (1997:61) points out, its statement that “guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity given to research participants must be honoured, unless there are clear and overriding reasons to do otherwise” reflects the dilemmas that all researchers still have to grapple with even within an adherence to such codes. This research was also subject to scrutiny and approval by the University of Huddersfield School Research Ethics Panel in Human and Health sciences with approval for the proposed methods and ethical considerations advanced (see Appendix 6). Copies of invitation to interview, consent form and accompanying information can be found in Appendix 7. This documentation provides evidence that that the participants were fully informed about the nature of the research (including the possibility of publication) and the fact that all attempts would be made to ensure anonymity as far as reasonably possible.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the key methodological issues considered as part of this study and has provided a rationale for a multi-method approach in addressing the research questions. This chapter has attempted to provide an insight into some of the

debates around methodological choices made, has provided a rationale for those choices, and has discussed the methods used and the method of analysis undertaken in both stages of the study.

Part Two

Analysis and Findings

Chapter 6: The Beatles' Films

Introduction

The choice of the Beatles' live action films as a sample within "The Beatles" as a text has been discussed in Chapter 5, as has the rationale for using this piece of documentary research as a way in which to examine representations of and reflections on men and masculinities. Of the Beatles' film texts Neaverson (2000 : 152) states:

“... their films were vital in communicating and showcasing the group's ever-changing array of images, attitudes, ideas and musical styles.”

Taking Elvis as a comparison here, his films are generally viewed as poor, formulaic, mass produced product (although critics often distinguish between pre-and post-1960 films) [Goldman, 1982] and representative of nothing, specifically, apart from the period of his career in which he concentrated solely on film appearances. It is worth noting, however, that Elvis' films generally see him playing a variation on a traditionally masculine theme; race-car driver, helicopter pilot, boxer, etc. The Beatles' films, are viewed critically more favourably (Carr, 1996; Neaverson, 1997), provide an interesting representation of masculinities and, as Neaverson (2000) argues, they are important in examining changing musical and visual styles at different points in the decade.

A Hard Day's Night (1964) shows the Beatles at work and play, the four personalities in the gang. This is consolidated in the "fiction fantasy" (Neaverson, 2000 : 152) of *Help!* (1965). *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) "crystallised their newly constructed roles as psychedelic figureheads of the emerging counter culture" (Neaverson, 2000 : 152) and also set a precedent for subsequent psychedelic jaunts such as the Monkees' *Head* (1968), or Ken Russell's *Tommy* (1975). MacDonald (1994) also sees it as a prototype of the countercultural Road Movie, drawing on Kerouac's beat saga *On the Road* (1955) and the real life adventures of author Ken Kesey and his merry pranksters' road trip through the US in 1965 (Wolfe, 1969) and an influence on films such as *Easy Rider* (1969). *Let it Be* (1970), argues Neaverson (2002 : 152), "documented a group of taciturn philopshers who, having turned the full musical

circle, were now in an advanced state of personal and, to some extent, professional decay.”

These findings of the documentary stage of the research were written up in the form of a discussion of each film and follow in chronological order. The decision to do so, rather than write up the discussion under headings which related to all four films, came about as a result of engaging and re-engaging with both the visual texts and the written material which resulted from this analysis. The original title for the thesis contained the phrase “changing representations of masculinity”, encompassing the idea that, by looking at texts from different parts of the 1960s, some change would be apparent. What emerged from the analysis stage was certainly something about differences in terms of representations of masculinity within each film text. There was also a sense that, while there were similarities in the way that discourses of masculinity operated within each film, there were also differences and that the different “texture” of each film text was significant. It has been suggested elsewhere (MacDonald, 1994; Neaverson, 1997) that each film stands as a representation of the different drugs one or more of The Beatles were partaking of at the time they were made. Thus *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) is a speed-crazed journey through their early ‘60s’ workaholic existence, *Help!* (1965) is a languid grass-tinged travelogue, *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) is an acid influenced journey back to childhood pleasures and *Let it Be* (1970) is a dark heroin stained finale to “the sixties”.

For these reasons, the findings from the analysis of and the discussion of each film text follow as separate entities in chronological order.

The Beatles’ Films: A Hard Day’s Night.

The Film : Circumstances of Production

A Hard Day’s Night (1964) is the first of a four film deal that manager, Brian Epstein negotiated for the Beatles with United Artists. Their initial interest in the film was mainly to cash in on a soundtrack album as Beatlemania gripped the UK and USA in early 1964. Because of the healthy state of the British film industry in the early

1960s¹ many US companies, including United Artists, had set up production units in the UK. Producer Walter Shenson had never heard of the Beatles but was won over by their natural charm and charisma on meeting them (Murray, 2002) and proposed a semi-documentary film based on a day in the lives of the Beatles, with the group playing themselves (or rather, a representation of themselves).

Famously described on its release as “the Citizen Kane of Jukebox movies” by Andrew Sarris in his review in *The Village Voice* in 1964 (Sarris, 2006: 56), the film has, in retrospect, been viewed as something beyond the usual attempts to exploit the latest pop sensation via celluloid. Agajanian (2000: 91) describes it as “nothing like any previous musical, British or American” in her essay on the film in *Windows on the Sixties* (Aldgate et al., 2000), a collection which uses a number of texts to examine some of the social and cultural changes of the 1960s. Agajanian (2000) argues that *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) should be viewed as a key 1960s' cultural text for a number of reasons, including the circumstances of its production, which reflected a change in the creative process within the music industry at this time², the combination of the musical/documentary genres within the film, the content which raises issues about celebrity, class, age and gender, and its economic and cultural significance in US/UK relations.

A Day In The Life

Shenson hired a fellow American, Richard Lester, to direct the film. Lester won the Beatles' approval because of his previous work with the Goons³. Welsh playwright Alun Owen was engaged to write a script and he spent time with the group on a trip to Paris as research and to try and write some of the Beatles' already famous wit and

¹ British films including the new wave “kitchen sink” dramas such as *Room at the Top* (1958) and *A Taste of Honey* (1961), the Bond cycle of movies which began in 1962 and the output of Hammer Studios in the late 1950s/early 1960s, had been commercially and critically successful. This attracted investment from US studios (Murray, 2002).

² Inglis, I. (ed) [2000a] *The Beatles Popular Music and Society* contains a section on the Beatles as men of ideas. (See Chapter 1)

³ The Goons, Spike Milligan, Peter Sellers, Harry Secome and Michael Bentine were a popular surreal comedy grouping with a radio show in the late 1950s. The Beatles' producer George Martin had worked with them on a number of recordings and Richard Lester had worked with them on *The Running, Jumping and Standing Still* (1959) film. All went on to success in a variety of fields. Sellers became friendly with the Beatles later in the 1960s and co-starred with Ringo Starr in the film *The Magic Christian* (1969).

personality into the script⁴. The film's cinema verité credentials are boosted by the fact that shooting (on a budget of £200,000) began in March 1964 and the film premiered in London on 6th July with Royalty in attendance amidst further scenes of Beatlemania akin to those evident within the film. The film's original title was, in fact, Beatlemania, until one of Ringo Starr's malapropisms was used instead. Walker (1991: 489) in *Halliwel's Film Guide* describes the film as "a sweet breath of fresh air" and sees it as a precursor to the swinging sixties London spy thrillers and comedies. The film itself is a representation of the Beatles on tour at the height of Beatlemania. A sanitized version of The Beatles as themselves – they are called John, Paul, George and Ringo but never referred to as the Beatles, although the name appears on the drum kit, in neon lights during their final theatre performance, and on the helicopter that whisks them away at the end of the film.

New Musical Express journalist Charles Shaar Murray described it as a:

"mock-doc feel with outbreaks of surrealism ... The plot is a real back of the envelope job. The Beatles arrive in London by train with their road managers Norm (Norman Rossington) and Shake (John Junkin) as well as Paul's (fictional) granddad Johnny McCartney (Wilfred Brambell) to hold a press conference and perform a live transmission TV concert from what is, presumably, the BBC. Granddad winds Ringo up to the point where he walks out on the band shortly before transmission. The others have to find him in time and get him back to the studio in time to play the gig. They do it. That's it."

(Murray, 2002: 116)

⁴ With the passing of time the nature of how near to "reality" *A Hard Day's Night* is, has been contested. Paul on Alun Owen's script: "Alun picked up lots of little things about us. Things like "He is late but he is very clean, isn't he?" Little jokes, the sarcasm, the humour, John's wit, Ringo's laconic manner, each of our different ways. The film manages to capture our characters quite well, because Alun was careful to try only to put words into our mouths that he might have heard us speak ... I think he wrote a very good script" (The Beatles, 2000: 178). John: "*A Hard Day's Night* was sort of interesting since it was the first time. We loathed the script because it was somebody trying to write like we were in real life. In retrospect Alun Owen didn't do a bad job but at the time we were self-conscious about the dialogue. It felt unreal." (Miles, 2002b : 131). George: "There was one piece of dialogue where I say "Oh, I'm not wearing that – that's grotty!" Alun Owen made that up. I didn't. People have used that word for years now. It was a new expression: grotty – grotesque" (The Beatles, 2000 : 179).

The film has been described as a sort of comic-strip version of The Beatles (The Beatles, 2000) with often repeated references to the Marx Brothers (Norman, 1981; Stark, 2005). It can, be read as a cleaned up version of reality, the loveable mop-tops as people wanted them to be.

“There’s no shagging or drugging in *A Hard Day’s Night*, but the Beatles smoke lots of ciggies and letch after schoolgirls.”

(Murray, 2002: 116)

The Beatles’ Manager Brian Epstein was careful not to allow references to the Beatles’ girls, or any unwholesome habits like drinking, or taking drugs, lest it damage that image. Even when Lennon suggestively sniffs a coke bottle it is done as a joke and ignored by the rest, being treated as just one of the many incidents of the Beatles’ fooling around. Agajanian, (2000) sees this scene as having slipped under the censor’s radar and a glimpse into the reality of a day in the life of the touring Beatles. Lennon has likened the early tours to something closer to Fellini’s *Satyricon*⁵ than *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) [Miles, 2002a].

Nouvelle Vague

Richard Lester’s love of French new wave cinema (Neaverson, 1997; Murray, 2002) and his admiration for artists such as Jacque Tati give the film a visual gravitas and an artistic discourse beyond that of the standard British pop film of the time (Agajanian, 2000)⁶. Murray (2002: 2) describes this as “matching the Beatles’ exuberant music to wild impressionistic visuals” with “exhilarative” results. The film draws on a number of influences, linking a dialogue based, play-like script with jump-cut photography and hand-held camera work used in the documentary film-making genre and the French new wave. The fact that the film was in black and white, while a result of United Artists’ financial expediency, also linked it to these genres. Agajanian (2000)

⁵ *Satyricon* (1959) directed by Frederic Fellini is described by Halliwell’s film guide as “the sexual adventures of a Roman student” (Walker, 1991 : 767).

⁶ A viewing of *The Beatles: The First U.S. Visit* (2004) [a film commissioned by Granada Television in 1964 and never released in full until 2004] reveals how much *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) also draws on this documentary (Agajanian, 2000). Filmed by documentary film makers Albert and David Maysles the film shows the Beatles on their first US tour – in a hotel room, on a train, in a club and performing on stage, providing the blueprint for the majority of the settings in *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964).

sees the film as being indebted to the British documentary movement, particularly to the “free cinema” realist tradition of the mid-1950s and the British “new wave films of 1959 – 1963, which featured black and white stories of working class life.

Richards (1992) sees these films as part of an emergent post war social upheaval linked to working class affluence, an increasing emphasis on “youth” and the emergence of left wing intellectuals as some kind of movement. He characterizes the mood of British new wave cinema as:

“... a rejection of things as they were, a powerful sense that Britain was hopelessly lost in a hierarchical Victorian world of outdated values, disciplines and restriction.”

(Richards, 1992: 219)

The genre, script and overall mood of *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) encompasses this feeling, with the Beatles as young upwardly mobile men presented as the antithesis of the outdated values, discipline and restriction referred to by Richards (1992). The film provides a documentation of their journey from the North to the South, both literally and metaphorically. Stafford (2001: 1) cites *Billy Liar* (1963) as a defining moment for the birth of the “swinging sixties”. At the end of the film Billy (Tom Courtney) is offered the chance to go down to London with Liz (Julie Christie as ‘60s’ “free spirit”) to pursue his dream of being a scriptwriter. “Billy chickens out at the last moment but Liz goes South and with her goes the focus of British cinema in the mid sixties” (Stafford, 2001 : 1).

The Beatles’ juxtaposition with men who represent hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) or Brittan’s (1989) masculinism occurs a number of times within the film and provide examples of contrasting discourses around masculinity, often intertwining the theme of social class prevalent in the British new wave films with discourses around masculinity.

An early scene on the train taking them to London

(www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkkva3-pfBy) shows the upwardly mobile Beatles in conflict with a bowler hatted and brolied RAF type (“I fought the war for your sort” – “I bet you’re sorry we won.”) He is a symbol of the “old order”, “the establishment”

and hegemonic masculinity. He insists on closing the window and turning off their transistor radio suggesting they go to some other part of the train “where you obviously belong.” (The British train, along with the aeroplane, remains a class divided environment.) The scene culminates with Lennon’s “it’s his train, isn’t it mister?” and then all four of them appearing (surreally) outside of the train shouting, “can we have our ball back mister?”

“... it is their irreverence to this figure of authority which is both striking and refreshing, and one of the many ways the Beatles encapsulated new modes of expression and self-presentation.”

(Agajanian, 2000: 103)

Discourses around an age and class divide, reflecting old and new forms of masculinities, appear throughout the film. George Harrison’s solo scene in which “youth” TV is given the satirical treatment (- “she’s your symbol” – “who, that posh bird who always gets things wrong?”) and Ringo Starr’s scene with Paul’s grandfather, played by Wilfred Brambell, (“being middle aged and old takes up most of your time doesn’t it?”) are just two examples. The film is full of movement – running, singing, laughing and joking. The Press Conference scene (“Are you a mod or a rocker?”, “I’m a mocker”, “What do you call that hairstyle?” “Arthur”), written by Alun Owen, but based on press conferences he had observed (and including the best ad-libs), is key in portraying an important aspect of The Beatles as young men going places in the early 1960s, their quick wit and humour.

Run for your life

One of the key discourses at work in many of the British new wave films is one which reflects Ehrenreich’s (1983) flight from commitment and an increasing frustration around the trappings of hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995 Hearn, 2004) and the expectations of fulfilment of the male role (Segal, 1988). [See Chapter 3].

A Hard Day's Night (1964) has much in common with the new wave 1960s' "kitchen sink" dramas, particularly *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960), *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1961) and *Life at the Top* (1965), in that discourses around containment, imprisonment and the need and desire of men to break out are at work in all of these films. The drawing of inside/outside distinctions (Petersen, 1998: 21) is also a common theme. Hearn (1992: 194) describes how male stars in the Hollywood system "had a vast array of social and technological inventions to play with and within." He cites the car, the train, the gang and the posse as a series of props through which traditional masculinity could be played out. In *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) these "boys' toys" serve to contain and imprison the main male characters. The film has twin themes of running and escape which are at odds with the traditional male star's central role and direction of events and narrative (Hearn, 1992). In the opening scene of the film The Beatles are seen running away from female fans. McKinney (2003: 64) describes the fans as "a rolling wave or flying wedge forever haunting the streets outside." They run into ever decreasing spaces: the street, the alley, the photo booth, the telephone box and the train compartment, all within the opening three minutes (McKinney, 2003). In describing the Beatles' enclosed existence (Norman, 1981: 251) states:

"It was the year they conquered the world but did not see it. For them the world shrank to a single dressing room ... one more stage, one more limo, one more run for your life."

This is summed up in the film by Paul's mythical grandfather, as outside observer of the Beatlemania phenomenon, when he complains about the lack of excitement and claustrophobic nature of the trip they have taken him on: "... so far I've been in a train and a room and a car and a room and a room and a room." It is a film about the most famous men in the world but the discourse of work and resultant imprisonment/trappings looms large. There is a clue in the opening title song: "It's been a Hard Day's Night and I've been working like a dog." They are like Albert Finney in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960) trapped by the monotony of a "man's job" in a factory or Laurence Harvey in *Life at the Top* (1965), imprisoned by the upwardly mobile existence he wished for himself, escaping from his working class roots only to find that the life of a middle class male executive is no better. *A Hard*

Day's Night (1964) sees the Beatles, having played a TV show, heading for a midnight matinee in Wolverhampton. Segal (1988) documents how women represent a threat in these films, a representation of the trap of marriage and domesticity, and the Beatles' constant fleeing from their screaming fans in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) can be read similarly.

The film contains many scenes of running – to escape from the fans in the opening scene, from the train to the limo, from the limo to the theatre, later running through the streets of London searching for a missing Ringo. The scene in which they break out, cutting rehearsals by running down a fire escape and later running around in a field, signifies a brief escape, the gang at play. Set to a sound track of *Can't Buy Me Love* (1964) this scene is considered to be the birth of the pop video⁷. Again this juxtaposition of inside/outside (Petersen, 1998) represents escape from the trappings of responsibility, like Albert Finney leaving the factory for a night “out” or Tom Courtney in the *Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1961). Courtney, as a borstal boy, uses long-distance running as both a means and a symbol of escape from his hemmed in Borstal existence and his previous working class life of crime⁸. Controlled by hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) in the form of the prison governor, the culture of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) within the Borstal, and an overbearing mother (Segal, 1988) the outdoors represents freedom and escape. This discourse of inside bad/outside good runs throughout *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), a film McKinney (2003: 59) sees as being “preoccupied with bare white bulbs and imprisonment.” Lester's hand-held camera technique and choice of enclosed locations creates a mis-en-scene consistent with the discourse. The Beatles' minders “Norm” and “Shake”, older men (and representations of real life

⁷ The music video was certainly born in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) but it is surely the appearance of the first song in the film – *I Should Have Known Better* – as the audience gazes through the caged enclosure of the train's guard's van at the group, the music fades in as they play cards and suddenly they are playing their instruments and singing – that constitutes the first ever pop video. Lester explains “... it was always clear that if you're going to play games with time and space for music you need to warn the audience of its coming. A perfect example is the performance in the train, in the baggage cage, when the Beatles suddenly switch from playing cards to singing *I Should Have Known Better*. Three or four minutes before that sequence, there's this scene, where, first the Beatles are in the carriage and then suddenly there's this quick shot of them outside the carriage, running and cycling and banging on the window to be let in. It's just a little thing to let the audience know that all is not just documentary.” (Carr, 1996 : 31).

⁸ As a comment on class conflict in Britain, the end of the film sees Courtney using his running as a subversion of the Borstal system. By refusing to cross the finishing line before his rivals he finds a way to inflict defeat on his captors, and take his revenge on “the system”.

minders Neil Aspinall and Mal Evans) constantly attempt to engage the group. (“If you don’t need them I’ll lock them up in the dressing room” Norm tells the TV producer). Norm, in particular, acts as a surrogate parent to a gang of naughty boys, forbidding them to go to a club or even leave the building, something which they were to experience increasingly as Beatlemania took hold in the UK and US (Anon, 1965).

“... it is the adults – the traveller, the manager, the director, the groundsman and the policeman – who consistently place obstacles in the way of the Beatles having fun.”

(Agajanian, 2000: 162)

Despite their extraordinary status as famous men the Beatles, in *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964), appear like the ordinary men in the Northern new wave films. Trapped by, but railing against, their role in the production process and traditional expectations of them as men.

Men of Ideas: From Consumers to Producers

“They express effectively a great many aspects of modernity that have converged, inspiredly in their personalities.”

(Sarris, 2006 : 58)

Inglis’ concept of the Beatles as “men of ideas” (Inglis, 2000b : 1) is discussed in Chapter 1. *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) provides a number of examples of the Beatles as famous men, engaging creatively with others and making new ideas accessible to a wider audience due to their position as a global cultural (male) phenomenon.

The film is acknowledged as the source of the idea for *The Monkees* TV Series (The Beatles, 2000) and subsequent musical career, and the jangling guitar (evident on much of the upbeat soundtrack) produced by George Harrison’s newly acquired 12-string Rickenbacker 360 Deluxe, “an instrument whose chiming overtones ... colour much of the (soundtrack) album” (MacDonald, 1994: 98), was the inspiration for the formation of the Byrds and the mid 1960s’ West Coast sound in the USA (Rogan,

1991). The soundtrack album itself, dominated by Lennon's song writing, comprised 13 original Lennon – McCartney compositions – only Buddy Holly and Bob Dylan (both major influences on The Beatles in different periods of their work) and fellow Scouser Billy Fury had previously had the audacity to produce commercial albums totally comprised of their own compositions. This represents, it can be argued, as the whole phenomenon of The Beatles does, a shift of control from old to young, or at least the illusion or representation of it, coupled with something exciting and innovating, something “happening”. MacDonald (2003) sees this as a shift from consumer to producer power, with influential acts like the Beatles and Bob Dylan writing their own material and producing a lyrical shift in their songs which progressed (in the case of the Beatles) from traditional “boy loves girl” lyrical content to something more personal as the decade progressed (see later). Inglis (1997: 49) explains:

“The Beatles’ insistence, right from the outset of their recording career with Parlophone in 1962, that all their singles and a large majority of their album tracks should be self compositions was thus a direct challenge to the conventional wisdom of the popular music industry, and an early clue to the innovatory elements that were to distinguish their later career.”

Their initial success (four number 1 singles and two number 1 albums in 1963) changed the way that the popular music industry operated and the Beatles’ contemporaries (notably the Rolling Stones, the Kinks and the Who) all began to write their own material (Inglis, 1997). Macdonald (2003) sees this as a change in the balance of power from old professionals (song writers, managers, publishers) to young amateurs with a close connection with their audience, something which eventually led to punk and the rise of the independent record label (Heylin, 2008).

Boys, My Boys: Homosexuality and Pop Music

“... at times, Brian would seem unable to pluck up courage to go into the Beatles’ dressing-room, but would stand out in the auditorium, suddenly as

distant from them as the furthest screaming girl. I saw him once, ... in one of those northern ABCs, when the curtains opened and the scream went up. He was standing there with tears streaming down his face.”

(Norman, 1981: 219)

Savage (1991) has traced the influence of male homosexuality on pop music from the early 1960s’ “boy” stars (Tommy Steele, Cliff Richard, Billy Fury) through Bowie’s 1970s glam-rock androgyny to Boy George and beyond. Savage (1991: 155) argues that “it is from the milieu and sensibilities of the sexually divergent that pop music draws much of its substance.” The gay manager has been a fixture of the popular music scene in the UK since the late 1950s. From Larry Parnes’ stable of “boy” stars in the early 1960s to Wham in the 1980s and Take That in the 1990s, the svengali-like qualities of the older man and his young boys has been part of pop music discourse (Napier-Bell, 1983; Savage 1991). Brian Epstein’s role as Beatles’ manager and his importance in their rise to global fame cannot be underestimated (Norman, 1981; Irvin, 2002). Epstein’s journey from failed RADA theatrical to manager of his father’s store to manager of the most famous men of the 1960s has been well documented (Norman, 1981; *The Beatles*, 2000; Irvin, 2002) as has his “obsession” with John Lennon (Norman, 1981; Goldman, 1988)⁹. Epstein’s influence on their style and presentation, arguably rooted in his own homosexual svengalisism and theatrical yearnings, is a vital part of their global appeal, all of which was established around 1963/4 and the signs of which are apparent in *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) Irvin (2002: 121) argues that:

“... the suited and booted, mop-topped Fab Four – the first globally recognised pop group – were Brian’s vision.”

⁹ Lennon beat up the Cavern DJ Bob Wooler for making a remark about his relationship with Epstein (Norman, 1981). Epstein and Lennon went on a 10 day holiday together to Barcelona just after Lennon’s wife Cynthia had given birth to their son Julian. A fictionalised account of the trip formed the basis of the short film *The Hours and Times* (1991). McCartney is evasive on the subject in *The Beatles Anthology* DVD (2003). Albert Goldman in *The Lives of John Lennon* (1988) claims that Lennon and Epstein had a sexual relationship over a number of years but there seems to be little evidence to support this.

Segal (1988) has documented the persecution of homosexual men¹⁰ in 1950s' Britain and she outlines how homosexuality was seen as a threat to gender order and, therefore, social stability. Though the persecution of homosexuals is usually by men against other men, it is also about the forced repression of the "feminine" in men and keeping women in their place (Segal, 1988). Thus "gayness" could be read as subversion or, as Savage (1991) claims, an important challenge to the dominant modes of masculinity. Epstein's obsession with his "boys" and his influence on their early presentational style (turning them from James Deanesque leather clad rebels into well groomed pop idols) can be read in this context. Drawing on Mulvey's (1975) work on the gaze (see Chapter 4), Savage (1991: 159) argues that The Beatles, in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), can be read as "the adored object ... homosexual desire translated into female adoration", taking up a feminized, often narcissistic, positions (Cohan, 1993; Neale, 1993). However, they can also be read, at this point, and in this film, as a site where gay aesthetics and pop music meet to question the social construction of male identity and to pose questions about new types of masculinities (Mäkelä, 2004). Their global fame and position as cultural icons made them a focus for this debate. As Mäkelä (2004: 69) points out:

"The Beatles' success indicated that there was space for new kinds of masculinities in British culture, and even a demand for them."

Their visual appearance in what can be termed their "dressed by Brian" period is only part of the story. *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) is punctuated by discourses of gayness or queer codes (Shillinglaw, 1999) and this is important for the debate on 1960s' masculinities, given that *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) provides a good example of Fiske's (1992) notion of a mass produced text made into a popular text by the people. Shillinglaw (1999: 177) argues that *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) displays "deeply queer sensibilities" often overlooked or disregarded. Mäkelä (2004) sees playing with gender and identity as a central part of the Beatles' early appeal, often passing this off as just another Beatle joke while "messing" with the audiences' perception of gender.

¹⁰ The film *Victim* (1961) features Dirk Bogarde (gay but not "out" at this point) as a married solicitor being blackmailed because of his homosexuality. Halliwell's film guide states: "a plea for a change in the law is very smartly wrapped up as a murder mystery which allows all aspects to be aired ..." (Walker, 1991: 945). The film is seen as an important cultural text in the context of the debate on the law on homosexuality which began in the late 1950s (Sandbrook, 2005).

They are knowing insiders (Shillinglaw, 1999), and *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) provides a setting in which to display this knowledge. In the early railway scene carriage, described earlier, Lennon flutters his eyelids at the older “establishment” man and at one point faces him down with the words “give us a kiss”. McCartney narcissistically combs his hair in the mirror. Later Ringo Starr is seen in a Ladies’ hair salon under the dryer reading a copy of *Queen*. “That’s an in joke, you know” says Lennon. Lennon camps it up with the other male artists in the building, offering to “swap” costumes and calling “cheeky” after them down the corridor. In the rehearsal performance of the song *If I Fell* (1964) he serenades Starr with the words “If I fell in love with you would you promise to be true”. Lennon admitted to liking to play “faggy” (The Beatles, 2000: 98) and a lot of the queerness in the text is focussed on him. He joins in with Lionel Blair and his dancers as they rehearse on stage and there is even what could be read as a thinly veiled reference to the rumours about his relationship with Epstein when minder Norm warns him to shut up “or I’ll tell them all the truth about you.” “You wouldn’t” Lennon responds. “Ah, I would though” comes the reply.

The Gang

The gang motif, a popular staple of traditional male genres such as the Western (Branston and Stafford, 1996) or the gangster movie (Bruzzi, 1997), is strong in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964).

“Paul : It helped that we were like a gang together. Mick Jagger called us the four headed monster because we went everywhere together, dressed similarly. We’d all have black polo neck sweaters and dark suits and the same haircut”

(The Beatles, 2000: 354)

This is apparent in the film, where the gang is bound together by youth, appearance, attitude and the tight enclosed environment in which they find themselves. Lennon’s use of “mister” at several points to older men (e.g. addressing an older man at press conference wearing a handkerchief in his top pocket – “you can’t blow your nose on it up there can you mister?”) represents his Just William (Crompton, 1990) schoolboy

persona, Crompton being one of his favourite authors (MacDonald, 1994). They are naughty schoolboys running about in a field (“sorry we hurt your field, mister”) and generally having fun.

Ringo Starr’s “lonely man” solo scene (“I’m a deserter”, “It’s not much cop without them”), in which he deserts the group and goes wandering by a canal, meeting up with a schoolboy gang of characters who mirror his own gang, provides a focus for this theme (“Ginger’s mad - he says things all the time”, (another Crompton reference) “Eddie Fallon’s good at spitting and punching”, “Ding Dong ... he’s a big head, he fancies himself. He’s alright though, he’s one of the gang.”)

It is Ringo’s ordinariness, in the midst of the extraordinary phenomenon of Beatlemania, that is important in “maintaining an emotional link with the audience that the other three do not inspire” (Agajanian, 2000: 107). He is portrayed as the normal bloke. In the “lonely man” scene he is seen in the street, in a pub, in a second-hand clothes shop (buying a disguise, putting on the guise of the ordinary man to escape the attention of the fans) and by a canal. These are ordinary, unglamorous settings (which again reflect the link with the “Northern” new wave films) which contrast with the upwardly mobile glamour of the limo, the hotel and the theatre. At one point he goes AWOL and is hunted down by the other three.

Newspaper coverage of the group at the time played up the idea of the gang, whether wandering around Paris together (Anon, 1964), storming America (Hutchins, 1964) or holidaying in the Bahamas (Epstein, 1965). The John, Paul, George and Ringo phenomenon was often portrayed by the media as “the gang”, often surrounded by or pursued by girls, and girls are everywhere in *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964); schoolgirls on the train (“Come on let’s give them a pull”), showgirls (“Please sir, can I have one to surge with sir?”) and girls in a nightclub (including a young Charlotte Rampling)¹¹. This establishes the Beatles heterosexual credentials (Hefner’s *Playboy* girls come to life) amidst their gender games. Shillinglaw (1999) draws on Sedgewick’s (1985)

¹¹ When they do escape from their hotel to go to a club, the scene provides an interesting representation of the early beginnings of what became known as swinging London (Melly, 1970). Focussing on young people – the new “classless” society with pop as what Melly (1970 : 50) called “the banner of the new class” – having a good time in what is meant to be the Ad-lib, the Scotch of St James or the Bag O’Nails – the new London discotheques which had recently sprung up and were frequented by the Beatles and their contemporaries.

concept of the homosocial (bonds between persons of the same sex) to examine the gang phenomenon further. While women provide a decorative backdrop and enough interaction to establish heterosexuality, they play no real part in the plot, but rather represent a version of femininity complementary to and compliant with hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004). John, George and Ringo all have solo scenes in which they are not recognised outside of their homosocial context i.e. the gang. The radical and subversive nature of the gender codes at play in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and their importance for the establishing of new types of masculinities in this period become apparent when considering Sedgwick's understanding of the relationship between the homosocial and homosexual.

“To draw the ‘homosocial’ back into the orbit of ‘desire’ of the potentially erotic, then, is to hypothesize the potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual.”

(Sedgwick, 1985: 1)

The potentially erotic nature of the Beatles' uncertain positioning on the homosocial/homosexual continuum is illustrated by the final performance scene in the film. In their performance of *She Loves You* (1963) McCartney and Harrison bring their faces close together to share one microphone whilst shaking their hair and uttering the “ooh” refrain from the song's chorus (borrowed from the American girl groups they much admired).¹² This act is greeted by increased screaming from female fans, an example of “the pleasure they offer” (McKinney, 2003: 54), Savage's (1991: 159) “homosexual desire translated into female adoration”, or Mäkelä's (2004) assertion that there was, indeed, a demand for new kinds of masculinities in 1964.

¹² Bannister (2000) and Warwick (2000) document the influence of the early 1960s' girl groups on the Beatles, many of their early cover versions having originally been performed by female groups (see Chapter 3). In the Maysles' *Brothers* documentary (see footnote 6) the Beatles are seen in a phone hook up with US DJ Murray the K, self appointed “Fifth Beatle” on their first US tour (Stark, 2005). The requests they made were all songs by Motown artists, mainly female.

“To be looked at-ness” (Mulvey, 1975: 18)

“John and Paul were fabulous in their three-piece, four button bespoke Douggie Millings suits, with Paul in lighter and John in darker shades of grey. Their gear was a mod variation of the classic Ted drape jacket, set off by black velvet collars, slash pockets and narrow, plain-front trousers.”

(Oldham, 2000: 235)

A Hard Day's Night (1964) was designed as a globally distributed product, providing an opportunity for many Beatles' fans worldwide to look at them, a step beyond the live shows in terms of potential audience. Even as early as 1964, the live shows had become a showcase for looking rather than listening due to the fans' screaming throughout the performance, which often drowned out the lo-fi technology available to the Beatles at the time¹³ (Norman, 1981; The Beatles, 2000; Stark, 2005). A consideration of the Beatles' visual appearance and their “to-be-looked-at-ness” (Mulvey, 1975: 18) adds to the argument that they were important in subverting traditional notions of what men should look like (Hebdidge, 1978) and how they are viewed (Neale, 1993).

The Image: Dressed by Brian

Epstein's role as father figure, weeping fan and sometime gang member is significant in the construction of their visual representation in this period. It was he who had a vision of the group's early image, dressing them in suits, “feminizing” their appearance (Cohan, 1993) and suggesting the bow at the end of the performance, all a reflection of Epstein's theatrical interests. “Back then everyone was more straight, the whole business was” was George Harrison's retrospective take on why the suits were a necessary step (The Beatles, 2000: 75), while Ringo Starr's assertion that “we could never have done the Palladium unless we'd have put the suits on” (The Beatles, 2000; 103) is an indication of what “the suit” represented for men in 1964.

¹³ The Beatles gave up touring in 1966, partly because of the fact that the screaming drowned out the music and they reportedly felt that they were stagnating musically and partly for safety reasons (The Beatles, 2000; McKinney, 2003; Ellen, 2002a).

Bruzzi (1997), in her work on Frano-American gangster films draws attention to the importance of signs and symbols in this “traditional” male genre. Male subjects, she argues, are presented as objects of spectacle and fetishism because of their obsession with clothes and image. Clothes are used as a symbol of success and upward mobility. Citing examples from Godard’s *A Bout de Soufflé* (1960), Melville’s *Le Samouri* (1967) and Scorsese’s *Goodfellas* (1990) she argues that what we is seen in these films is heterosexual maleness linked with consumption and style, previously seen as “feminine” traits. Thus narcissism becomes a component rather than an opponent of masculinity with positive connotations for men who engage with it (Bruzzi, 1997).

A Hard Day’s Night (1964) sees the Beatles suited and booted, with suits or trousers with jackets worn in all scenes,¹⁴ in what can be interpreted as their homoerotic “dressed by Brian” period, both, it can be argued, illustrating and challenging Bruzzi’s (1997) ideas about masculinity and consumption.

Mod

Despite the traditional nature of the suit or formal jacket, round collars, high collars, velvet collars and suits worn with a black polo neck, another Beatles trademark used on the cover of *With the Beatles* (1963), borrowed from the Hamburg Exis¹⁵, are all in evidence in *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964). The influence of the mod movement, in the shape of subtle and subversive detail which distinguished between “hip” and “square” suits, is apparent.

“Mod was the most secretive of cults; its power was sourced from impenetrable codes, rarely expressed in words, and had everything to do with details: what precisely was the best vest to wear under an American Brooks Brothers shirt? Should buttons on jackets all be closed or should some be left open and vents, six or eight inches long.”

(Hewitt, 2001 : 1)

¹⁴ The Beatles’ tailor Duggie Millings makes a cameo appearance in the film as himself. The Collector’s Edition DVD (2003) contains an interview with his son and a section on the suits worn in the film.

¹⁵ Kirrchher and Stuart Sutcliffe, an original member of the Beatles, were part of the Hamburg existentialist ‘scene’ in the early 1960s.

While The Beatles were never a mod group (The Who claimed to be, but it was The Small Faces who were actually mods who became a popular group) and mod in a real sense was dead by 1964 (MacIness, 1959; Hewitt, 2001), they nevertheless, by association and through their cultural influence, spread the ideas and philosophy that mod represented for young men at the time, with clothes as a “real language” (Hewitt, 2001: 3).

Subtlety as Subversion

It is the subtleties signified by velvet collars, visible shirt cuffs, long button down shirt collars, rings, bracelets and pointed Chelsea boots (which became known as “Beatle boots”) which subvert the traditional wearing of the suit and point towards what is to come in terms of men’s dress¹⁶. Bruzzi (1997) sees the popularity of the Italian slim-fitting suit in the late 1950s and early 1960s as providing a more sexualised appearance, given that these suits followed the contours of men’s bodies more closely. The contrast, for example, between The Beatles’ suits and Norm and Shake’s off-the peg dowdy ill fitting suits is apparent; age versus youth, upward mobility, straight versus hip is all represented in this one form of attire. Norm wears a pork pie hat, again, traditional male attire. However, Lennon’s black leather hat, made in a women’s fashion shop and the “Beatle” boots, hand made at Annello and Davide, primarily a ballet outfitters, provide examples of feminisation in appearance (Cohan, 1993) and cultural resistance (Hebdidge, 1978) while wearing what is ostensibly the most “masculine” of garments. Shillinglaw (1999) reminds us that it is hard to remember in retrospect just how feminised they actually appeared at the time and cites attention to clothes and hair as evidence.

¹⁶ An article by Derek Johnson in *The New Musical Express* (1/11/63 : 5) entitled *Beatles keep Royal Suits Secret* discusses which suits the Beatles will wear for their forthcoming appearance at the Royal Variety Performance. The article questions whether their round collared “Beatle Suits” would be suitable attire in which to perform before Royalty.

Hair: Mop-Tops

Hair (and hair length) looms large in The Beatles' legend. In their early years they were known as "mop-tops", defined by The Beatle haircut, the style still clearly visible in *A Hard Day's Night*, although starting to grow out and become "long". Their hair was radical for the early 1960s. The brushed forward "feminine" style fashioned and photographed by Astrid Kirrchher, an existentialist they met in Hamburg in the early 1960s, created a new brylcream-free hairstyle for men as it grew in popularity¹⁷. At this time it was seen as radical and one of the things that made The Beatles a talking point. There are numerous pictures of them supposedly trimming each other's hair but they actually had a hairdresser, Betty Glasow, on set. Interviewed on the collector's edition of the *A Hard Day's Night* DVD (2003), she describes the begging letters she used to get for locks of hair, again, an example of Savage's (1991) notion of desire and adoration. Although the style had been worn by Beatnicks and their European cousins the Existentialists, since the late 1950s and, therefore, was in itself seen as a "subversive" sign, it was The Beatles who popularised it. Kirrchher's haircut and photographic style was recreated by photographer Robert Freeman for the cover of *With The Beatles* (1963), their second album. The original United Artist's proofs for the album cover of *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) featured cartoon illustrations of Beatle wigs stuck on top of guitars. However, photographer Robert Freeman was brought in to produce the comic strip grid, head shots of each Beatle; the mop-top as a dominant feature, which was used for the album cover, film poster and end credits of the film (The Beatles, 2000; 2003).

In retrospect, their hair in this period is not "long" at all but it was seen as such and was a constant talking point, especially at press conferences. For example, footage of their arrival in the USA in 1964 sees them being asked "Are you going to get a haircut while you are here?" to which George Harrison sardonically responds "I had one yesterday" (The Beatles, 2003). Its influence spread beyond the Beatles themselves to their contemporaries. The Byrds all sported variations of the mop-top but it is, Brian Jones, from the Beatles' contemporary rivals the Rolling Stones who was, perhaps,

¹⁷ Despite her credit for this crucial creation Kirrchher has been scathing about it in, recent years: "... all this rubbish about 'the haircut' is nothing to do with what The Beatles really were" (Kirrchher, 2002: 146).

the possessor of the greatest mop-top. A retrospective look at Gered Mankowitz's famous cover picture for one of the Stones' early albums, *Out of Our Heads* (1965), sees the other four members of the group with hairstyles which could place them in the mid 1960s, early 1970s or even 1990s Britpop. It is the foregrounded Brian, with his perfectly rounded mop-top (or "perfect page boy cut" [Savage, 1991: 161]) that places the picture firmly in the early 1960s (Harris, 2004). The style was also available to all via the Woolworth's Beatle wig (Bryant, 2002).

In *The History of Hair* (2000: 130) Robin Bryar states that "The Beatles had an unrivalled influence on hairstyles in the second half of the twentieth century," citing the mop-top as the first hairstyle to spread upwards through the social classes rather than downwards, and also from East to West across the Atlantic. Hair, then, is vitally important in establishing their role, via their global popularity and the nature of *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), as a global product/text, in changing perceptions of masculinity, the development of a "feminized" appearance for heterosexual men and links them to the emergence of the concept of unisex around this time (Sandbrook, 2006).

The Gaze

"The images of John, Paul and George falling from the sky in slow motion present the male body as an object of high style for its own aesthetic state as the male form cuts through space in an artful fashion."

(Shillinglaw, 1999: 133)

Shillinglaw's (1999) analysis refers to the *Can't Buy Me Love* (1964) segment of the film. Overall *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) is an invitation to gaze at the Beatles and, as in a traditional musical, provides breaks in the action specifically to do so (Cohan, 1993; Agajanian, 2000) and to consider Mulvey's (1975) work on visual pleasure and looking, discussed in Chapter 4.

Agajanian (2000: 96) sees *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) as "a backstage musical" despite being "nothing like any previous musical, British or American" (Agajanian,

2000: 91). It is steeped in the tradition of Hollywood musicals, despite its modern appearance and mock-documentary new wave credentials.

The action stops, as it does in the Hollywood musical, (Cohan, 1993) for what are really essentially, a number of musical tableaux (“a pause on stage when all the performers briefly freeze in position” [Collins Concise English Dictionary, 1993: 1370]), not related to a gap in the romantic plot, as is customary with musicals, but the gap “overturms the customary way in which masculinity is assumed to advance and dominate the linear narrative” (Cohan, 1993: 49). Thus, these breaks provide a space where the male stars perform and females gaze, providing what Mulvey refers to as moments of “erotic contemplation” (Mulvey, 1975: 19) or what Cohan (1993: 55) calls “a male spectacle” far from those offered by other film genres such as the Western/gangster films or action adventures, traditionally seen as appealing to men, as sites where men look at men. These set pieces or breaks in the narrative are referred to as tableaux because, it can be argued, their purpose is exactly as described by Cohan (1993), a set of frozen moments in which the audience is invited to gaze at the spectacle of performance. These are just three examples from the film.

***I Should Have Known Better* (www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngwlb-Dxt)**

The first song in the film, after the opening titles, the action cuts to The Beatles playing cards in the train’s guard’s van, viewed through a cage against which schoolgirls lean to gaze in and attempt to touch. The scene is representative of the gold fish bowl existence of the Beatles, which is a key discourse of the film. One of them (Patti Boyd) actually makes it into the “cage” – a reference to her blossoming on-set romance with George Harrison whom she would later marry. The visuals switch from The Beatles playing cards (a ‘masculine’ activity with reference to the Western – “ay, ay – the Liverpool shuffle”) to playing and singing in what can be seen as the first pop video. The camera roams from hands to hair to face close ups to velvet collars and jewellery, symbols of “feminization”.

***And I Love Her* (www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fNDfdjxd8)**

A slow McCartney ballad and one of the songs seen in rehearsal in the film. The Beatles are placed within a highly contemporary set, large black and white hexagons as a backdrop, leather chairs, a reflection of the British design scene at the time (Jackson, 1994; Sandbrook, 2006). McCartney is placed on a podium at the front, pouting and narcissistically camera-aware, as always in these early performances. To the left is George Harrison, one foot on the podium, Spanish guitar at a 45 degree angle. John Lennon is seated to the right (tie undone) with Ringo Starr at the back on a drum riser. This scene, more than any other, gives the impression of the group being carefully placed, in black and white contrast, and positioned for maximum “to be looked at-ness” (Mulvey, 1975: 18). They are objectified and feminized (Cohan, 1993). “Try not to jiggle out of position” the producer tells them.

***Concert Scene (Tell Me Why; If I Fell; I Should Have Known Better; She Loves You)* (www.youtube/watch?v=gk14ufehjpA)**

There is a nine minute scene towards the end of the film where the group’s TV performance finally takes place. Filmed in The Scala Theatre in London, with an invited audience, the scene recreates The Beatles’ theatre performances of the time. Despite their insistence that they did not want to make a pop film like any previously produced, there is something of this scene that is similar in setting to Cliff and the Shadows’ performance at the end of *The Young Ones* (1961). The difference, though, is that through the use of six different camera angles and his technique of jumping from one shot to another, Dick Lester manages to convey the energy and excitement of Beatlemania in action (McKinney, 2003) and creates the opportunity for the audience to see itself from the Beatles’ perspective.

Cameras pan backwards and forwards between screaming girls (and boys) gazing at their heroes, velvet collars, hands, feet, shirt cuffs, guitars, feet, backs and bottoms. At several points, the film viewer, gets to look through camera lenses and TV monitors to focus their own gaze on the spectacle. The process of visual reproduction itself is made obvious (McKinney, 2003). The cameras focus on the male body, full screen close-ups of faces and hair, a long slow tracking shot from behind the group

which lingers on Ringo Starr's posterior and Paul McCartney and George Harrison close together at one microphone, shaking their hair and "ooing" in *She Loves You*, a trademark of their early performances.

The group appear in classic pose from this period – Ringo Starr raised on a podium at the back, John Lennon to the right playing his short arm black and white Rickenbacker, George Harrison, centre with his newly acquired Rickenbacker 360, Paul McCartney to the left, his left handed Hofner bass creating visual symmetry. The grey velvet collared suits, along with the round collared "Beatle suits" (which appear in photographs in the film but are not actually worn) and "Beatle" boots, represent their most homoerotic-dressed-by-Brian appearance and the film provides an opportunity to take a long look at the Beatles in this particular phase.

Conclusion

Despite its beginnings, in the minds of its United Artists' producers, as yet another pop exploitation movie, *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) emerges as a text which has undergone much critical reappraisal in the forty five years since its release (Agajanian, 2000). The Beatles' exuberant playfulness, reflected both visually and musically in the film, juxtaposed with a moc-doc glimpse of their gruelling work schedule at this point makes it an interesting text through which to reflect on men and masculinities of this point in the 1960s. The film documents a journey from North to South on more than one level. The production values, including its grainy black and whiteness and its nod towards French new wave and the documentary filmmakers' hand-held camera techniques, link it to early 1960s' British new wave cinema and the discourses of masculinity at work in some of these films. The work/ play, inside/outside, trapped/free binaries are all on show here. The masculinist (Brittan, 1989) work ethic pervades the film and, yet, the Beatles, like the male heroes of other "Northern" films, show signs of resistance through a combination of wit, creativity, humour and visual appearance. Hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) is also challenged through the positioning of the Beatles in relation to the female fans. The beginning of the film finds them "running like big daft girls", as one respondent to an interview for this thesis succinctly put it (see Chapter 7). They are men running away, from rather than running after, women. At

various points we see them running away and breaking out from the responsibilities of being a Beatle (and a man).

The gender tourism (Reynolds and Ross, 1996) which is featured more strongly in later films, is hinted at here, while the queer codes (Shillinglaw, 1999) apparent in the film, coupled with the Beatles visual appearance in their dressed-by-Brian period creates an interesting discourse around gender fluidity (Whiteley, 1997) and sexuality. The mis-en-scene of the film creates spaces in which to look at the Beatles (indeed, the film itself is a text designed for just such a purpose) and this allows for an interesting discussion around the work of Mulvey (1975) and others such as Cohan (1993), Neale (1993) and Bruzzi (1997) on the objectification and feminisation of men in such texts.

The presence of these “traditional” masculine discourses around the gang and homosociality mix with Inglis’ (2000b : 1) “men of ideas” thesis to create a text which is multi-layered and consequently provides much food for thought about the representations of masculinity at this particular point in the 1960s.

The Beatles’ Films: Help!

The Film: Circumstances of Production

Production on the Beatles’ second film *Help!* (1965) started on 23rd February 1965, again produced by Walter Shenson, with a “big” budget of £400,000 and directed (again) by Richard Lester. Since making *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964), Lester had been successful at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival with *The Knack* (1965), a London-based swinging Sixties comedy starring Rita Tushingham¹⁸ and a young Michael Crawford. Lester brought in Charles Wood, who had written the screenplay for *The Knack* (1965), having already commissioned a screenplay from Mark Behm who had worked on *Charade* (1964), a popular comedy thriller featuring Hollywood royalty

¹⁸ Rita Tushingham had made her debut in *A Taste of Honey* (1961) now viewed as one of the key British new wave texts of the 1960s (Murphy, 1997; Spicer, 1997).

Cary Grant and Audrey Hepburn. The addition of a highly experienced team of comic actors, including Victor Spinetti, Eleanor Bron and Leo McKern, who also brought with them the gravitas of theatre, added to the impression that this was no run-of-the-mill British pop movie (Carr, 1996) but rather a suitable vehicle for the Beatles as they made the transition from mop-top pop stars to “men of ideas” (Inglis, 2000b : 1) surrounded by creative and experienced professionals.

Neaverson (1997) argues that *Help!* (1965) is a film starring the Beatles as opposed to a film about the Beatles, a position contested retrospectively by the Beatles themselves who claimed to have felt like extras in their own film (The Beatles, 2000). McKinney (2005: 72) describes *Help!* (1965) as “a comic strip of what the Beatles’ real lives were becoming”. Their position as “a moving bulls eye for a band of religious zealots” (McKinney, 2003: 72), for example, predicts the “bigger than Jesus” religious furore of 1966.¹⁹ *Help!* (1965) is essentially about the attempts of a rogue Eastern religious cult to retrieve a sacrificial ring sent to Ringo by a fan (“an Eastern bird”). Here, fear, and general threats of violence (McKinney, 2003), jostle with discourses of escape and upward mobility. There is some continuity with *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) in this sense. The hordes of girls pursuing the Beatles in the first film are replaced by a representation of “the shadow of the female over the Beatles” (McKinney, 2003 : 78) in the form of the Goddess Kali, to whom Ringo is to be sacrificed. There is a suggestion of violence as a result of adoration (McKinney, 2003) which would play out in the reality of the 1966 tours. Thus the predatory female of the Northern kitchen sink drama (Segal, 1988) becomes an exotic goddess, yet still provides a “disturbing undercurrent” (McKinney, 2003: 83) to the Technicolor escapism that is *Help!* (1965).

Help! (1965) is not generally critically viewed in the same way as *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) which has now been conferred the status of a key 1960s’ text (Agajanian, 2000) and as culturally connected to the 1960s’ British New Wave movement.²⁰ Reviewing *Help!* (1965) for *The New Musical Express* in 1965 Chris Hutchins described it as “a hundred minutes of nonsense” (Hutchins, 1965: 2).

¹⁹ See Chapter 1.

²⁰ See previous section.

Ingham (2003: 197) describes it as “lush, sillier but definitely inferior to its predecessor” while Halliwell’s film guide describes it as an

“... Exhausting attempt to outdo *A Hard Day’s Night* in a lunatic frenzy ... It looks good but becomes too tiresome to entertain.”

(Walker, 1991: 102)

However, audiences still flocked to see it (Ingham, 2003)²¹ and the release of a digitally remastered version of the film in 2007 brought with it some critical revisionism. Robertson (2002: 12), in describing the BBC’s showing of *Help!* (1965) on the evening of John Lennon’s death in 1980, sees the film as an important documentation of a particular change in the Beatles’ career. It will be argued here that this change is also significant in the Beatles representation of changes for men and discourses of masculinity at this time.

“... for grief stricken Lennon fans across the country, *Help!* provided strange relief. Far removed from reality, it conjured up a nostalgic, comforting world, in which the Beatles were still fab, still four. It was an ironic afterlife for a movie which had been designed to prolong the initial rush of Beatlemania but actually preserved the moment when it began to decay.”

(Robertson, 2002: 12)

A Technicolor International Travelogue

The increased budget for *Help!* (1965) meant that the film would be shot in colour. This shift to potential full blown “in-colour” musical worried George Harrison at the time:

²¹ I saw the film on its release in 1965 at the ABC Cinema in Cleethorpes. It was obviously viewed by fans as an opportunity to “look at” the Beatles. Screaming broke out in the cinema whenever John, Paul, George and Ringo appeared on the screen and this went on throughout the film in a similar manner to that described at the live shows (Norman, 1981; The Beatles, 2000; Starke, 2005). This is the only time I have ever experienced such interactive cinema.

“I don’t mind colour in a film if it doesn’t mean dancing about in a red shirt, like in one of Cliff’s. I don’t like that.”

(Carr, 1996: 59)

His fears were unfounded. Rather than hark back to the early 1960s’ Brit-pop musical the Technicolor *Help!* (1965) pre-empts other key 1960s’ texts such as *Batman* and *The Avengers* (Topping, 1998; Chapman, 2000) and the use of colour is important in terms of the representation of emerging versions and alternative discourses of masculinity at this point in the 1960s. As an “elaborate fantasy film” (Neaverson, 1997 : 34) it is part of a shift in British film making, a North-South shift, away from the new wave Northern drama of the early 1960s (Stafford, 2001). This shift also reflects changes in the representation of men in the cinema in this period, from men at work, trapped by work and responsibility in the grim North, to men at play in the swinging South (Spicer, 1999).

This shift from reality to fantasy is reflected in the Beatles’ first appearance in *Help!* (1965) [www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3DWJFbeMiM]. Following the opening sequence, in which they do not appear, they are seen in black and white wearing black roll neck sweaters, dark trousers and Beatle boots in what looks like an outtake from *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) but is, in fact, a cine film of the group performing the song *Help!* (1965), watched by cult leader Chang and his followers, with the ring, central to the plot, visible on Ringo Starr’s finger. The next time they appear they are in colour. Like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) they have travelled from the black and white “reality” of Kansas (read Liverpool) to the Technicolor fantasy world of Oz (read pot-fuelled swinging London, 1965), with the implication that other men could make this journey too. *Help!* (1965) is itself a representation of this shift. The Beatles are seen at play in an international travelogue, no longer ground down by the gruelling touring schedule represented in *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964), the ordinary replaced by the extraordinary, a reflection of their “real” lives, having moved from Liverpool to London in late 1964.

Neaverson (1997) describes how British cinema moved from North to South in this period with the resultant colour films being “increasingly London based, light-hearted and ‘international’ in both style and subject matter.” (Neaverson, 1997: 34-5). In

this sense *Help!* (1965) can be read as a cultural text of its time with the Beatles, as men, at the centre of an emerging consumerist and upwardly mobile lifestyle, a key discourse throughout the film. It is a Technicolor travelogue, exotic, in retrospect vaguely racist (Ingham, 2003), with a hint of adventure movie, the Bond cycle²² and something of a *Carry On*²³ Britishness about it. However, it is also peppered with drug references for the emerging “in” crowd. Above all, it is international with settings in “swinging” London, Austria and the Bahamas, mixing James Bond with the upward mobility thesis of the 1960s (Sandbrook, 2005).

Neaverson (1997) argues that the film draws on the Bond cycle of films in a number of ways containing “Bondesque ingredients” (Neaverson, 1997: 37). These include the exotic locations, the closed narrative, set-piece fights, a car-boot kidnapping and the opening sequence which sets the scene before the opening credits. The film’s “evil” characters, the mad scientist (Victor Spinetti) and his sidekick (Roy Kinnear), out to rule the world (“if only I could get a Government grant”), cult leader Chang (Leo McKern) and the fickle heroine (Eleanor Bron) all provide a pastiche of Bond villains. At several points in the film the soundtrack score offers a pastiche of John Barry’s Bond soundtracks.

In footage on the Beatles *Anthology* DVD (2003), a 1964 interview with the Beatles reveals them to be fans of the Bond films. The mood, settings and international style of *Help!* (1965), borrowed from the cycle, is crucial in establishing a discourse of masculinity which is resistant to the hegemonic (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004). Foulkes (1996a) sees the Bond films as introducing the audience to the possibility of long distance travel and exotic locations years before it became a reality for ordinary men (Sandbrook, 2005). He goes on to describe the Bond cycle of films as part of the post war affluent, feel-good atmosphere of the early 1960s, with Bond as a member of “the international set” (Foulkes, 1996a: 62) *Help!* (1965) draws on this in establishing the Beatles as part of the international set, with art mirroring life to a certain extent. Their extraordinariness and the exotic freedoms it brings is a key

²² The James Bond cycle of films produced by United Artists and based on the novels of Ian Fleming, began with *Dr No* (1962) followed by *From Russia with Love* (1963) and *Goldfinger* (1964) with Sean Connery in the role of Bond.

²³ The *Carry On* films represent a unique genre of British comedy with 30 films produced between 1958 and 1976 (see Ross, 1996).

theme of *Help!* (1965). Their “freedom” is established in the film by their lifestyle, lack of “surrogate” parents (Norm and Shake in *A Hard Day’s Night* [1964]) and their portrayal as part of “the jet set”, with the ability to leave behind the mundane for the exotic at a moment’s notice.

The portrayal of Bond in the early Sean Connery films draws very much on traditional “Hollywood” masculinity in his dealings with women and villains. Fiske (1992) asserts that the male Hollywood hero embodies patriarchal capitalism. Connery’s Bond is a good example of this. Bond’s contested portrayal of masculinity continues to present material for debate. The release of *Quantum of Solace* in 2008 prompted an article by Rohrer (2008), in the BBC News Magazine, reviewing the evidence. This included Paul Johnson’s review of Fleming’s Dr No novel in 1958 entitled “Sex, Snobbery and Sadism”, interpreting Bond’s masculinism (Brittan, 1989) as something loathsome, Kingsley Amis’ assertion that Bond’s relationship to “foreign” villains is about Britain’s cultural hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) at a time of developing world power, and Professor James Chapman’s view that the films remain ideologically unsound as racist, heterosexist, xenophobic texts (Rohrer, 2008). Early 1960s Bond, while certainly containing these elements, has also been interpreted as representing something else for men and the representation of masculinities. McInerney (1996), for example, writing from a US perspective, argues that his persona also represented a new kind of stylish masculinity and that his sophistication, urbanity and Europeanism were seen as positive (rather than sexually suspect) attributes. He sees Bond as a new kind of role model “a cultured man who knew how to navigate a wine list ... and how to seduce women” (McInerney, 1996: 36).

Connery’s working class roots (he had been a truck driver like Elvis [Sullivan, 1996]) meant that his portrayal of Bond reflected something of the upward-mobility thesis of the times (and a contrast to the more traditional gentlemen-hero of the Fleming novels). Like John, Paul, George and Ringo, Connery as Bond reflected the mood of times and his visual appearance – single breasted suits – “the modern man’s preferred choice” (Foulkes, 1996b : 96) or modern casual attire, his elegant Aston Martin DB5 (McCartney and Harrison both owned one by the mid 1960s) and the many exotic mis-en-scenes of the Bond films represented male aspiration. While the Beatles did not invent swinging 1960s’ cinema, *Help!* (1965) sees them planted firmly centre

stage and thus enables a reading of changing representation of masculinity, at this point, through them.

Escape

If *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) showed moments of men “breaking out” from the trappings of the indoor, work and screaming females, *Help!* (1965) can be read as a discourse of escape on a number of levels. Both the Bond and Harry Palmer²⁴ films had presented male heroes who were fiercely heterosexual, children of Hefner's 1950s' vision of men reclaiming the indoors and their identity (Ehrenreich, 1983). The Beatles are presented in the same way here. The film, as a travelogue and a celebration of upward mobility, can be read as a fiction fantasy prompted by the Beatles' own need to break out and escape from Beatlemania for a more sustained period. *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) ends with the group being whisked off to yet another midnight matinee performance by minders Norm and Shake. *Help!* (1965) provided the opportunity for men at work to become men at play and to take advantage of their fame. McCartney (1989: 47) recalls:

“I remember one of the first conversations was, hey can't we go somewhere sunny? ... The Bahamas? Sure we could write a scene in where you go to the Bahamas. And skiing. We'd like to go skiing! It was like ordering up your holidays.”

The trappings of the day job are still apparent in *Help!* (1965) not least in the title song which can be read as a reference to Ringo's need for assistance in avoiding his pursuers in the film. However, MacDonald (1994) describes how Lennon retrospectively talked about the song as a cry for help from his “fat Elvis” period, exhausted by and bloated from the rigours of touring. McCartney (The Beatles, 2003) cites a friendship with Lennon bounded by traditional masculine boundaries as a barrier to realizing that the song, despite its “help me if you can I'm feeling down” refrain, was Lennon's personal cry for help.

²⁴ The Harry Palmer films starring Michael Caine began with the *Ipcress File* (1964) followed by *Funeral in Berlin* (1965) and *Billion Dollar Britain* (1967). Palmer is generally seen as a more down to earth spy played with Caine's characteristic deadpan humour, the antithesis of Bond's glamour.

Indoor Boys

The ordinary yet extraordinary nature of the Beatles as men is established in a memorable early scene where they arrive in a limousine in a terraced street and walk up to the doors of four adjoining terraced houses (with red, green, blue and orange front doors). They are observed from across the road by two older women who discuss whether or not to wave: “they expect it, don’t they” and then comment on their fame and extraordinary nature, a reference to Beatlemania and their household name status.

“Lovely lads, and so natural. I mean, adoration hasn’t gone to their heads one jot, has it? You know what I mean ... success? ... still the same as they were before ... not spoilt one bit, just ordinary lads.”

As they step through four separate front doors they enter one large communal room. The interior of the house represents a shift from the black and white reality of 1964 to the Technicolor hyper-reality of 1965 and the upward mobility of the Beatles, but also reflects, as does the film itself, a different potential lifestyle opening up for men in the mid-1960s and, consequently, can be read as a discourse around resistant masculinities. The house is filled with contemporary designer furniture – arc lamps, an Arne Jacobson egg chair, a Robin Day sofa (Jackson, 1994) – with a well stocked book case (from which Lennon takes [and kisses] his own book *A Spaniard in the Works* [Lennon, 1964]) an action which emphasises Inglis’ (2000b : 1) “men of ideas” concept.²⁵ It is also a fantasy world. Expectations created by the outside are subverted by the inside view. They are Hefner’s playboys (Ehrenreich, 1983) reclaiming the indoors. As well as the upwardly – mobile designer furniture, the house also contains a number of surreal and displaced objects. A Wurlitzer organ, a number of vending machines along one wall and a set of American comics, all reflect the increasing influence of Americana on the UK (Hoggart, 1957).

²⁵ See Chapter 1.

Ringo Starr's centrality to the plot again draws on his "ordinary" appeal (Melly, 1970) within the extraordinary phenomenon. They are still a gang but moving up in the world. Co-ordinated different coloured front doors, telephones and pyjamas for each Beatle indicates movement from the uniform dress of *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), to a greater sense of individuality within the group. This is another significant shift and the importance of visual image is discussed later in this section. The colours on the walls are vibrant blues, purples and greens. They are men interested in their surroundings, creating a non-traditional male environment. But only men live there, in an environment that would not look out of place in a 21st century copy of *Elle Decoration*. While there is no real romantic plot, the presence of heroine Eleanor Bron and her meaningful looks to Paul McCartney and George Harrison, coupled with Lennon's reported off-screen fascination with her, (Carr, 1996), establishes their heterosexual credentials. The setting represents the idea of freedom, Ehrenreich's (1983) male revolt. They are independent men living together. They have moved out of the family home, but not to get married, something that was to become increasingly common for men throughout the decade. And, like the heroine of McCartney's *She's Leaving Home* (1967), the leaving of home (Liverpool, Beatlemania) leads to fun ("something inside she was always denied for so many years"). The juxtaposition of contemporary furnishing and Americana creates an exotic location.

Their upward mobility as men is contextualised by their upward mobility as Beatles. As in their other films the Beatles represent a resistant version of masculinity. They are not like other men portrayed in the film. Their youth and vitality is juxtaposed with the world weariness of the older men they encounter; the police inspector, the jeweller, the scientist, a marching band and Royal Guardsmen at the Palace. These all provide a representation of a traditional masculine discourse, old order, "the establishment" and the Beatles' encounters with them allow for a subversive dialogue with satirical digs at their masculinism (Brittan, 1989)²⁶, against which we can read

²⁶ The Beatles visit Asprey, the exclusive London jewellers, to get the sacrificial ring removed from Ringo's finger but the jeweller – a pompous self confident smartly attired representation of the kind of man who waits on the upper classes – fails in all of his attempts (John: "Jeweller, you're not getting anywhere are you jeweller").

They visit a scientist in order to use 'scientific' methods to remove the ring. White coats, machinery and other scientific paraphernalia abound, a representation of Harold Wilson's new Britain based on the white heat of technology (Marwick, 1998; Sandbrook, 2006). Victor Spinetti's world weary scientist banter with his incompetent sidekick (Roy Kinnear) – "It's the brain drain – his brain's

the Beatles' version of resistant masculinity (Whitehead, 2002). The setting of the emerging swinging London (Melly, 1970) of 1965 acts as a focus for their "inside yet outside the establishment" status. Iconic representations of the upper class are interspersed throughout the film. They are pursued by a Harrod's²⁷ van, seen in Asprey²⁸ the jewellers and visit Scotland Yard. All the classic London landmarks appear in the film and, at the Palace (actually Clivedon, setting for the Profumo scandal²⁹), a nod back to their success at the Royal Variety Performance in 1963 and a pre-cursor to their actual trip to the Palace later that year to receive their MBEs. This also represents the ultimate in upward mobility. The four "working class" heroes, the most famous men in Britain, seemingly offered hospitality by the Monarch.

Outdoor Boys

The use of the indoor/outdoor juxtaposition (Petersen, 1998) is used in *Help!* (1965) in a similar way to its use in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964). The outdoor scenes in the film, (skiing in Austria, beaches in the Bahamas) represent breaking out and having fun. In *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) they achieved this by running about in a field. In *Help!* (1965) it is as if the world were their playground, McLuhan's (1964) global village made (un)real in Lester's fantasy travelogue. Lester uses the performance scenes in the film to build on the work he pioneered in the first feature with outdoor

draining", despairs of lack of funding for his work – "he's out to rule the world if he can get a Government grant", of all things British (in reference to a gun) "British, you see, useless ...", demands the ring "in the name of science" but inevitably fails. (John: "You're another failure, aren't you scientist?").

The first meeting with the Police Inspector assigned to protect them (Patrick Cargill) sets the scene for their relationship:

Inspector: "So this is the famous Beatles."

John: "So this is the famous Scotland Yard."

Inspector: "How long do you think you'll last?"

John: "Can't say fairer than that. Great Train Robbery. How's that going?"

The "famous" gag then runs to the end of the film ("The famous Ringo", "I have a famous plan", "Raja the famous Bengal man eating tiger") a self deprecating reference to the Beatles' immense fame at this point.

²⁷ An article from *The New Musical Express* in 1965 details how Harrod's was kept open to allow the Beatles to do their Christmas shopping in private, a privilege usually reserved for royalty (see Chapter 1). Smith (1965: 3) describes this as being "given the freedom of Harrod's, one of London's most noted 'upper class' stores."

²⁸ Asprey had previously presented each of the Beatles with a globe-shaped cocktail cabinet (Norman, 1981).

²⁹ A scandal involving Government Minister John Profumo and call girl Christine Keeler in 1963 is generally credited with the downfall of the Conservative Government the following year (see Chapter 2 and Sandbrook, 2005 for a full account).

settings and their “breaking out” implications replacing the confined indoor spaces of *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964). This is important in terms of representation. While the outdoors has provided the backdrop of the most masculine of film genres, the Western (Branston and Stafford, 1996), the Western’s rugged landscape for rugged men scenario is subverted by the Beatles’ feminized and narcissistic appearance (Cohan, 1993; Neale, 1993). In a scene where the group are supposedly recording on Salisbury Plain (www.youtube.com/watch?v=12dNwMtrjTI), protected by the army from Ringo’s pursuing hordes, the group wear a “feminized” version of military chic which can be read as subversive (Hebdidge, 1978). The resistant masculinities on display serve to undermine the phallic military tank symbolism. The whole idea of recording outdoors is surreal in itself, the military presence makes it more so and the scene pre-empts the Monty Python team’s juxtaposition of indoor objects in outdoor settings by several years³⁰. Harrison and Starr wear military jackets in the style of those that they would all wear for their appearance at New York’s Shea Stadium later that year (The Beatles, 2003). Starr also wears a huge military tam-o-shanter which gives his outfit a further air of camp.

McCartney wears a mushroom coloured suit, with brown roll neck sweater, again with matching, mushroom suede boots. The browns and greens, “natural” outdoor colours, along with the greens and browns of the surrounding environment and the military hardware on display are a precursor to the outdoor settings the group would favour in film and photography over the next two years and also a hint of hippydom to come – an emphasis on the “natural”, the environment and the outdoors. Robert Freeman’s cover shot for *Rubber Soul*, released in late 1965, shows headshots of the Beatles set against a backdrop of foliage and their promotional films (the forerunner of the pop video) for *Paperback Writer* and *Rain* in 1966 again showcased the Beatles’ “feminized” appearance in an outdoor, natural setting³¹. The Beatles’ appearance at

³⁰ Monty Python’s *Flying Circus* (BBC 1969 – 74) grew out of the British satire movement via the Cambridge Footlights. George Harrison famously financed their film *Life of Brian* (1979) when EMI pulled out due to the contentious plot line. Harrison also made a cameo appearance in Eric Idle’s Beatles’ spoof *The Rutles : All you need is cash* (1978). The songs for this programme were all written by Neil Innes of the Bonzo Dog Band, who make an appearance in *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967). At the *Concert for George* (2002) which followed Harrison’s death in 2001, various Pythons, joined by actor Tom Hanks, performed Monty Python’s *The Lumberjack Song* (1969).

³¹ The promo film for *Rain* (1966) [www.youtube.com/watch?v=FTLJM5bEnno] provides the best illustration of the outdoor setting and represents a continuation of the work Lester began in *Help!* (1965). Made in colour for the outdoor shots and black and white for the indoor performance shots

Shea Stadium in 1965 was the first large-scale outdoor performance by a pop group. The outdoor festival was to become central to the hippy culture from 1967 onwards with Woodstock (1969) providing perhaps the best known example.

A later scene showing the group skiing in the Alps sees McCartney sporting a zip up fur jacket, definitely of the unisex variety, while Harrison wears a top hat and cape and Starr and Lennon wear nautical caps [www.youtube.com/watch?v=EsXtg-92KUI]. Again, these outfits challenge the traditional masculinism (Brittan, 1989) of the suit and tie and reflect changing options for men at the time. Their choice of halves of lager and lime as opposed to the traditional “male” pint in another scene set in a London pub further adds to their upwardly- mobile, “feminized” credentials.

Men of Ideas

Inglis (2000b : 1) describes how the Beatles’ journey through the 1960s took them from the traditional pop group “to be looked at-ness” (Mulvey, 1975: 18) to “men of ideas” (Inglis 2000b : 1) whose ideas, views, creativity and ideologies became culturally significant. *Help!* (1965) marks a transition from the former to the latter in

(unlike the wholly black and white promos they had previously produced), the film, set in Chiswick Park, is an early example of the use of flowers, trees and foliage in relation to pop music – a forerunner of the “flower power” that was to consume UK and US pop music one year later in 1967. The song *Rain* described by Stone Roses’ guitarist John Squire as “Edward Lear set to music and casual to the point of nonchalance” (Squire, 2000: 58) is also a precursor to the Beatles’ shift to a more psychedelic style on the *Revolver* Album (1966), both musically and lyrically.

The promotional film itself represents a form of ‘breaking out’ – seen as a way of promoting the group without the gruelling tour schedules they had previously followed, the concept can be read as a “revolt”, in its own right, against the humdrum breadwinner existence. The outdoor shots are juxtaposed with indoor performance shots which provides a play/work binary (Peterson, 1998), the indoor shots providing a reminder of the endless touring-as-work as seen in *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964).

Headshots, close-ups, longer hair, the introduction of facial ornamentation – round sunglasses and big sideboards – all feature in the film. Trees, grass and foliage form the back drop as the group perform the song outdoors, wander around a huge hothouse among plants and flowers, while small children are seen playing among the trees.

In retrospect the film can be seen as a representation of masculinity on the cusp, before full blown psychedelic hippy culture and the accompanying changes in male hairstyle and clothing.

A “way out” sign is a pointer to the language of hippy to come and the closing of a wooden gate at the end of the film can be interpreted as a no going back statement [the Beatles had all experienced LSD by this point in 1966] (The Beatles, 2000).

Jewellery is much in evidence. John Lennon’s bracelet, with daises inserted in the links, is a highly significant close-up visual image providing a number of clues about the direction of travel of male attire at this point in the 1960s.

the same way as its soundtrack makes a transition from early 1960s single focussed pop to late 1960s album focused rock. This transition saw male artists transformed from the puppets of tin pan alley songwriters and Svengali like managers (Savage, 1991) to the artist as auteur, resulting in albums such as the Beach Boys *Pet Sounds* (1966) and the Beatles' *Sgt Pepper* (1967) being viewed as “art” in a broader sense (Melly, 1970)³².

Dick Lester's direction provides some continuity with the previous film. Slapstick humour and silent-movie jump-cut comedy combine with the surreal – day-glo graphics, which sporadically appear, such as an indoor gardener cutting the indoor “grass” with a set of wind-up false teeth, and an “intermission” sequence, with the Beatles in an outdoor rural setting. In this sense the film looks backwards to Lester's *Goons* connection but also forward to mid 1960s' pop art TV (Chapman, 2000; Ingham 2003). Its influence and links with other TV and film series of the time is also significant. Lennon is quoted as realizing in retrospect that Lester was “a bit ahead of his time with the Batman thing” (Carr, 1996 : 64). Ingham (2003) sees its pop art style as highly influential on future US TV shows. The Beatles' proximity as men of ideas (Inglis, 2000b : 1) to Lester as man of ideas is an important element in their 1960s' journey. The style over substance approach apparent in *Help!* (1965) has also seen it linked to the cult TV series *The Avengers* (Topping, 1998), particularly the 1965-1967 Diana Rigg/Patrick MacNee phase, “when it abandoned any pretence of realism or seriousness and moved decisively in the direction of fantasy and tongue-in-cheek humour” (Chapman, 2000: 38). In his work on *The Avengers* Chapman (2000) characterizes it as a key text of the 1960s, a window on what Marwick (1998) has termed the “high sixties”, and sees it as a hybrid of internationalisation (in terms of finance and production) and quintessential Englishness. The pastiche, intertextuality and post-modernism Chapman (2000) identifies in *The Avengers*; “the foregrounding of style over narrative and the very knowing and deliberate playing with generic conventions” (Chapman, 2000: 64), is also at work in Lester's *Help!* (1965). Interestingly, at this point, the Beatles were about to take this visual post-modernism and use it as a jumping off point for future audio production in the studio.

³² See Chapter 1.

Revolver (1966) was an album filled with a knowing and deliberate playing with musical conventions, combining traditional bass, drums and guitars with backwards tape loops and instrumentation via an interest in Stockhausen and the avant garde (MacDonald, 1994). *Help!* (1965) also marks the turning point in Beatle lyric writing, particularly Lennon's, from throwaway "boy meets girl" lyrics, which characterized their early hits such as *I Want to Hold Your Hand* (1963), to more self expressive and personal lyrics. Lennon has cited Bob Dylan's work as an influence in this respect (Robertson, 2002) and Dylan's meeting with the Beatles in New York in 1964 is seen as a significant event for all partners in terms of their subsequent creativity (Stark, 2005)³³. Lennon had already produced two books by 1965³⁴ and his increasing use of marijuana may also have been an influence on this change, which became more marked when he began using LSD (The Beatles, 2000). Goldman (1988: 219) sees the change of environment from Liverpool to London as significant.

"Lennon was employing the new medium of the pop song like a serious artist, using it as a lens through which to scrutinize quietly and accurately the character of the strange new life he was experiencing in London"

Inglis (1997) charts significant differences between their approaches to love songs between earlier and later Beatles' material with personal experiences and globalized perspectives developing. Lennon's Dylanesque *You've got to hide your love away* (1965) [www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNMhpQoEbJE] from the *Help!* (1965) soundtrack is often seen as the start of this process³⁵. While Dylan had firmly established the singer-songwriter genre in the UK and US pop charts by 1965 it can be argued that the Beatles' global popularity, and emerging recognition of their position as men of ideas, meant that they popularized the idea that men could express feelings and emotions in song. The roots of 1980s' "new man" (Nixon, 1997) can be traced

³³ Dylan's appearance at the Newport Folk Festival in 1965 with an electric band (seemingly influenced by his admiration of the Beatles) caused a furore among folk purists. In 1966 Dylan was famously confronted by a shout of "Judas" at a Manchester Free Trade Hall concert. This is well documented in Martin Scorese's film, *No Direction Home* (2006).

³⁴ *Spaniard in the Works* (1964) and *In His Own Write* (1965).

³⁵ *I'm a Loser* from *Beatles for Sale* (1964) is also a contender.

back to this point. The singer-songwriter as genre³⁶ certainly represents a challenge to traditional masculine discourses in this sense.

Help! (1965), despite its racist depiction of “Eastern” villains played by “browned up” white actors³⁷ (Ingham, 2003), marks the beginning of the Beatles’ interest in Indian culture and music which was to be highly influential in the late 1960s. Their position as men of ideas and their importance in opening up cross cultural traffic in the areas of music, clothing, religion and philosophy is not to be underestimated (MacDonald, 1994). The populist portrayal of the road to the hippy ideal and philosophy, and its implications for emerging resistant masculine identities (Whitehead, 2002), began with *Help!* (1965), specifically in a scene shot in one of London’s newly opened Indian restaurants (the Rajarama), itself an indication of the first stages of cross-cultural pollination. The scene features a band of Indian musicians playing Beatles’ songs. George Harrison first picked up the sitar on the set and later had a chance meeting with Swami Vishnu Devanda. Both events were to have a significant effect, both musically and personally and a decision to study the sitar with Ravi Shankar³⁸ led to a lifelong friendship and Harrison’s using his celebrity status to organise the first global musical fundraising event, the Concert for Bangladesh, in 1971 (The Beatles, 2000).

The Beatles as Pre-Metrosexual

Mark Simpson’s 21st century “discovery” “the metrosexual” has, it can be argued, its roots firmly in the mid 1960s and the Beatles in *Help!* (1965) can be read as metrosexual or, perhaps, pre-metrosexual. Simpson (2004 : 51) describes the typical metrosexual as

³⁶ US artists such as Neil Young and James Taylor and UK artists such as Nick Drake, Tim Buckley and John Martyn (the latter three all now deceased) retain a strong fan base in the early 21st century.

³⁷ “Browning Up” was a seemingly perfectly acceptable practice in the 1960s and 1970s. Peter Sellers played an ‘Indian’ character in *The Millionairess* (1960), with a spin-off record hit in which he was accompanied by Sophia Loren, and sang in a fake Indian accent, (*Goodness Gracious Me* [1960]). He also played an “Indian” film actor in *The Party* (1968). Spike Milligan was frequently seen engaging in the practice in many 1960s and 1970s comedy shows including regular appearances as an Irish-Indian character called Paki Paddy.

³⁸ In the DVD *Concert for George* (2002) which followed Harrison’s death, Shankar speaks of George as his “son” and refers to the esteem in which he was held by people in Bangladesh.

“a young man with money to spend, living in or within easy reach of the metropolis ... they might be officially gay, straight or bisexual but this is utterly immaterial.”

Pre-dating Simpson's (2004 : 51) “über metro poster boy” David Beckham by almost 40 years, the Beatles in *Help!* (1965) can be read as a representation of the development of further feminisation (Cohan, 1993; Bruzzi, 1997) in men's visual appearance, characterized by increased hair length and a more dandified dress sense.

By 1965, the phrase unisex was in circulation via the mass media. Entrepreneurs like Mary Quant and, more significantly for men, John Stephens, had invented the boutique as opposed to the clothes shop (Marwick, 1998; Sandbrook, 2006) and “Carnaby Street” became a globally recognised “brand” in itself, representing these new developments. The boutique provided both young men and women with a multi-coloured, pop-soundtrack filled environment in which to buy the latest fashions. The clothes worn by the Beatles in *Help!* (1965) reflect this change for men, a development of the mod style of the early 1960s (Hewitt, 2001) and a more “feminized” look in many ways. The suits worn with coloured roll neck sweaters, the introduction of coloured shirts, materials such as corduroy and denim and the addition of capes and hats can all be seen as examples of early metrosexuality. Simpson (2004) argues that while metrosexuality can be read as emasculation, or an opposition to masculinity (Brittan, 1989) it can, at the same time, be read as liberating through its aesthetic pleasures, and the Beatles' visual appearance in *Help!* (1965) can be seen as a representation of Stacey's (1992) possibilities of pleasure.

This feminized (Cohan, 1993; Neale, 1993) pre-metrosexual look is on show throughout *Help!* (1965) particularly where Lester stops the action in order to gaze (Mulvey, 1975; Cohan, 1993; Neale, 1993) at the Beatles' performance. As in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), *Help!* (1965) provides the opportunity for the audience to gaze at the Beatles at a number of points in the film. One early scene in the film shows the Beatles in the recording studio (www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSPmBoa) a diegetic performance with non diegetic moments, a good example of Lester's experimental style. Beautifully lit (Ingham, 2003: 197) and shot in soft focus with a blue filter, the addition of Ringo Starr's cigarette smoke gives the whole scene an

indoor jazz club feel and in-scene drug jokes (“boys are you buzzing?”) reminding the audience that it is “swinging” 1965. It is an invitation, via close up shots of heads, hands, hair, mouths and guitars, to look at the Beatles in their coloured shirts and polo neck casuals. This provides another example of the Beatles’ resistance to hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004). McKinney (2003: 75) regards them in this scene as “posed merely for their magnificence as objects” in a similar way to their to be looked at-ness (Mulvey, 1975: 18) [“try not to jiggle out of position”] in *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964). However, it is through this position as objects to be looked at that their resistance to the traditional male film hero, with its connotations of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) and patriarchal capitalism (Fiske, 1992) is established. The other men in the scene – the studio engineers in the control room – attired in shirts and ties and dark rimmed 1950s’ style glasses-appear to belong to a different era, and to reflect Brittan (1989) and Fiske’s (1992) conceptualisation of traditional masculinity. Again the juxtaposition within the scene is crucial to an understanding of this state of affairs.

Conclusion

In recalling memories of his 1960s’ childhood in his novel *One for my Baby* (2001) former music journalist Tony Parsons reflects on the Beatles’ pervasive influence on the cultural landscape of 1960s’ Britain.

“That land was an odd, insular place with real winters, where every foreign holiday to Greece or Spain felt like the trip of a lifetime. The Beatles had come and gone and left behind a kingdom where suburban grown-ups smoked for the same reason that they wore paisley skirts and miniskirts, the same reason they nervously went to Italian and Indian restaurants – because they thought it made them look young and sophisticated.”

(Parsons, 2001 : 69-70)

Help! (1965) seems to encapsulate this period succinctly, a period Parsons (2001 : 70) also describes as a time “when the clothes and the television sets and the expectations were going from black and white to colour ...” and the switch from black and white to colour at the beginning of the film is significant as has been discussed in this section.

The exotic Technicolor travelogue that is *Help!* (1965), containing, as it does discourses around upward mobility for the Beatles, and, by implication, other young mid-1960s men caught up in the classless society discourse prevalent at the time (Marwick, 1998; Sandbrook, 2006), is, then, a text which draws together a number of academic and popular ideas at work in UK society by the mid 1960s. These discourses are constructed particularly through the mis-en-scene of the film, through its indoor pre-metrosexual (Simpson, 2004), pre-loft-living accommodation that the Beatles occupy early in the film, but, mainly, through the indoor/outdoor juxtapositioning (Petersen, 1998) which equates the outdoors with escape. This discourse is also at work in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) but appears to go into overdrive in *Help!* (1965), representing a reflection, to some extent, of the pace at which the Beatles' own lives and global success had escalated between 1964 and 1965 (Norman, 1981; Stark, 2005).

Help! (1965) offers a second opportunity to look at and study the “to-be-looked-at-ness” (Mulvey, 1975 : 18) of the Beatles and the more feminized (Cohan, 1993) visual appearance described in this section is significant in terms of changing representations of masculinity in this period. In *Help!* (1965) they are metrosexual (Simpson, 2004) before it had been invented (a post-modern idea if ever there was one). The camp codes and narcissism at work in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) are still in evidence (Neale, 1993; Shillinglaw, 1999) and the subtle differences in forms of appearance and attitudes which challenge the masculinism (Brittan, 1989) that surrounds them on show in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) are taken to another level in *Help!* (1965). It is a swinging sixties text (Stafford, 2001; Sandbrook, 2006) yet the Beatles are out on their own as the only “swinging” characters in the film.

It's “swinging” credentials are cemented by its intertextual relationship with other texts, such as the Bond films and *The Avengers* which also played with traditional discourses around class and gender (Chapman, 2000), an emergent transatlantic visual style and Lennon and McCartney's appearance together, in the same year, in a photograph which seemed to blur the homosexual/homosocial boundaries, as part of David Bailey's *Box of Pinups* (1965), a collection of photographs which supposedly “reflected the values of swinging London” (Sandbrook, 2006 : 255).

Francis Wyndham's introduction to the collection stated:

“Together, these 36 photographs make a statement not only about the man who took them, but also about London life in 1965. Many of the people have gone all out for the immediate rewards of success; quick fame, quick money, quick sex – a brave thing to do”

(Sandbrook, 2006 : 255)

Help! (1965), then, is a text which captures the Beatles as the men of the hour, unarguably an excellent case study representing the period and the discourses around masculinity at work in *Help!* (1965) are reflective not only of a number of sociological and cultural debates of the time, but also reflect the real beginnings of a resistance to the discourses of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) and hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) which had been the norm in 1950s' British cinema and were still at work in many mid-1960s' texts (Spicer, 1999). In addition, the appearance of the Beatles' song writing partners in a collection of photographs categorized as “pinups” itself provides a challenge to Mulvey's (1975) original ideas on the gaze and further ammunition for those who have challenged these ideas (Cohan, 1993; Neale, 1993; Bruzzi, 1997; Simpson, 2004).

The Beatles' Films: Magical Mystery Tour

The Film: Circumstances of Production

If *Help!* (1965) represented a departure from the mop-top world of *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) then *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) was something else entirely. Self-financed (through Apple Films) on a budget of £30k and shot over a period of two weeks in September 1967, *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) is the Beatles' foray into independent film making. Self-produced, financed, directed and based on an idea Paul McCartney had on a plane journey from New York to London (Black, 2004), the

film represents a step into post-Epstein³⁹ independence in a number of senses. Some, including the Queen of England, felt that it was a step too far for the nation's favourite male stars (Norman, 1981).

McCartney, having decided film making was “not difficult” (Neaverson, 1997 : 49) came up with the idea of drawing a circle representing an hour, dividing it into segments and asking the other Beatles to throw in ideas as to what might happen. The basic plot consisted of a “psychedelic day trip”⁴⁰ (Neaverson, 1997 : 47) undertaken by the Beatles and a set of actors and performers, a sort of traditional working class coach outing with a twist⁴¹. Various stops along the way filled up the segments: an airfield, an army recruitment centre, an Italian restaurant, and a Busby Berkeley musical set. This semi-comic, semi-narrative (Neaverson, 1997) also provided a structure in which to perform a series of new songs⁴². Later described by Dick Lester, producer of their previous films, as “totally unprepared and half cooked” (Black, 2004 : 287), the film rolled into production on September 11th when the psychedelically decorated coach, filled with cast and production crew headed out of London for Newquay, followed by a 20 car press entourage.

Escape

The “escape” discourse, previously described in discussion of the previous films permeates *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) in a number of ways. The film represents an attempt to take artistic control of their own product following what Lennon described as the “bullshit” (Miles, 1997 : 107) of *Help!* (1965) in which they had reportedly felt

³⁹ Beatles' publicist Tony Barrow stated: “Epstein's death made the next thing the Beatles did absolutely crucial” (Barrow, 1987 : 5). Epstein had died on 27th August 1967. His influence as a father figure and mentor is discussed in the section on *A Hard Day's Night* (1964). *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) sees the Beatles free of “parental influence”.

⁴⁰ The Beatles had already experimented with the double meaning of the word “trip” on their 1966 single *Day Tripper*.

⁴¹ It is suggested that McCartney was influenced by the adventures of author Ken Kesey and his Merry Pranksters who had taken a countercultural coach tour across the USA in 1965, stopping to see the Beatles at the Hollywood Bowl and playing *Help!* (1965) loudly through the external coach speakers. The trip is documented in Wolfe (1969).

⁴² Music critic Charles Shaar Murray sees the US album version of *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), which added additional singles to the UK released EP, as a continuation of, or the second half of, *Sgt Pepper* (1967), containing, as it did, *Strawberry Fields Forever* (1967) and *Penny Lane* (1967) both of which were originally intended as tracks for *Pepper* (Murray, 2004).

like extras in their own film (*The Beatles*, 2000). In its desire to put as much distance as possible between the post-*Sgt Pepper* Beatles and the likeable mop-tops of 1964, the non-packaged nature of the film and its engagement, both musically and visually, with emergent countercultural ideas (MacDonald, 2003) and hippy ideals (Marwick, 1998) represents an attempt to “break out of the straight jacket” (Neaverson, 1997 : 48) of previous vehicles. It is both a road movie, that most traditional of male genres,⁴³ yet it continues to create discourses around escape seen in the previous films and places representations of alternative masculinities on the global stage. The confined spaces of *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) and the upwardly mobile consumerism of *Help!* (1965) are replaced by a journey from the city to the countryside, Petersen’s (1998) inside/outside binary once again coming into play. The Beatles abandon both the work ethic and the gendered narrative central to the traditional pop musical in favour of what would later be seen as an art house production⁴⁴. Neaverson, (1997 : 55) states:

“Despite the lack of narrative coherence, the film enjoys an astonishing eclecticism and, like *A Hard Day’s Night*, draws on a number of cinematic styles, happily jumping between, and at times combining, formal conventions from several different contemporary and historical genres.”

This escape from the formal conventions of the pop musical is important in that its radical form seems to be a deliberate act, with a rejection of logic, so that the film becomes a set of loosely associated scenes, some musical and some not, with the non-diegetic performances established by Lester in *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) taken one stage further. The songs are often used solely as accompaniment to a surreal visual sequence. McCartney describes the process thus: “we just got a lot of things ready and fitted them together” (Gambaccini, 1976 : 28) but Neaverson (1997) draws comparisons with surrealist cinema, in particular Dali and Bunûel’s *Un Chien andalou* (1928), citing “the surreal iconography of the mis-en-scene” (Neaverson,

⁴³ The film predates *Easy Rider* (1969) seen, by many, as **the** countercultural road movie (Biskind, 1999) by two years.

⁴⁴ McCartney has claimed that Steven Spielberg has cited the film as influential (Neaverson, 1997; *The Beatles*, 2003).

1997 : 55), including the wearing of animal suits, policemen swaying on a wall, a military officer interacting with a stuffed cow, and the displacement of cinematic conventions. This dream imagery can also be linked to the psychedelic experiences brought on by taking LSD. All of the Beatles had experimented with LSD by this point and Lennon's writing in particular had shown influences of this since the *Revolver* (1966) album⁴⁵. Thus the film can also be read as an escape from reality of the everyday, a rejection of the male bread winner role outlined by Ehrenreich (1983) but also a rejection of Hefner's consumerist playboy lifestyle (a discourse at work in *Help!* [1965]) that was touted as a replacement within a capitalist framework (Ehrenreich, 1983).

A Dalliance with the Counterculture

Instead, *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) can be seen as representing a rejection of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) and a dalliance with the counterculture, men on a creative mission fuelled by illegal substances. "Being in a band meant you had the chance of avoiding a boring job", McCartney retrospectively noted in an interview in 2004 (Wilde, 2004 : 47).

Of the four films in this case study *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) is the one in which the Beatles are not shown working in any shape or form. No boring jobs to attend to at all. It is all about play, ideas and the possibility of something else. That "something else" can be loosely read as an engagement with what has been termed 1960s' counterculture. According to Marwick (1988) the term was introduced by Roszak (1970 : XI) who states:

"The counter culture is the embryonic cultural base of New Left politics, the effort to discover new types of community, new family patterns, new sexual mores, new kinds of livelihood, new aesthetic forms, new personal identities on the far side of power politics, the bourgeois home and the protestant work ethic."

⁴⁵ "I must have had a thousand trips ... I used to eat it all the time" Lennon is quoted as saying in 1970 (Wenner, 1971 : 76). See also Chapter 1.

There is much debate, beyond the scope of this chapter about the existence of a single counterculture (MacDonald, 1994; Marwick, 1998; Sandbrook, 2006) but Roszak's (1970) definition gives a flavour of what has come to be seen in retrospect as a number of "movements" both political and cultural "which contrasted with, or were critical of, the conventional values and modes of established society" (Marwick, 1998 : 12), movements which, according to Marwick (1998 : 13) "permeated and transformed" society in the longer term, an idea interpreted by many (Martin, 1981; Marwick, 1998; Sandbrook, 2006) as success rather than failure in the context of a grand narrative. The assimilation of many elements of 1960s' countercultural activity in the mainstream, such as the emergence of political interest groups around gender, sexuality or single issues, operating outside of the constraints of the main political parties (Marwick, 2003), or the context and style of cultural products from the worlds of art, television and cinema which were to be influential in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Martin, 1981; Biskind, 1999) are examples of the way in which the idea of counterculture brought together the arena of politics and culture, a kind of logical progression from the satire movement and the golden age of TV discourse of the early 1960s, discussed in Chapter 2, in a questioning of established values. In this sense *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), a product with the decade's key cultural icons (Evans 1984; Marwick, 1998) at the centre, can be read as a countercultural text.

Men of Ideas

"During the last five years of the sixties it seemed to many fans of the Beatles that the group was somehow above and beyond the ordinary world : ahead of the game and orchestrating things."

(MacDonald, 2003 : 87)

It is useful here to revisit Inglis' notion of the Beatles as "men of ideas" (Inglis, 2000b : 1). Neaverson (1997) advances the view that by the time of *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) the Beatles had, indeed, recognised their role as "men of ideas" (Inglis, 2000b : 1) and had begun to view themselves as "cultural all rounders" (Neaverson, 1997 : 49). Their experimentation with the musical avant garde and an increasing interest in

exploring what could be created in the studio had culminated in the release of *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) earlier that year⁴⁶. The cross fertilization of ideas at work in *Pepper* and Lennon and McCartney's evolving interest in the musical and artistic developments of 1966 and 1967⁴⁷ were probably what led to the idea of a self produced and directed film. Booker (1969) describes the emergence of an overall pop culture in the mid 1960s which transcended class, cultural and age differences. The "men of ideas" (Inglis, 2000b : 1) had once again managed to place themselves at the centre of this emerging phenomenon and, thus there is an inevitability about *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), a step beyond what is still seen by many as the pinnacle of their work (Melly, 1970; Porterfield, 2006) and the gang, post-Brian and off the leash, on what some saw at the time, and many have seen since, as a foolhardy venture (Drummond, 1968; The Beatles, 2000). The fact that all four Beatles had or were on the way to branching out into other aspects of the arts at this point is significant as part of the "ideas" discourse. Lennon's books and his appearance in Dick Lester's *How I Won the War* (1966) and McCartney's collaboration with George Martin on the sound track of the Boutling Brothers' *The Family Way* (1966) were solo projects which took the group's main songwriters into new areas. Starr's acclaimed performances in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and *Help!* (1965), particularly the former, were to lead to film roles in *Candy* (1968) and *The Magic Christian* (1969) [with Peter Sellers]. George Harrison's interest in the sitar and his immersion in eastern spiritualism was, claims MacDonald (2003), highly influential in popularising and mainstreaming what we now know of world music and all things eastern by the early 1970s⁴⁸.

The six new songs written for the film, not fitting into any existing format, were released as a double EP accompanied by a 24-page colour booklet with lyrics, cartoons and pictures from the film, a multi-media object d'art, never done before. Neaverson (1997 : 54) sees this as being "partly born of the Beatles' pioneering desire

⁴⁶ See section on *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band* (1967) in chapter 1.

⁴⁷ See Chapter 1.

⁴⁸ In the early 1970s my friends and I would hang out on a Saturday in a shop called Boodle-Am. Set amongst the concrete and glass of Leeds City Centre it was an exotic oasis of Indian fabrics, exotic smells, joss sticks, ethnic jewellery, cheesecloth and loon pants. Such an experience would not have been possible in the early 1960s. The Beatles and their relationship to exotica (Hutnyk, 2000) is an area for future exploration beyond the scope of this thesis.

to experiment with unconventional formats”, an observation that could also apply to the film itself. Inglis’s (2000b :1) “men of ideas” concept is rooted in the idea of art, creativity and left-field-ness and in this sense represents a counter-hegemonic version of masculinity (Gramsci, 1971; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) which subverts the values of masculinism (Brittan, 1989). This provides an interesting contrast to the post - Blair corporate conceptualisation of men of ideas, well articulated in two media products current at the time of writing. BBC1’s *The Apprentice* (2008) [<http://www.bbc.co.uk/apprentice>] featuring Rolls-Royce driving entrepreneur Sir Alan Sugar and his “You’re fired” catchphrase oozes corporate masculinity (Collinson and Hearn, 1994; Whitehead, 2002) and rampant masculinism (Brittan, 1989). Set in the world of the boardroom the “ideas” in question all relate to consumer capitalism. When Lennon, giving a rationale for the establishing of *Apple* as a business acquisition at a press conference in 1967, said “we want to set up a system whereby people who just want to make a film about anything don’t have to go on their knees in somebody’s office. Probably yours” (The Beatles, 2003), he could easily have been addressing Alan Sugar. BBC’s *Mad Men* (BBC, 2008) set in the advertising agencies of Madison Avenue, New York in 1960, has the men of ideas thesis as its heart but, again, these ideas relate to selling the capitalist consumer dream (Baudrillard, 1998) and both creativity and gendered behaviours are bound by specific rules. The series, interestingly, draws on some of Ehrenreich’s (1983) ideas about men in this period and the tensions inherent in the world of hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) that they inhabit. Standard suits and ties are the order of the day in both of these offerings, a sign of the discourse of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) at work (www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRDQgw-QiBU).

The costumes and facial ornamentation (glasses, moustaches, sideburns) worn by the Beatles in *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) provide a stark contrast to the appearance of men in these current cultural products and to their suited and booted selves in *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964), operating as signs of anti-masculinism (Brittan, 1989). This will be discussed further, later in this section.

Arcadia in Albion

Magical Mystery Tour (1967) is both musically and visually part of the psychedelic scene that had established itself in the UK in this period (Marwick, 1998; MacDonald, 2003). Mäkelä (2004) sees psychedelia as the coming together of pastoral mythology, the notion of “Arcadia in Albion”⁴⁹ and an interest in the images of childhood. MacDonald (1994 : 173) argues that the “true subject of English psychedelia was neither love nor drugs, but nostalgia for the innocent vision of the child” and Mäkelä (2004) lists a number of UK pop songs from the period with childhood and innocence at their heart⁵⁰. Campbell (1987 : 224) sees the ethos of childhood as being opposed to the “ethos of bureaucracy”, and, as such, in opposition to the principles of the adult world. In this sense it can be seen to be in a opposition to the values of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) and hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell 1995; Hearn, 2004). The *Can't Buy Me Love* (1964) scene in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) provides an early example of The Beatles as men acting as children. In this scene they escape to the outdoors, run about in a field like four small boys, eventually being told off by a groundsman (“Sorry we hurt your field, Mister.”) Mäkelä (2004 : 115) argues that British Psychedelia is a movement “in which the childlike world view becomes prominent.” *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) set, as it is, within the context of the counterculture (“a way of life deliberately different from that which is normal or expected” [Chambers Dictionary 1998 : 373]) therefore can be viewed as a key text within this movement. The film itself can, therefore, be read as being in opposition to the values of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) and as a counter hegemonic text of itself. Drugs, according to Huxley (1973 : 23) restore “some of the peripheral innocence of childhood.”⁵¹ The LSD influenced visuals of *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), combined with Lennon’s Lewis Carroll inspired imagery within the lyrics of *I am the Walrus*, (1967) [www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqoKVonLrH8] the film’s visual and

⁴⁹ A phrase more recently popularised by Pete Docherty of the Libertines (now Babyshambles) referring to a mythical ship, the Albion, (Albion is also a term used to describe England or Britain) sailing towards the legendary place of Greek mythology – Arcadia – a Utopian vision of pastoral life. The first part of Evelyn Waugh’s *Brideshead Revisited* (1960) is entitled *et in Arcadia ego* with reference to the idyllic lifestyle of the hero.

⁵⁰ These include *Simon Smith and His Amazing Dancing Bear* by the Alan Price Set, *Ha Ha Said the Clown* by Manfred Mann and *My White Bicycle* by Tomorrow plus Syd Barrett’s work with the Pink Floyd circa 1967.

⁵¹ Beatles’ publicist Derek Taylor stated: “My boyhood innocence seemed to have been returned to me by LSD. Some found only God. I also found Piglet and Pooh and Mr Toad” (Taylor, 1987 : 74). It is also worth noting that the use of ecstasy in the UK rave culture of the late 1980s and early 1990s involved much tactile activity and the wearing of children’s dummies.

musical centrepiece (Neaverson, 1997), reflects Campbell's (1987 : 224) "ethos of childhood."⁵² In this sense *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), as well as incorporating much of this childhood vista into "the 'texture' of the text" (Fairclough, 1995 : 184) can also be seen as a text akin to some of those which it incorporates as influences. Classic children's texts such as *Wind in the Willows* (1908), with its rural idyllic ideal as an escape from the industrialisation at work in the UK when it was written, or A.A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh* (1926), written following his traumatic World War One experiences, are other texts which offer an escape into rural tranquillity. These can be read as children's stories permeated with discourses of escape and ideals later returned to by the countercultural movement in the late 1960s and, similarly, T S Elliot's (1946 : 15) "hidden laughter of children in the foliage" is an image conjured up by the 'texture' of *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967).

Different from that which is normal or expected : The Subversive Agenda

MacDonald (1994 : 204) sees the film as having a subversive agenda in that it seems to be "sending up consumerism, showbiz and the clichés of the media" through The Beatles' "version of the counter-culture's view of mainstream society", while Neaverson (1997 : 62) describes the film as being "charged with a deeply satirical mockery of both the establishment and 'straight' society". As in *Help!* (1965) representations of the pillars of the establishment are in evidence; the law, the military, Christianity, sexual censorship and even the notion of working class entertainment – the coach trip itself, carnival, the pub and the club – come under fire. Neaverson (1997) sees the anti-establishment ideology of the film as complementary to its lack of traditional narrative construction and the mockery of the various institutions is achieved through a range of techniques at work in the film. The visual surrealism borrowed from the goons via Dick Lester, the realist documentary style commonly employed by 1960s film makers such as Ken Loach, and a pastiche of traditional Hollywood styles all come together, to create a satirical take on mid-1960's Britain. The scenes featuring Victor Spinetti as an army recruitment officer are

⁵² Lennon's *Strawberry Fields Forever* (1967) and McCartney's *Penny Lane* (1967) were both songs about childhood recollections of Liverpool and were originally intended for inclusion on *Pepper* (1967), the original concept of which was to be a nostalgic journey into the past.

particularly interesting. Black (2004 : 291) refers to this as “pythonesque”. The scenes predates the *Monty Python*⁵³ series by two years but use a surreal indoor/outdoor juxtaposition (Petersen, 1998) of objects (for example, a desk in a field and a stuffed cow attached to a plank), in a style which would become commonplace on *Python*. Spinetti, as a recruiting sergeant barks meaningless orders, again reminiscent of *Python*, in a surreal send up of the military and the values of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) inherent in this institution. Establishment approaches to censorship and “good” taste are also questioned. The BBC had already banned *A Day in the Life* (1967) due to perceived drug references and *I am the Walrus* (1967) on the grounds that it contained obscenities (MacDonald, 1994). Neaverson (1997 : 64) observes:

“As such it is possible that the animated ‘censored’ sign, which covers stripper Jan Carson’s breasts in the nightclub sequence, is a slyly satirical dig at both the BBC and self righteous moral crusaders such as Mary Whitehouse.”⁵⁴ (www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9x4vLrHSm4)

The film attempts, at a number of points, to represent a state of heightened awareness achieved through the use of mind expanding drugs, and this must also be considered as part of the subversive and counter-hegemonic (Gramsci, 1971) agenda of the film. The film switches between psychedelic fantasy/reality (read drugged/clean of drugs) states (Neaverson, 1997), implying dull/mundane versus excitement/escape, discourses also at work in the previous two films. In the sequence which accompanies the song *Flying* (1967) [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROIcBQozUQ] images of coloured clouds are used to suggest a psychedelic “trip”, providing a contrast to the mundane banter on the actual bus trip.

“Here, the tour guide Miss Winters announces that ‘if you look to your left the view is not very inspiring’ (cut to short of real, and genuinely uninspiring landscape). ‘Ah but if you look to your right ...’ (cut to colour-filtered clouds which herald the start of the ‘flying’ sequence.)”

(Neaverson, 1997 : 65)

⁵³ See Footnote 30.

⁵⁴ See Chapter 2.

The fact that the first screening of *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) was not in an art house theatre, nor a projection on a huge canvas screen at an LSD fuelled happening in London, but in a prime time slot on the BBC on Boxing Day 1967, nestling among the usual “square” Christmas fayre, raises a number of interesting questions about the Beatles as famous men and the Beatles as “men of ideas” (Inglis, 2000b : 1) at this point in history. The Beatles were able to secure a prime time slot because they **were** the Beatles. However, there is some contradiction at work in their thinking that the subversive agenda of the film would be acceptable prime-time BBC viewing. A psychedelic drug tinged film shot in colour but shown in black and white generally mystified critics and viewers. Neaverson (1997 : 70) reads the event as an example of the Beatles’ feeling that they, as famous men and cultural icons would somehow get away with it:

“Although their advocacy of certain ideas had brought them into considerable disrepute with sections of the public and the media, it had never harmed the critical or commercial reception of their work. As Britain’s cultural royalty they had no reason to believe that *Magical Mystery Tour* would be treated any differently. If anything, wouldn’t its ‘anti-commercialism’ paradoxically make it more popular?”

However, at this point in the 1960s, their journey from loveable mop-tops to men of ideas, with a seemingly increasingly counter-hegemonic (Gramsci, 1971) and subversive agenda, meant that they were on a trajectory at odds with other male performers of the era. Rebel to family entertainer was the usual trajectory for the male star (Savage, 1991). Elvis in the US and Tommy Steele and Cliff Richard in the UK had all followed this route. The Beatles, on the other were taking the opposite route. Lennon’s “Bigger than Jesus” controversy can be seen as a key point along this trajectory and the critical slating given to *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) coming soon after the Beatles’ admission that they had tried LSD⁵⁵ (The Beatles, 2000) can be seen as another. Writing for *The New Musical Express* in January 1968, Norrie Drummond stated:

⁵⁵ Interestingly, Brian Epstein’s admission that he had also taken the drug took the controversy to new heights, including a discussion in the House of Commons (Neaverson, 1997).

“It had to happen of course! The British National Press, which for the past four years had supported them, had now turned against the Beatles by viciously attacking their film ‘Magical Mystery Tour’. Almost to a man, the TV critics of the daily papers declared it a mighty flop.”

(Drummond, 1968 : 3)

The papers found the film baffling, bemusing or like the Daily Express, just “Blatant rubbish” (Drummond, 1968 : 3). A debate ensued during which the newspapers generally chose to interpret experimental as amateur while McCartney attempted to explain the concept (The Beatles, 2000). The satirical and subversive nature of the film and its representation of its male heroes in a context of anti-masculinism (Brittan, 1989) were not topics that made the debate in early 1968. A retrospective viewing of the film actually reveals it to be a fairly radical piece of cinema⁵⁶. Neaverson (1997 : 76) detects a “moral revenge” in the critical reaction of the establishment press. The fact that the Beatles looked stoned and the way that they looked generally, in terms of visual appearance, in *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) is also part of the anti-hegemonic agenda (Gramsci, 1971) and again, provides an alternative representation of masculinity to that of the hegemonic variety (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004).

Granny Takes a Trip⁵⁷

“... just as elements of the narrative mirror the group’s newly acquired taste for the counter-culture, so too does the nature of the Beatles’ filmic image, as expounded by their costume, behaviour, performance and songs”

(Neaverson, 1997 : 66)

In June 1967 the Beatles had been seen, along with famous friends and acquaintances, bedecked in bells, flowers, kaftans and beards, performing *All You Need is Love* (1967) for a global TV audience (www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLxTps1V220).

⁵⁶ At the foot of the final page of notes, made when a friend and I watched the film for the purposes of writing this section, is a note which states – in capital letters – MADDER THAN WE EXPECTED.

⁵⁷ *Granny Takes a Trip* was one of several shops which appeared in London in the mid 1960s selling a mixture of clothing and Victorian artefacts (Melly, 1970).

Magical Mystery Tour (1967) sees the Beatles continue in this visual vein in floral shirts, hats, kaftans, tank-tops, flares and even animal costumes. “The Beatles are turning awfully funny, aren’t they”, the Queen is reported as saying (Norman, 1981 : 306). It is a long way from the dressed-by-Brian⁵⁸ homoerotic boyish look of *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964). The fact that they do not appear as themselves (the famous men, “The Beatles”), but rather in a number of “roles” throughout the film, allows for various presentations of self (Goffman, 1967). Neaverson (1997 : 69) argues that they manage to “amalgamate elements of hippy drug culture, eastern philosophy and underground satire into a single self image” drawing on “the fashions of different youth sub-cultures”. For example, the costumes in the *I am the Walrus* (1967) sequence combine day-glo, psychedelic and Indian styles while in the *Fool on the Hill* (1967) sequence McCartney is seen wearing a navy style greatcoat which would become staple wear for teenage boys in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At various points in the film they appear dressed as wizards, camping it up above the clouds “orchestrating things” just as MacDonald (2003 : 87) suggests. Hats and moustaches, sideboards and glasses (what has been termed here “facial ornamentation”) are also much in evidence. The bright colours and mixing of styles, plus the camp behaviour in the “wizard” sections of the film, can be seen as taking the arguments about the “feminized” look in the section on *Help!* (1965) to another level. Many of the items worn in the film were already available on the High Street. MacDonald’s (2003 : 87) point about the Beatles being “above and beyond the ordinary world” at the centre of things, famous men being looked at by other men, is relevant here. Their attire in *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), taken together with the silk military outfits worn on the cover of *Pepper* (1967), and in the promo film for *Hello Goodbye* (1967), represent the high water mark (Thompson, 1972)⁵⁹ of men’s “feminized” clothing in the 1960s and also act as signs (Hebdidge, 1978) of the subversive anti masculinist (Brittan, 1989) agenda at work in the film.

⁵⁸ Epstein also abandoned his trademark Saville Row suits for floral patterned shirts at this point.

⁵⁹ In *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1972) Hunter S Thompson argues that there is a point in the 1960s – a high water mark – after which things – politically, culturally and artistically – begin to roll back, and to return to less radical forms of expression (see Chapter 2).

Painting the Car and the Granny Glasses

Mäkelä (2004 : 172) sees these “lurid costumes” as linked to another 1967 Beatles artefact; Lennon’s Rolls-Royce Phantom V which Mäkelä (2004 : 120) reads as “an extraordinary work of art”. In early 1967 Lennon had the car repainted in bright yellow with accompanying designs, including flowers and zodiac signs, in reds, blues, greens, turquoises and gold. Described by publicist Derek Taylor as a “cross between a psychedelic nightmare and an autumn garden on wheels” (Taylor, 1987 : 149), the car caused much comment in the press partly because it provided a perfect complement to the Beatles’ changing visual appearance at this point and to the exciting changes in visual media as TV moved from black and white to colour (Parsons, 2001; Sandbrook, 2006). The bus on which the mystery tour takes place in the film is also painted in psychedelic designs. More significantly, the Rolls-Royce, vehicle of choice of Sir Alan Sugar and other successful masculinists (Brittan, 1989), as already noted, is, according to Mäkelä (2004 : 126) a “heavily coded artefact”. Its connotations of business, success and affluence, it can be argued, were subverted by painting it in the signs and symbols of the counterculture and as such, subverted its role as a symbol of hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004). Mäkelä (2004 : 128) sees the film itself as another “painting the car project” in that similar subversive discourses and the mocking of “normal” “straight” society and conventions, particularly with reference to symbols of masculinity, are at work in both projects. Lennon and the other Beatles, were, indeed, self made men but, as has been argued previously, their status as “men of ideas” (Inglis, 2000b : 1) included a rejection of the values of masculinism (Brittan, 1989). Just as Lennon’s Rolls Royce had been transformed from its standard appearance into a psychedelic artefact, so the Beatles were similarly transformed from their appearance in more standard men’s attire in *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) to their flamboyant *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) selves. The significance of this in terms of changing representations of masculinities should not be underestimated as a reflection of changes in mens’ visual appearance over this relatively short period.

Another key artefact, with similar significance, making an appearance in *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) is a pair of glasses, once referred to as “granny glasses” and now

known worldwide as “John Lennon glasses”⁶⁰ (Wenner, 1971). Despite his atrocious eyesight Lennon had resisted appearing in public in glasses, claiming that “glasses were sissy” (Cott, 1982 : 189), associating them both with effeminacy and weakness, a notion stemming from his wearing NHS spectacles as a child (Cott, 1982). Braun (1964 : 27) argues that this was “about his identity, his own decision as a pop star and a man”, suggesting that the clearly defined discourses around masculinity in the early 1960s (Segal, 1988) were a major influence on his decision. There are pictures and film clips of Lennon wearing his horn rimmed glasses offstage in the early 1960s particularly when in the studio (The Beatles, 2003) but never on stage, at press conferences or in other public arenas. Horn rimmed glasses had been worn onstage by artists such as Buddy Holly, Hank Marvin of the Shadows and Freddie Garrity of Freddie and the Dreamers and it is, perhaps, the latter who epitomises the idea of glasses in pop as somehow comical in the early 1960s (Mäkelä, 2004). However, glasses began to move from their comical/utilitarian function as the 1960s progressed. The fashion eyewear group of America was established in 1964 (Mäkelä, 2004) and by 1966 artists like Roger McGuinn of the Byrds and Scott Walker of the Walker Brothers were to be seen sporting interestingly shaped wire rimmed glasses which Rogan (1991) sees as a symbol of pop intellectualism. Thus pop artists began to draw on the “intellectual aura” (Mäkelä, 2004 : 120) of spectacles, a link to the “men of ideas” (Inglis, 2000b : 1) concept.

Lennon first wore the granny glasses for his role in Dick Lester’s *How I Won the War* (1966), a satire on the lunacy and futility of war and war movies (Sinyard, 1987). Thus, Lennon’s solo foray still placed him firmly at the centre of the UK mid-1960s’ satire movement and his first public appearance in the spectacles after the film was playing the part of a toilet attendant on the 1966 Boxing Day edition of Peter Cook and Dudley Moore’s *Not Only but Also*. The war setting for the film is significant in that Easthope (1992) argues that there are particular contexts in which it is acceptable for men to act in a “feminine” way e.g. crying, holding and comforting each other⁶¹,

⁶⁰ This style of glasses is currently to be found on ebay.co.uk with printed signature case and “John Lennon” engraved on the legs of the spectacles.

⁶¹ At the time of writing Chelsea FC footballers were seen by a global TV audience engaging in just such behaviours – weeping, comforting and hugging – following their defeat in the Champions League Final of 2008.

playing out desires along the homosexual/homosocial continuum (Sedgwick, 1985; Shillinglaw, 1999). War is one such setting and scenes of tenderness between men are commonplace in war films (Easthope, 1992).

Lennon's decision to continue to wear the glasses and to incorporate what is essentially an item with feminine and aged connotations ("granny glasses") can be explained by the emergence of what Reynolds and Ross (1996 : 385) refer to as mid 1960s' gender blurring or "gender tourism". The term unisex was in common use by this time and the boutique providing clothing for men in a "feminized" environment was very popular (Sandbrook, 2006), challenging the traditional men's outfitters as places where young men would buy clothes. Shops like "Granny takes a Trip" specialised in the nostalgia and Victoriana that the Beatles were to incorporate into their *Sgt Pepper* (1967) concept and so the glasses also reflect a mid 1960s' obsession with nostalgia (Wilson, 1985). An article in *Melody Maker* in 1967 described Lennon as looking like "a Victorian watchmaker" (Hutton, 1967 : 5) in his "new" glasses. What had once been conceptualised by Lennon as "sissy" (Cott, 1982 : 189) were now established as part of his identity for the rest of his life. The incorporation of the glasses as part of his *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) identity is another important change in the way that masculinities were represented in this period. Such was the reach of what Mäkelä (2004 : 21) calls his "Starnet", the item subsequently became known as John Lennon glasses and men continue to wear them both, it can be argued, for their fashion value and cultural significance.

Conclusion

Discourses of independence and escape permeate *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), both in the sense of it being a post-Epstein-as-father-figure, self-financed product and its construction around the idea of a coach trip, a traditional working class activity, which provides a playful contrast to the world of work. Despite its countercultural credentials the film still draws on discourses at work in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and the Northern kitchen-sink dramas discussed in association with it earlier in the chapter. The "escape" discourse in *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) has as much in common with Albert Finney's escape from the drudge of work in *Saturday Night and*

Sunday Morning (1960) by dressing up and going to the pub or Tom Courtney in *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1962) with its inside (bad)/outside (good) binary (Petersen, 1998) as it does with *Easy Rider* (1969) and other countercultural texts. Having said that, the film has significant countercultural credentials, a text which Macdonald (1994 : 33) claims reflects “the countercultural revolt against acquisitive selfishness and ... the hippies’ unfashionable perception that we can change the world only by changing ourselves.” It is a text through which the public at large, through the Beatles popularity, were exposed to some of these ideas and the fact that this was disturbing or unacceptable to the “mainstream” accounts for some of its critical failure.

The subversive agenda at work in the film, reflected through its style, production, visual appearance and the use of certain artefacts, and its status as a “painting the car project” (Mäkelä, 2004 : 128) make it a text which is resistant to mainstream values and ideas. The Beatles once again appear as “men of ideas” (Inglis, 2000b : 1) and one of the ideas in the film is to challenge masculinism (Brittan, 1989) containing, as it does, The Beatles, in terms of hair and dress, challenging the traditional masculine appearance, taking gender tourism (Reynolds and Ross, 1996) one step further in a semi-narrative steeped in countercultural and counter hegemonic (Gramsci, 1971; Carrigan et al, 1986; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) discourses. Of the four films discussed in this chapter *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), perhaps, provides the best example of the way in which Fairclough’s (1995 : 184) notion of reading “the ‘texture’ of the text” and van Dijk’s (1993) ideas about the way in which discourses are produced within texts, through a combination of setting, genre, topics, speech acts, participant positions, power relations and social meaning, come together to provide a holistic framework for analysis. The resultant conclusion is that the whole text can be read through “the play of its internal relationships” (Foucault, 1984 : 103), as a representation of a particular set of values through the interaction of a number of different components within the text and, thus, the texture of the *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) text produces a counter hegemonic (Gramsci, 1971) “anti constitutional” (Neaversen, 1997 : 111) and anti masculinist (Brittan, 1989) statement.

The Beatles' Films : Let it Be

The Film: Circumstances of Production

Let it Be (1970) is a film in three parts. Although this was not the original intention, “the movie is affectively structured into a triptych of chronological ‘acts’” (Neaverson, 1997: 110). The filming began at Shepperton’s Twickenham film studios on 2nd January 1969 (www.youtube.com/watch?v=BMGL8ghPFaA), a location chiefly chosen because Ringo Starr was due to start filming *The Magic Christian* (1969) with Peter Sellers there the following month and space had become available. The depressing atmosphere of the studio (The Beatles, 2000), however, led to a change of venue later in January to the Apple Saville Row Headquarters, where mobile studio equipment was imported from the Abbey Road Studios. This section which features both rehearsal and recording, forms the middle portion of the film. The third, and final section, consists of the group’s final performance on the rooftop of the Saville Row Headquarters.

The idea for the film had come during the previous year following the bad tempered sessions (Neaverson, 1997; The Beatles, 2000) for what is now known colloquially as *The White Album* (1968)⁶². Paul McCartney had had the idea that the group should return to its roots (Neaverson, 1997) and rehearse a set of new songs with the intention of playing a one-off live show somewhere exotic. The rehearsals would be filmed showing a piece of work under construction. McCartney apparently got his idea having seen a documentary about Picasso being filmed while constructing a painting (O’Gorman, 2004). Inglis’ (2000b : 1) “men of ideas” concept comes into play again here. As with *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) the film was to be an independent production financed through Apple Films with the Beatles retaining artistic control and coming up with the ideas. There was also to be no George Martin

⁶² The actual title is *The Beatles*.

father-figure as producer⁶³. The whole package was to consist of a film, initially envisaged as a short TV special, featuring the Beatles playing a live show and a new album. The whole project was initially titled *Get Back*, a reference to a new McCartney song but also to the idea of getting back to live performance and playing together as a group in rehearsals away from the studio trickery and soundscapes that had characterized their mid 1960s' work (Neaverson, 1997; O'Gorman, 2004).

The disagreements that had been apparent at the White Album (1968) sessions⁶⁴ soon re-emerged and suggestions that the live show should be in a Roman Amphitheatre, on a cruise liner or even a conventional venue such as the London Roundhouse were all thrown out (O'Gorman, 2004). After a week of rehearsals George Harrison walked out of the sessions and one of the conditions of his return was that the live show was dropped (Neaverson, 1997). At this point the TV documentary idea developed into a fully blown feature film, the idea being that with no live show the film/album would still constitute an interesting package. Michael Lindsay-Hogg who had worked on the *Rolling Stones' Rock 'n' Roll Circus* project (2004) and directed the Beatles' promotional films for *Hey Jude* (1968) and *Revolution* (1968) the previous year was chosen as director with the Beatles as executive producers and Apple stalwarts Dennis O'Dell and Neil Aspinall as producers.

Neaverson (1997) cites the influences of other pop music documentaries on *Let it Be* (1970), in particular Jean Luc Goddard's *One Plus One* (1968), in which the Rolling Stones were filmed in rehearsal, and D.A. Pennebacker's *Don't Look Back* (1966) which chronicled Bob Dylan's visit to the UK in 1966. As with *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) the "men of ideas" (Inglis, 2000b : 1), [and, again, the project seems to have been driven by McCartney] seemed keen to position themselves within another artistic genre. The film is sequenced chronologically and shares some of the characteristics of the previously mentioned documentary-style productions. However, Neaverson (1997) sees the film as being of interest as another example of the Beatles working as "men of ideas" (Inglis, 2000b : 1) in its minimalist approach.

⁶³ George Harrison's widow Olivia recently recalled how George and the other Beatles always regarded Martin as the adult in the room (Michaels, 2008). Elsewhere the Beatles themselves retrospectively commented on how they would hide any illegal drug use from Martin (The Beatles, 2003).

⁶⁴ See Norman (1981); Lewisohn (1992); The Beatles (2000; 2003).

“As well as avoiding the classical documentary techniques of reportage and interview, the edited film lacks the traditional narrative signifiers of temporal construction.”

(Neaverson, 1997: 110)

The viewer assumes a chronological order but there are no aural or visual clues to this, nor any real indicators of place thus focusing the viewer on The Beatles: the gang, working within their own creative medium with the viewer as voyeur, once again emphasising the non-traditional male role in the “to-be-looked-at-ness” (Mulvey, 1975 : 18) of the Beatles. Neaverson (1997) therefore ranks *Let it Be* (1970) alongside *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) as an “anti-constitutional” (Neaverson, 1997 : 111) text because of the way that it plays with cinematic form and convention.

Despite the fact that *Let it Be* (1970) has retrospectively been characterized in negative terms (“the most miserable sessions on earth” [O’Gorman, 2004 : 357]) the soundtrack album (itself surrounded by controversy⁶⁵ and described by *The New Musical Express* as “a sad and tatty end” [Anon, 1970 : 3]) won the Oscar for best musical score in 1970 adding another globally recognised prize to the Beatles’ collection. Even at their worst, the “men of ideas” (Inglis, 2000b : 1) were still, it seemed, regarded as the best.

Woman

The Beatles’ relationship with key women in their story has been discussed elsewhere⁶⁶, while the Beatles as a traditional male gang is one of the key discourses at work in *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964). In *Let it Be* (1970) the gang discourse and discourses around the Beatles’ real life relationships with women come together.

Yoko Ono’s constant presence at the *Let it Be* (1970) sessions has become a focus for

⁶⁵ Due to wranglings over the production of the album with engineer Glyn John’s original version being rejected and the tapes eventually being handed over by Lennon to Phil Spector, infamous for his early 1960s’ “wall of sound” productions, the album and consequently the film was not released until 1970. Disagreements over the “big” production rumbled on for years and 2003 saw the release of *Let it Be : Naked*, supervised by Paul McCartney and nearer to Glyn John’s stripped down original version. See Heard (2003).

⁶⁶ See Chapter 3.

a discourse around the Beatles' break-up that has lasted for 40 years. The female interloper breaking up the gang. Many have described *Let it Be* (1970) as watching "a band disintegrate" (O'Gorman, 2004 : 357) or a lesson in how bands break up (The Beatles, 2000). McCartney has, more recently, tried to subvert this time-honoured discourse with his own analysis of the break up as inevitable, as part of boys growing up and heading off in different directions as married men⁶⁷ citing lines from an old music hall song "Those wedding bells are breaking up that old gang of mine" that he and Lennon were always keen on (The Beatles, 2003) and pointing out that the break up of the gang was far more complex than the discourse allows. Even at the time he stated:

"It's going to be such an incredible, comical thing, in 50 year's time ... for people to say 'they broke up 'cos Yoko sat on an amp'."

(O'Gorman, 2004 : 359)

However, Lennon remained bitter about the sessions and particularly about Ono's treatment by the other members of the group. Even in one of his final interviews he recalled how during the recording of the song *Get Back* (1969) McCartney seemed to pointedly be directing his anger at Ono:

"You know 'Get Back to where you once belonged'. Every time he sang the line in the studio, he'd look at Yoko."

(Sheff and Golson, 1981 : 202)

A Messy Divorce

Both Lennon and McCartney have gone on record as saying that the whole process of breaking up was like a messy divorce (Sheff and Golson, 1981; The Beatles, 2000), again an indication of the homosexual/homosocial discourses at work in their story (Sedgewick, 1985; Shillinglaw, 1999).

⁶⁷ See Chapter 3.

The scene from the film which is often shown to illustrate the disintegration discourse features a discussion between Harrison and McCartney over a guitar part:

“‘I’m trying to help you but I always end up annoying you’ said McCartney, trying to remain reasonable: ‘I’ll play whatever you want me to play’ replied Harrison through gritted teeth ‘Or I won’t play at all. Whatever it is that will please you, I’ll do it.’”

(O’Gorman, 2004 : 359)

Despite the fact that they are being filmed for a documentary the conversation takes place in hushed tones, almost embarrassed, despite their status as public men (Hearn, 1992) who have chosen to be filmed at work. However, despite the conflict, they are, in many ways, still the gang hanging out together just like the gang in *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964). The eyeball to eyeball song writing partnership of Lennon and McCartney (Ellen, 2002a; The Beatles, 2000) is long gone by this stage, but their performance of McCartney’s *Two of Us* (1970) reveals a history of homosociality at work [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogLaeh6JUcO]. The song is allegedly written about McCartney’s wife Linda. However, the “You and I have memories much longer than the road that stretches out ahead” refrain certainly make it appear to be a song about male bonding and a friendship between one of the 20th century’s leading creative musical partnerships. Their performances during the film of a number of old standards dating back to their days in Hamburg, also give the impression of the gang at play. On the other hand, the tension caused by Lennon and Ono’s relationship at the time and her presence in the studio, is an obvious source of strain at several points in the film, and their use of heroin at this point means that neither of them seem particularly engaged.

“‘I didn’t give a shit about anything’ Lennon confessed. ‘I was stoned all the time on it. You sit through 60 sessions with the most big headed uptight people on earth ... And be insulted just because you love someone.’”

(O’Gorman, 2004 : 358)

Lennon and a Politicised Masculinity

Mäkelä (2004) outlines, in some detail, the media's "he's gone too far" discourse which characterised their approach to Lennon once he had become involved with Ono. *Let it Be* (1970) provides an opportunity to observe Lennon's relationship with Ono and his "politicised" persona and appearance. At the heart of this discourse, Mäkelä claims, is a mourning for Beatle-John, the seemingly "normal" apolitical mop-top pop star bound up in the "working class boy made good" discourse beloved by the media and contained in a version of, seemingly, acceptable masculinity. Lennon's radically changed visual appearance at this point caused much media comment and part of what Mäkelä (2004) interprets as mourning for Beatle John can also be read as a mourning for the certainties of early 1960s' masculinities (Segal, 1988; Brittan, 1989). The change in Lennon's visual appearance was accompanied by a shift to a more overtly politicized counter-hegemonic (Gramsci, 1971) version of masculinity which, because of his Beatle status, he had come to represent by the end of the 1960s.

"By appearing by the side of the woman who refused to stay in the background, who assumed equal status with him, who was eccentric, foreign and also older than he, Lennon violated the pattern of 'free masculinity' that had been characteristic of his stardom during Beatlemania."

(Mäkelä, 2004 : 161-2)

Mäkelä's (2004 : 142) characterization of Lennon as an "avant garde peacenik" at this point in the late 1960s is a fair appraisal of the way in which he had come to represent this new kind of politicized masculinity with links to an emerging global countercultural movement. Marwick (1998) outlines a number of key political flashpoints across Europe and the USA in 1968 and the debate which surrounded Lennon's position within the counterculture/political life, much of which centred on the song *Revolution*⁶⁸, is, in retrospect within the spirit of the times. In many ways McCartney's idea about getting back to roots and re-engaging with an audience which

⁶⁸ See Marwick (1998) on the revolutions of 1968. Lennon's dispute with the UK political left on his commitment to revolution and the meaning of his "count me out" lyric in the song *Revolution* (1968) is chronicled in Goldman (1988), *The Beatles* (2000) and Mäkelä (2004).

was at the heart of the *Let it Be* (1970) concept had already begun to be taken up by Lennon through his globally reported activities outside of the Beatles, initially through his relationship with the avant garde Ono who had been firmly characterized as other (Hall, 1997) by the media. These activities were to be stepped up as 1969 progressed with the controversy of their *Two Virgins* album (1969), featuring, as it did, their naked photographs on the cover, and the bed-ins, bag-in and other peace campaign activities that surrounded his marriage and honeymoon early in 1969 (Norman, 1981; Mäkelä, 2004). Mäkelä's (2004 : 159) argument that he "exceeded certain boundaries of how the pop celebrity was supposed to act" at a time when the print media, particularly, were becoming more interested in the superficial aspects of celebrity (Mäkelä, 2004) is interesting when placed in the retrospective context of Lennon's role as public man (Hearn, 1992). His determination to put his celebrity to political use whilst still seemingly refusing to engage with "the establishment" or the organised countercultural political left can be read as a precursor to Band Aid, Live Aid, Live 8 and the Bono/Geldof phenomenon of the late 20th and early 21st century.

Social Constructionism at Work?

Much of the conflict discourse of *Let it Be* (1970), then, is built around Ono's presence both in a broad sense and in the sense that she is a physical presence throughout the film, a common sense explanation for the break-up of the gang. However, as Geertz (1983) has illustrated "common sense" is as much of a social construction as any other discourse, and the fact that *Let it Be* (1970) is a film about the Beatles at work in a "real" life way, rooted in the documentary genre, rather than the Beatles at work in a "fantasy" feature film way, as in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), is something worth considering here. Outtakes of the film, more recently come to light as part of the Beatles' *Anthology* documentary (The Beatles, 2003), show the presence in the studio of other Beatle wives and children and a different atmosphere to the proceedings. As Carr (1996 : 161) states:

... there are those who worked on the movie who claim that many of those scenes that ended up on the cutting room floor reveal another mood, to the

proceedings – one that is lighter, often frivolous, and, overall, much less bleak.”⁶⁹

Certainly, the rooftop concert section of the film presents the fab four as a solid unit, grinning, clowning; the gang playing together as well as ever before.

It is worth remembering, then, that *Let it Be* (1970) can also be read as a social construction of The Beatles’ reality, not unlike *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) in some ways. However, what it does offer, is an opportunity to observe representations of and reflections on masculinities, the “boys to men” discourse and the importance of women within the text.

“To be looked-at-ness” (Mulvey, 1975 : 18)

John Lennon’s retrospective view of the process of making *Let it Be* (1970) was not positive.

“It was a dreadful, dreadful feeling in Twickenham Studios, being filmed all the time, I just wanted them to go away.”

(O’Gorman, 2004 : 358)

Given the tension apparent within the gang at this stage in their career it is, perhaps, hard to understand McCartney’s enthusiasm for a project which would present the Beatles (as men) “au natural” (O’Gorman, 2004 : 356) and as a spectacle (Neale, 1993). Given their decision to give up touring and a previously stated aversion to the goldfish bowl existence of Beatlemania (Norman, 1981; *The Beatles*, 2000), a project which returned to the exploitation of their “to-be-looked-at-ness” (Mulvey, 1975 : 18) as Beatles seems to be a strange decision. McCartney’s watching the artistic process in action (O’Gorman, 2004) and Lennon’s participation as part of an attempt to break

⁶⁹ A viewing of the film reveals it to have much more light and shade than many commentators have allowed. The first section is dark, both in a sense of the gloomy containment of the indoor studio setting and the arguments and bickering on show but the final section set on the rooftop provides a total contrast. There is also much banter and laughter at various points in the film. See also Chapter 1.

the myth of the Beatles (Wenner, 1971) both fail in their intentions, according to Neaverson (1997). There is no real attempt to show how the “men of ideas” (Inglis, 2000b : 1) actually build up particular songs but rather the film, in many ways, harks back to the traditional British pop film (Medhurst, 1995) with its attempts to fit in as many songs as possible. And in the very end the Beatle myth is enhanced by the group’s final live performance described in the *Time Out Film Guide* (1991) as an event in which they

“... almost magically reform and take us back to happier times with their impromptu concert on the Apple rooftop”

(Milne, 1991 : 379)

Despite the distinctions drawn between the fantasy of *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) [Murray, 2002] and the “reality” of *Let it Be* (1970) there is a return to the mis-en-scene of the former in the latter. The all seeing camera is caught on camera at several points, an intertextual reminder of the final scene of *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964). Lester’s tight enclosed spaces reflecting the Beatle’s hemmed-in-ness by the work ethic discourse in *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) gives way to the impersonal aircraft hanger atmosphere in the opening third of *Let it Be* (1970) where the group rehearse at Shepperton Studios, but the work ethic discourse remains. The claustrophobic atmosphere of the setting has been commented on retrospectively by all of the Beatles (The Beatles, 2000; The Beatles, 2003).

“You couldn’t make music at eight in the morning or ten, or whatever it was, Lennon told Rolling Stone ...”

(O’Gorman, 2004 : 358)

In its “back to roots” approach and an insistence on a 9 to 5 existence, *Let it Be* (1970) could be read, in some senses, as the Beatles in a playful experiment with hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004). By this stage in the decade they had experimented with gender tourism (Reynolds and Ross, 1996), mind expanding drugs, musical boundaries, transcendental meditation and playing businessman (The Beatles, 2000). The more masculine aspects of their physical appearance will be discussed in the next section. The film certainly stands in

juxtaposition to the break-out metrosexuality of *Help!* (1965) and the frivolous escape and counterculture discourses at work in *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), so perhaps it is a text that epitomises the aftermath of Hunter S. Thompson's '60s high water mark thesis.^{70, 71}

However, their visual appearance in the film, once again, sets them apart from the other men that surround them. The final section of the film in which they come into conflict with the establishment and representations of hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) in the form of the police force and London businessmen still suggests a counterhegemonic (Gramsci, 1971) discourse at work in the text and if they are to be read as experimenting with hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) in some form in *Let it Be* (1970) it is with a subversive playfulness similar to that found in *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967).

The Look

A progression towards a more feminized (Cohan, 1993) look can be traced throughout the first three films; from the matching suits in the dressed-by-Brian *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) period, through the pastel colours and soft fabrics of *Help!* (1965) to the kaftans, beads and floral prints of *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), the Beatles provide a text through which to read men's changing visual appearance throughout the 1960s. *Let it Be* (1970) is no exception, with the Beatles acting as a lens through which to view developments, yet still appearing to be ahead of the game (MacDonald, 2003). Dandyish costuming (Bruzzi, 1997) and bright colours are still in evidence (George Harrison's fedora hat and scarf combination provides a good example of this). However, in retrospect, the Beatles appear to have gone on ahead to the early 1970s. Lennon's "granddad" vest, "granny" glasses, waistcoat and tennis shoes combo are a precursor of the Oxfam chic that would become popular for men in the early 1970s

⁷⁰ See footnote 59.

⁷¹ The return to a more blues based style on some of their work the previous year *The Lady Madonna* (1968) single, and large chunks of *The Beatles* (1968) album could also be read in a similar way. Some authors see this as an important transition from the more feminine pop music of the early 1960s to the more masculine rock music of the late 1960s and early 1970s (Frith and McRobbie, 1990). Again The Beatles, as famous men at the top of their game, provide a cultural focus for this transition at work.

(McRobbie, 1998). McCartney's return to the suit, but, again worn with pumps and open shirt, subverts the most formal of men's attire (Bruzzi, 1997) and is in a similar vein. What is particularly interesting about their "look" in the film is that, in retrospect, it can be seen as a "look" that has been recycled more than once in the intervening period. In many ways they look very contemporary. It is a look that could have been seen in any period since, but never before, the setting of the film. Part of the reason for this is the length of their hair. Media obsession with their hair was a key feature of Beatlemania, (Norman, 1981; Mäkelä, 2004; Stark, 2005). By the time of *Let it Be* (1970) their hair is **actually** long, reflecting a change in men's fashion that had begun around 1967 (Cox, 1999). It is particularly apparent in *Let it Be* (1970) that the increasingly feminized (Cohan, 1993) hair length is offset by the "masculine" attribute of facial hair. They are hirsute Beatles in *Let it Be* (1970), again a precursor to 1970s' man (Hunt, 1998). McCartney sports a full beard, the others all have huge sideboards. Lennon is unshaven throughout and Harrison and Starr both retain the moustaches they had been experimenting with since *Sgt Pepper* (1967). Their appearance, then, is quite striking, a visual spectacle (Neale, 1993) and nowhere more so than in the final section of the film, the rooftop concert. McCartney wears a suit, but as previously discussed, subverting its original masculine meaning (Hebdidge, 1978) through the accessories chosen. The other three wear what are surely women's coats. Lennon in a short brown fur jacket, Harrison in a black furry coat and Starr in a red plastic mackintosh. In some ways it is an extremely masculine look, in others highly feminized (Cohan, 1993) and a marker of how men's visual appearance had changed, in some circles, between 1960 and 1970.

The last point is extremely important in that the Beatles spectacular appearance (Neale, 1993) and "to-be-looked-at-ness" (Mulvey, 1975 : 18) is made more so because of their juxtaposition to the other men around them. Shots of the film crew and the crowd down below in the street, listening to them play, show men mainly dressed in shirts and ties, bowler hatted businessmen in a sea of black and grey. While the Beatles appear to have gone on ahead many of the other men in the film could still be in 1960, given their clothing and hairstyles. "Everybody let their hair down" Lennon sings, as the group perform *I've Got A Feeling* (1970), but in reality this is patently not true. The presence of black keyboard player, Billy Preston adds another dimension to "the look". They are multi-racial Beatles. Their love of and the

influence of black music and their refusal to play to segregated audiences in the US is chronicled elsewhere (The Beatles, 2000; McKinney, 2003; Stark 2005). Preston, sporting a black leather jacket and close cropped afro hairstyle, is a reflection of an emerging black-male style at the time. He also appears to have gone ahead to the 1970s and would not look out of place in *Shaft* (1971), *Superfly* (1973) or any of the so-called blaxploitation movies of that period (Hoberman, 2003). There is a shot in this section which shows an older man scaling a fire escape ladder to get up onto the roof to see what the commotion is about. He wears a hat, a mac and is smoking a pipe, a strange Harold Macmillan/Harold Wilson⁷² hybrid and a representation of late 1950s'/early 1960s' hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell 1995; Hearn, 2004). He seems imbued with the values of masculinism (Brittan, 1989) through a reading of his visual appearance and provides a stark contrast to the almost-post 1960s' Beatles. Their extraordinariness, as men, is juxtaposed, once again, with the ordinariness of other men, a return to McKinney's (2003) notion of their quasi-religious status⁷³.

And In The End

The rooftop concert which took place on 30th January 1969, forms the final section (or act) of the film. A compromise around the original live show idea and the climax to what had become, by this stage, a feature film for cinematic release during which the group performed five new songs. The inside/outside (Petersen, 1998) juxtaposition at work in the other films is also reflected here. The three sections of the film, represent a move from work to play, from “the most miserable sessions on earth” (O’Gorman, 2004 : 355) in the Twickenham section, which is dark and enclosed, to the lighter setting and lighter mood⁷⁴ of the white walled Apple offices and finally to the outdoors where the gang plays together for one last time. Neaverson (1997 : 107) sees the concert as “a triumph” which ‘managed to rekindle their ability to generate

⁷² See Chapter 2.

⁷³ See Chapter 1.

⁷⁴ On his return to the fold, after walking out of the sessions, Harrison brought in Billy Preston to augment the sessions (The Beatles had originally met Preston in Hamburg in the early 1960s when he had been a member of Little Richard's band) [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ijx17Wv-l-y]. The result was that the atmosphere brightened considerably which Harrison retrospectively explained as everyone feeling the need to be on their best behaviour, thus drawing on the gang/naughty schoolboys discourse at work in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) [The Beatles, 2003].

the excitement of their spellbinding live performances” and provides a stark contrast to what Lennon has described as the traumas and paranoia of much of the session building up to it (The Beatles, 2000).

In A High Place

The darkness to light/sorrow to joy discourse at work in the film reflect McKinney’s (2003) previously discussed quasi-religious discourse around the group and the setting for the rooftop concert also reflects this

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=umok21EOcwk]. The group ascend to a high place to play for one last time to their followers and believers below (McKinney, 2003) who strain to see and hear them through windows or perched on ledges. Some climb up to be nearer to them. They are an extraordinary vision on high (“out on their own” remarks an onlooker [*Let it Be*, 1970]) playing to the masses below. Glyn Johns, who engineered the sessions states:

“... at the time, they were viewed as being the be-all-and-end-all, sort of up there on a pedestal, beyond touch, just gods, completely gods ...”

(Carr, 1996 : 163)

The performance itself is a resurrection of their live performances buried since 1966. The ascension motif is used at the end of *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) and reappears here. Lennon’s enthusiasm for and identification with Jesus Christ has been well chronicled (Harry, 2000; McKinney, 2003; Mäkelä, 2004)⁷⁵ and his identification with, perhaps, the most famous man of all time is interesting in the context of this thesis on masculinities. While Lennon’s “bigger than Jesus” and thinking that he actually was Jesus (The Beatles, 2000) period had passed by early 1969, his mission to bring world peace through the possibilities of the modern media had religious overtones (Mäkelä, 2004). The long hair, beard and white suit he would wear for his wedding later that year⁷⁶ gave him something of a Jesus-like appearance. *The New Musical Express* wrote: “John’s long hair and beard gives him an intellectual almost holy appearance” (Nesbit, 1969 : 4) and this all took place in a context in which rock

⁷⁵ See Chapter 1.

⁷⁶ This is best illustrated in the promotional film for the *Ballad of John and Yoko* (1969) [www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3oaPNJeg].

music generally was becoming permeated with a quasi-religious discourse (Mäkelä, 2004).⁷⁷ McKinney's (2003) chronicling of the Beatles and religion is a particularly interesting interpretation of the phenomenon⁷⁸ and the final concert can be usefully read within this context.

God-like status apart, the Beatles as men manage to once again challenge 'the man'⁷⁹, or the establishment. Representatives of hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn 2004) can be seen in the final section of the film, expressing their annoyance at the Beatles' arrogance and disruption of the working day. "I think it's a bit of an imposition to disrupt all the businesses in this area" (*Let it Be*, 1970) states one disgruntled businessman, "I want this noise stopped, it's an absolute disgrace" (Carr, 1996 : 166) was the response of Apple's next door neighbour Stanley Davis. A bowler hated gent, just like the man in the railway carriage in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), is seen talking to the police who have been called, complete with black maria. The police appear on the rooftop, a threatening presence, as the Beatles reprise *Get Back* (1969) and McCartney changes the lyrics to "You've been playing on the roofs (sic) again, and you know your momma doesn't like it, she's gonna have you arrested"⁸⁰. Ringo Starr bemoaned the fact that the film was denied a glorious ending:

"I always felt let down by the police ... I thought 'oh great. I hope they drag me off' they didn't of course, they just came bumbling in ..."

(The Beatles, 2000 : 321)

However, it is important to note that the presence of the police and disgruntled business men act as an illustration of the Beatles' resistant version of masculinity set

⁷⁷ The musical *Hair* (1967) contained countercultural and semi-religious sentiments, *Tommy* (1969; 1974), The Who's rock opera, tells the story of a deaf, dumb and blind kid who became a Jesus like figure and God-rock was big in 1971 with *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Lennon was originally approached to play the lead!) and *Godspell* (see Mäkelä, 2004).

⁷⁸ See Chapter 1.

⁷⁹ "The Man" was a phrase coined in the late 1960s counterculture – a hip version of "establishment" – with connotations of Brittan's (1989) masculinism and Carrigan et al's., (1985) hegemonic masculinity. It's usage spread into black popular culture and its usage is common in the early 1970s' so-called blaxploitation movies (See Hoberman, 2003).

⁸⁰ This is an interesting use of the term "momma" as a representation of the female as a barrier to pleasure, reflecting Segal's (1988) ideas, featured in Chapter 3.

against the hegemonic versions (Carrigan et al, 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) as in the previous films.

Conclusion

“... the ‘real life’ authenticity of *Let it Be* continues to exact a musical spontaneity and voyeuristic pleasure which is by nature absent from other movies. It is, for me, both the ‘worst’ and the ‘best’ Beatles movie”

(Neaverson, 1997 : 115)

Neaverson’s (1997) quote is included here as an illustration of the way in which texts, as Hall (1980; 1997) has suggested, are open to a number of different interpretations. Some have argued that *Let It Be* (1970) is as much of a social construction as *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) [Carr, 1996] while it can be argued that the voyeuristic pleasure at work in *Let It Be* (1970) is also at work in the other films, and that the Beatles’ “to be looked-at-ness” (Mulvey, 1975 ; 18) or the spectacle (Neale, 1993) of the Beatles is also to be found in other texts. While *Let It Be* (1970) falls into the documentary genre, the Beatles’ relationship with the camera is referenced in the other films too. In the final concert scene of *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) camera equipment and cameramen focussing on the Beatles appear in shot, in *Help!* (1965) the four Beatles alight from a plane in the Bahamas armed with cameras, taking photographs as they descend, a mirroring of their role as the object to be photographed and looked at. In the Maysles Brothers documentary covering the first US tour⁸¹ there is a scene on a train where Ringo Starr collects all the photojournalists’ cameras and staggers down the corridor wearing them all as a sort of über photographer. Given this awareness of the “to be looked at” (Mulvey, 1975 : 18) nature of the Beatles, it is interesting that the final film encourages this voyeuristic pleasure, with a final scene that sees the Beatles on a metaphorical pedestal playing for the crowds below. Berger (1972) has argued that the baggage of historical context can enhance the retrospective value of cultural artefacts and *Let It Be* (1970) can be read in this way, marking as it does the end of the Beatles, the end of the 1960s and it’s associated values and optimism⁸².

⁸¹ See Footnote 6.

⁸² See Chapter 1.

The film certainly seems designed as this sort of marker, partly in its desire to show the Beatles back at work, after the playfulness and countercultural discourses at work in *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967). As in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) it shows the gang at work, a 9 to 5 style existence reminiscent of their early recording career⁸³, enclosed dark settings and close-up shots reminiscent of the earlier film. It is a post 1960s' high water mark (Thompson, 1972) product marking a return to live performance and their early blues style, featuring a number of performed songs not played since their early days in Hamburg.

The “‘texture’ of the text” (Fairclough, 1995 : 184) seems fraught with competing discourses in many ways with, arguably, a return to a more masculine visual appearance yet subverted at the same time (the velvet collars and jewellery of *A Hard Day's Night* [1964] giving way to coloured trousers, tennis shoes and fur coats). Here the Beatles play with notions of masculinity and masculine attire. The juxtaposition of indoor (work) and outdoor (play) features once again as does the juxtaposition of the Beatles with representations of hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) in the form of the policemen and the businessman. The quasi-religious discourse surrounding the Beatles by this time (McKinney, 2003) is reflected in this text, and the presence of women, and one woman in particular, is a significant contribution to the discourses of masculinity at work in the film.

In this sense, perhaps, Neaverson (1997) is right about it being the best film. The complexities around the notion of masculinities that, in retrospect, can be seen to be emerging by the late 1960s are well reflected by these competing discourse at work in *Let It Be* (1970). As previously stated, McKee (2003 : 1) argues that:

“we interpret texts ... in order to try and obtain a sense of the ways in which, in particular cultures, at particular times, people make sense of the world around them”

⁸³ *Please Please Me* (1963), The Beatles' first album, was recorded in one day (Norman, 1981; MacDonald, 1994).

Similarly, May (1997) sees texts as a way of learning about past social and political events as aspirations and intentions of a particular period. *Let it Be* (1970) provides an opportunity for this type of examination as it marks the end of The Beatles' journey as a working group, as well as marking the end of the decade. Having set out to use the Beatles as a way of reading and reflecting on social changes for men and as providing an opportunity to study representation of masculinities in the 1960s, *Let it Be* (1970) is an interesting text in that it provides both continuity and discord with previous texts, a contested text to mark and reflect the end of a contested decade (Marwick, 1998; Sandbrook, 2006).

The Beatles' Films : Conclusion

It is the intention here to briefly draw together some of the issues discussed in this chapter in relation to the ways in which the Beatles (in their films) present a challenge to hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985, Connell, 1995, Hearn, 2004) and masculinism (Brittan, 1989), as discussed in Chapter 3. In addition, the ways in which the Beatles presented an alternative version of masculinity and a resistance and challenge to the dominant discourses of masculinity prevalent at the time will be outlined.

Challenges to hegemonic masculinity

Discussion in Chapter 3 outlines the values associated with hegemonic masculinity and masculinism and their links to consumer capitalism, Western societal norms and conformity. In all four films the Beatles are juxtaposed with and come into conflict with men who represent hegemonic masculinity. Quite often these are authority figures ranging from the "I fought the war for your sort" railway carriage gent in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), through the police inspector in *Help!* (1965) and the military figures in *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) to the annoyed businessmen and police officers, threatening to make a rooftop arrest, in *Let it Be* (1970). One way in which this juxtaposition occurs is through the contrasting physical appearance of the Beatles to the other men in the films. The smart, sober "manly" dress and hairstyles worn by the representatives of hegemony and masculinism are contrasted with the Beatles' attire. Their suited and booted look in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) is

accompanied by subversive detail (Hebdidge, 1978; Bruzzi, 1997) and narcissism (Neale, 1993) akin to that discussed by Bruzzi (1997) in relation to Franco-American gangster movies. The pastel shades and soft fabrics of the pre-metrosexual *Help!* (1965) lead on to the countercultural and most challenging visual appearance in *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), while *Let it Be* (1970) sees them in a multi-layered challenge to the attire of the businessmen in the street below with subverted suits, pumps, granddad vests and green loon pants, topped off by women's coats. Hair and hair length has been discussed in relation to each film as it moves from what the media defined as "long" in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) to Woodstock generation length, with long hair worn as a countercultural badge, what Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young referred to as "letting my freak flag fly" in *Almost Cut My Hair* (1970).

Their relationship to the masculinist world of work and consumerism is interesting. In *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) they are contained by work and offer resistance (comparisons are made with the men in the Northern kitchen sink dramas of the late 1950s and early 1960s). In *Help!* (1965) they show signs of upward mobility, work reduces, they enter a multi-coloured travelogue and show signs of early metrosexuality (Simpson, 2004) and consumerist traits which would re-emerge in the 1980s (Edwards, 1997; Nixon, 1997). *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) sees them totally at play, lost in a child-like psychedelic world, the coach trip narrative representative of a working class respite from work, so retaining a link to Albert Finney in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960). *Let it Be* (1970) sees them, once again, contained by work but with the indoor/outdoor binary (Petersen, 1998) coming into play in the final scene, a link to the breaking out discourses at work in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964). Again, resistance comes to the fore.

Magical Mystery Tour (1967) with its independent financing and art house production values, coming straight after the release of *Sgt Pepper* (1967), probably represents the pinnacle of the creativity and intellectualism at work in Inglis' (2000b : 1) "men of ideas" concept. The creativity of their musical output is apparent in all four films. Their relationship to the work of girl-groups, their early songwriting from a feminized standpoint and development into men who wrote songs about their feelings is also significant in relation to a study on men and masculinities. Their association with Dick Lester for the first two films, their involvement in other film, TV and book

projects and their position in McLuhan's (1964) global village, all reflects a challenge to masculinist notions of what "work" entails. Their independence from "the man" and the way that this had meaning for others is reflected in the quotes in the "Waxing Lyrical" section (see Appendix 1) and other challenges to "the man" are to be seen in the films. Lennon's subversion of the Rolls-Royce, the status symbol of the hegemonic businessman, is discussed in relation to *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967). The rooftop setting of their final concert in London's business district and the upset and disruption it causes to businesses in *Let it Be* (1970) can be read in the same way. These are but two examples. The reality and reason of the world of work in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) ("on to a midnight matinee in Wolverhampton") gives way to the fantasy and unreason of the *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), a coach trip through an LSD-tinged narrative that makes little sense. The return to childhood theme in relation to the psychedelic movement has been discussed in relation to this particular film and the Beatles embrace this both in terms of visual appearance and attitude. The "gang" motif operates throughout all for films but, perhaps, most obviously in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) where they taunt surrogate parents Norm and Shake and refer to other authority figures as "Mister".

An Alternative Version of Masculinity

One of the central arguments of this thesis is that the 1960s were a period in which representations of alternative versions of masculinity, those which challenged the hegemonic and masculinist, became highly visible and widely available due to developments in technology and media. "The Beatles" have been chosen as a text, and as producers of texts, through which to read this process. The discussion presented so far in this concluding section is built on the premise that "The Beatles" can be read as the representation of an alternative version of masculinity, a version which presents work as something which is not necessarily the key factor in the formation of masculine identity, one which values creativity and the intellectual above the mundane and the physical, one which involves colour and an "outrageous" appearance as a contrast to smart sobriety, with long hair as a symbol of defiance. It is a version of masculinity, which values the child-like above the norms of adult society and values fun and exuberance over the serious, (*A Hard Day's Night* [1964],

for example, provides much juxtaposition of The Beatles' exuberance with the discourse of work that binds the film together).

To this list, "The Beatles" as a representation of a more feminized (Cohan, 1993) pre-metrosexual (Simpson, 2004) version of masculinity can be added, an early illustration of the way in which the consideration of masculinity (singular) evolved into discussions of masculinities (plural) [Brod, 1987; Hearn, 2004]. Chapter 3 contains discussion on a number of aspects of the Beatles as a cultural phenomenon which have significance vis-à-vis masculinities and discussion of the films in this chapter has drawn attention to The Beatles' role in presenting a feminized look, combined with the challenges to hegemonic masculinity and masculinism already outlined here, to a global audience. In this sense, the Beatles' films have an interesting relationship with their contemporaries. In Chapter 4, Segal's (1988) work on the "angry" and kitchen sink dramas of the late 1950s and early 1960s was discussed with reference to the way in which the female/feminine was often presented as controlling and enclosing, resonating with Ehrenreich's (1983) work on the male revolt in the same period. Thus, female/feminine is viewed in a negative light. What has been discussed as part of this (and previous) chapters is the way in which The Beatles' engagement with the female and the "feminized" became part of their appeal, part of their representation of alternative masculinities, and, thus, the female/feminine becomes a positive rather than a negative concept within "The Beatles" as text. The dressed-by-Brian look of *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) combined with the queer codes at work in this film and *Help!* (1965) [Shillinglaw, 1999] and their general "to-be-looked-at-ness" (Mulvey, 1975 : 18) at, work in all of the films, add weight to the arguments about alternative versions of masculinity and authors such as Ehrenreich et al., (1992), Shillinglaw (1999) and Stark (2005) have emphasised that it is hard to understand, in retrospect, just how shocking and subversive this actually seemed and what an impact it had on "established" values in the 1960s.

This challenge to the dominant modes of masculinity has been a key theme of this chapter. In Chapter 7 part of the discussion of the interview stage of this study will examine the ways in which this challenge by these extraordinary men was read and interpreted by ordinary men, both at the time and in retrospect.

Chapter 7: Looking Back – What do men say?

Introduction

The rationale for using a set of semi-structured interviews, as part of a multi-method study to address the research questions outlined in Chapter 1, has been discussed in Chapter 5, as has the sampling process used.

Below is a series of mini-biographies of the 11 interview participants. These include reference to each interview process and some of the emergent themes.

Respondent 1

Respondent 1 was 74 years old. In 1960 he was a professional footballer playing in the lower divisions of the football league. By 1970 he had retired to return to the plastering trade which he had trained for before turning professional and he remained in this job until retirement. The respondent was vaguely known to me via my father. He was chosen for interview because I have always thought of him as a “man’s man”. He was not a big fan of the Beatles – more of a Rat Pack man – and a lot of the interview revolved around the differences between the ‘50s and the ‘60s, although, as it progressed, it became apparent that he was familiar with the lives and work of the Beatles which he put down to having children in the ‘60s and buying records for them. A lot of the interview revolved around football – when I arrived for the interview a former footballing colleague was there and a lot of their conversation related to their playing days, while they watched football on Sky Sports. We, therefore, got into conversation around masculinity via the physical nature of football and the clothing worn both on and off the field. This included a lengthy section on George Best, which also framed discussion about this relationship to the Beatles and the 1960s generally, and Dennis Compton, who the respondent recalled as the first major sporting icon, a Brylcream poster boy 60 years before David Beckham and someone renowned as ‘a man about town’. Other themes included men’s changing visual appearance, men’s changing role, homosexuality and a lot of references to ‘lads’ and ‘fellas’. Overall the respondent engaged fully with the subject matter.

Respondent 2

Respondent 2 was 46 years old, so was only one year old in 1960 and at school in 1970. Went on to become a one-hit wonder, appearing on Top of the Pops in the summer of 1978 and later played Paul McCartney in a play about the life of John Lennon at the Everyman Theatre in Liverpool. Now a writer, broadcaster and comedian. I got to know the respondent when I first came to Manchester in the late '70s but had not seen him for 25 years. Chosen for interview because his comic creations draw heavily, in my opinion, on different versions of masculinity. Familiar with the Beatles from childhood but a bigger fan of the Monkees! The interview was lively and jocular, partly tinged with nostalgic references and attempts to avoid the temptation to catch up on the past 25 years but, overall, the respondent engaged with the subject matter. Reading the transcript it is much more genial and conversational, more informal than some of the other interviews, and it ends with us going for a pint (a bit like the Likely Lads). The interview started with a reference to Lennon running like a girl in the opening scene of *A Hard Day's Night* and progressed rapidly into discussion around feminized appearance, including a section on the Beatles versus the Stones and Jagger's androgyny/sexuality, the Beatles' changing appearance throughout the '60s, including references to acceptable/not acceptable, the generation gap, coats and beards and the late '60s as unisex and gender division appearing not to matter. Other themes included class, resistance, marriage, Robbie Williams and the gay/camp boundary.

Respondent 3

Respondent 3 was 55 years old. In 1960 he was at school and in 1970 was a policeman, later training as a mental health nurse and then going on to an academic career before taking early retirement. The respondent was known to me through a contact at work and was chosen mainly for his age category. The interview starts with the respondent stating that he was a Stones fan and saw the Beatles as a girly band. This led into discussion about biker culture, the concept of 'cissified' and the role of visual appearance in representation. The interview is full of detailed recollection of the period, told through a series of anecdotes relating to experiences of being a boy and a man in a period of social change (specifically expressed by the respondent). This includes reference to 'traditional' male gang activity was bunking off school or

being part of a biker gang and a band, a sense of freedom related to the journey from the 'austere' 50s to the glamour of the '60s, an assertion that the swinging sixties did exist in the North, for the ordinary man and that this is linked to upward mobility (and a friendship with Peter Stringfellow's brother), the generation gap and the role of fathers. Despite his stated dislike of the Beatles the respondent was very comfortable with the idea of them as a reference point for change in the period and was knowledgeable on the topic. The interview concludes with a discussion on contemporary gender issues such as women, and binge drinking. Overall the interview transcript reads like just that, with the interviewer probing for ideas/anecdotes from a respondent who is fully engaged with the subject matter and obviously has a lot to say on the subject.

Respondents 4/5/6

This interview was a fascinating experience from start to finish and includes a lot of cultural cross-reference and, at certain points, reflection on the fact that they are respondents in an interview. Respondent 4 and 5 were two school friends from Birkenhead who frequented Liverpool in the early 1960s. Both were at school in 1960 and by 1970 respondent 4 was secure in a career in sales which he remains in today. Respondent 5 had, in the interim period been to London and worked as a musical journalist, so produced a number of anecdotes around spending the night in a studio with the Small Faces and interviewing Eric Clapton in his Chelsea flat – real life 'swinging '60s' tales. By 1970 the excesses of his life had sent him back up to Birkenhead, also to work in sales but also to retrain as a teacher. Respondent 6 was the 38 year old nephew of respondent 4 and a friend of a friend who set the interview up for me. A lot of the early interview revolves around Liverpool in the early 1960s – respondent 4's first experience was to go and see the Beatles at the Cavern – his girlfriend at the time knew them and even went to see them in the band room – he did not and there is something of a recurring theme around loss and regret and what if? throughout the interview. Although they were fully engaged with the Beatles and their relationship to Liverpool and then London in the period, there is a lot of stuff about what the Beatles were 'not' and they cannot be described as fans. There is a lot of what I would define as 'blokey' technical chat about amps and guitars and chord shapes, although this breaks out into a fascinating discussion on the totemic nature of

the guitar. Respondent 5 was very articulate and as the interview unfolds the relationship between the two friends emerges and there is a narrative about their drifting apart and coming back together – a recent occurrence. Respondent 5 also draws attention to the fact that he followed the Beatles down to London and this links to a number of themes around men and upward-mobility, breaking out and the role of fathers/the previous generation. The subsequent return to the North and ‘normality’ is another interesting theme which is linked to alcohol, drugs and the generally perceived excesses of the period, made real via real life anecdotes.

Visual appearance and its relationship to masculinity, effeminacy and Brian Epstein is another recurring theme.

There is some very articulate analysis of the material by the respondents – the link between the rooftop performance and Christ’s ascension is particularly good – reading the transcript reminds me that the whole experience was rather like watching a particularly well written (perhaps by Jimmy McGovern) attention-to-period-detail-Northern-drama about two estranged friends, aided and abetted by a nephew, reminiscing on times and places gone by.

Respondent 7

Respondent 7 was 70 years old. In 1960 he was a post office worker in Kingston, Jamaica. He came to England in 1962, partly with a view to playing professional cricket, but in 1970 was a GPO worker. He later retrained as a youth and community worker. A local Labour Councillor for many years he was awarded the MBE for his post-retirement charity work. Chosen for interview on the grounds of age and ethnicity the respondent was known to me through the Labour Party. Not a fan of the Beatles but well versed in the musical products of Jamaica and a fan of late ‘50s/early ‘60s jazz. The interview provides an interesting perspective on the 1960s from someone who arrived in England in the early part of that period. The interview is framed around the respondent’s political background and experiences and reads as one might expect of one experienced in politics – often long monologues as responses to questions, many of which contain anecdotes that relate to the life and experience of a black man newly arrived in a changing culture. Strong themes of identity, struggle,

challenge and a certainty about self and what it means to be a man (and, by implication, a black man) with strong political views emerges. Issues around poverty, young black men, the emerging representation of famous black men in the 1960s (and some of the contradictions in these representations) are discussed. The interview concludes with a discussion on social change and the past/present discourses around racial politics.

Respondent 8

Respondent 8 was 49 years old. He was at school in 1960 and 1970, later becoming a nurse and an NHS manager. The respondent was not known to me and came through a contact at work, chosen mainly on the basis of age category. More of a Stones than a Beatles fan but well aware of the Beatles' work and their high profile in the 1960s. A good deal of this interview revolved around the idea of rebellion and conformity involving an explanation of why the respondent always wears black (a bit like Johnny Cash). A lot of this involved discussion around the generation gap, the roles of the respondent's father and mother in the family and the difference between what the respondent saw as the values of his and his father's generation. Themes around breaking out/away and the importance of visual appearance for men in the '60s/70s as representation of identity and the contrasting significances of institutions e.g. the Church/art school all emerge. The conservative nature of the Beatles in comparison to some of their contemporaries is discussed at some length as is appearance in relation to masculinity/femininity and what this represented in the period.

Overall this interview had very much a feel of a research interview with a fairly consistent question/answer format.

Respondent 9

Respondent 9 was 18 years old (obviously not alive until the 1980s!) and was a college friend of my daughter. Chosen purely on the grounds of age in order to explore a retrospective perspective on the decade under study. In this sense it was a different kind of interview. The respondent – a music student – was not particularly a

fan of the Beatles but familiar with the musical output of previous decades. The respondent offered some interesting views on visual appearance and the whole idea of gender from the perspective of an 18 year old. There was lengthy discussion on the Beatles' appearance in terms of clothes and hair, how there have been subsequent attempts to revive this 'look'. Interestingly the respondent saw men's appearance from the 60s and 70s in a similar way and found it hard to distinguish between the band in different periods. There is some interesting discussion on the 'modern' look of some of the Beatles' visual material and also around gay/camp/feminized appearance and its significance. The interview ends with discussion of contemporary representation of men in film and TV and the 'traditional' macho hard-man image.

In looking at the transcript the interview was harder going than some of the others but overall worth doing to get a different perspective.

Respondent 10

Respondent 10 was 38 years old, born in the 1960s and 3 years old in 1970. The respondent was chosen on the basis of age in order to give a different perspective. Although only born in 1967 the respondent is a big fan of Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones and the Beatles – in that order – and contact came via a friend. The respondent is a solicitor. The respondent was, because, in my opinion, of his fan-dom, well tuned in to the subject matter of the interview. Knowledgeable about the music and culture of the 1960s, the respondent engaged articulately with the questions and offered some interesting ideas about masculinity and gender, with specific reference to the Beatles and the particular historical period. There is a lot of interesting discussion on clothes, hair, cultural artefacts and their role in representing change and upward mobility for men in the period. The interview touches on the Beatles representation in relation to women in a way that none of the other interviews do and on the cultural importance of the Beatles. There is a very interesting section on the fantasy that men create for themselves in relation to famous men.

The interview reads on one of the more conversational examples, maybe because the respondent is very tuned-in to the subject matter, which allowed for genuine conversation and provided the opportunity to probe deeper into some of the issues.

Respondent 11

Respondent 11 was 34 years old, born in the 1970s, and chosen because of his status as an ‘out’ gay man (and a very camp one at that). Gay masculinities emerged as a key theme within the interview. The interviewee was well versed in the issues and was articulate on the issues of ‘authenticity’ and ‘selling out’, with lengthy discussion on gay men in the media, including John Inman, Larry Grayson, Graham Norton and Paul O’Grady. The respondent made links between gay masculinities in the media and his own senses of identity, challenging some of the received wisdom about ‘acceptable’ and ‘stereotypical’ portrayal of gay men. Discourses around David Beckham and the Beatles in relation to contemporary metrosexuality and “camperaderie” all made for an entertaining interview, rich in data with the respondent fully engaged with the material.

Interview Data

The 11 interviews generated a large data set. All were analysed and it was decided that it would be impossible to use all the data from the interviews in this section. Instead, a sample of the sample was chosen, within the context of the findings of the whole data set and a rationale for this choice follows later in the chapter. The entire data set will be used in a later piece of work.

The next section provides an overview of the key themes which emerged from the analysis of all eleven interviews.

Key Themes

An analysis of the 11 interview transcripts revealed a number of emergent themes which can be divided into those which seemed to reflect an alignment with more “traditional” ideas around masculinity, reflective of the discussion of hegemonic masculinity in previous chapters, and those which reflected the idea of resistance.

The latter themes emerged mainly through discussion of the Beatles and resonated with much of the discussion of the analysis of The Beatles' films in Chapter 6.

The respondents' establishing of themselves in the world of men was a theme which featured in a number of the interviews. Discussion of their role in the world of sport (respondents 1 and 7), the music scene (respondents 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10), politics (respondent 7) or national service (respondent 1) served as a way for respondents to discuss their own masculinity. This was often backed up by the use of terms such as "lads", "blokes" or "fellas" and this is discussed in greater detail in an analysis of the interview with respondent 1 in a later section.

The linking of masculinity with authority and examples of the way in which hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) plays out in everyday scenarios was another common theme. The interview with respondent 7, for example, contains a reflection on the role of authority figures in the Beatles' films. After viewing a clip of *Let it Be* (1970) he sees the "policeman being these authority masculine figures, erm that help give the Beatles their feminine rebellious quality". This observation links to the discussion of the Beatles films in Chapter 6.

Talking about the way in which the masculinity of Jamaican men is often perceived, respondent 7 states: "... we are macho outside and we would give you the impression that we are in total control", again linking the idea of power and masculinity.

Another theme which featured in a number of interviews was the establishing of this power through expertise and subject knowledge, with the participants reflecting on how this is "part" of masculinity as well as displaying such subject knowledge within the interview. This is particularly apparent in the interview with respondent 1 ("I could talk about football till the cows come home") and respondents 4, 5 and 6, who reflected extensively on the 1960s' music scene. These interviews are subject to further detailed analysis in a later section. Respondents 2, 3 and 10 also reflected on the 1960s and music to a great extent, showing detailed subject knowledge, while respondent 7 reflected at length on both the global and local political scene in the 1960s, referencing Martin Luther-King and Malcolm X as well as outlining his experiences as a Labour activist in Manchester in this period.

The role of heroes in the establishing identity was a major theme of the interviews and, therefore, reflective of much of the broader discussion around masculinity (Chapter 3) and representation (Chapter 4) which appears earlier in the thesis. Again, this is discussed in further detail with particular reference to the interviews with respondents 1 and 11 in a later section, but all participants made reference to at least one male hero with an explanation of why this was important to them, often with reference to ideas around idealised versions of masculinity. Heroes discussed included James Bond, David Beckham, George Best, Boy George, John Inman, Dennis Compton, Bob Dylan and Mick Jagger.

Within discussion around this theme the notion of men looking at other men was raised. Again, this links to the discussion of the Beatles in their films (see Chapter 6). Respondent 10 had this to say on the subject of the Rolling Stones, his particular heroes.

“... the strange thing I find interesting is that photographs are better than the videos and the video can shatter the illusion sometimes ... I think there's also the fantasy element ... I had this book of pictures of the Rolling Stones from the mid '70s of this tour ... they were wonderful pictures, but there's a huge element of fantasy involved about what it could have been like, from these photos. And then, recently, I got a sort of bootleg DVD which was all well and good, but that DVD could never have been as good as the fantasy I created around those pictures.”

The Rolling Stones were used as an example of a more “authentic” masculinity by a number of participants. Respondent 3 contrasted The Beatles as “a girly band” with the rock'n'roll authenticity of The Stones and the more “radical” nature of The Who, while, respondent 2 reflected on discourses that were predominant at the time around the “dirty” nature of The Stones. Respondents 4 and 5 also reflected on this idea, contrasting the early “authentic” “masculine” Beatles that they saw at the Cavern with the more “manufactured” feminine Beatles seen in the films (see later section). This interview also exemplifies well the use of the feminine or female as a representation of the negative (as discussed in Chapter 4) and the establishing of

masculine identity through that which it is not. This is further discussed later in a more detailed analysis of interviews with respondent 4, 5 and 6 and respondent 11.

The family, particularly relationships with fathers, and the establishing of traditional ideas about masculinity within the home was another theme which featured in a number of interviews. Respondent 3, for example, outlined the way in which “establishment” values were laid down by fathers for sons (“you can’t do that, you’re a boy”) and saw the “era of promise” of the 1960s as an opportunity to rebel against such traditional ideas. This links to a number of themes discussed in Chapter 2. Similarly respondent 8 saw his “straight-laced” father as the reason he decided to rebel in terms of dress and lifestyle. This theme is discussed further in the detailed analysis of the interview with respondents 4, 5 and 6 in a later section, also linking to themes around the danger and opportunities inherent in the “generation gap” discourses of the 1960s.

Within these themes, then, the notion of resistance is often apparent, but it was in discussion of The Beatles in the interviews that specific themes around the idea of resistance to hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan, et al, 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) arose.

Some of this discussion reflected the ideas outlined in Chapter 1 and Chapter 6. The Beatles’ as “men of ideas” (Inglis, 2000b : 1) was an overarching theme coupled with the idea that The Beatles might represent a different kind of male hero. Respondent 11, for example, conceptualised The Beatles, through their feminised visual appearance, stance on the Vietnam War and open use of illegal drugs as “paving the way” for other artists to experiment with ideas around masculinity in later decades (see later section). Respondent 10 commented on The Beatles’ synonymity with the ideas of “freedom” and “creativity” (“the greatest group of all time”) and this resonates with much of the discussion in Chapter 1. Respondent 2 talked about the “arty” nature of the film *Yellow Submarine* (1968), Lennon’s journey to “weird” and how all this was, somehow, “cool”.

The quasi-religious nature of The Beatles (see Chapter 1) also emerged as part of this discussion. This is discussed in a later section with reference to the interview with respondents 4, 5 and 6 but respondents 2 and 10 also make reference to this.

The changing visual appearance of The Beatles over the decade was used by several respondents to raise the issue of feminization and its meaning in terms of resistance. As previously discussed, the idea of men as feminized emerged as a theme in the interviews with both positive and negative connotations being attached by respondents. Discussion of hair and clothes featured in all interviews. Respondent 10 identified The Beatles' "magpie element" combining the mod suit and beatnik hairstyle, and bringing them to public attention, as being important to the representation of a different "version" of masculinity. While respondents 11 and 8 preferred the "authentic" "masculine" early Beatles, and respondent 3 saw them as "a girly band" other interviewees saw their shift to a more androgynous appearance as significant, with the campness of their "big mushroomy haircuts" (respondent 11) as a positive attribute and part of their resistance to "traditional" ideas about masculinity.

The queer codes at work in The Beatles' films are discussed Chapter 6 and again, the "queer" nature of The Beatles' representation provided a contested theme within the interviews, leading to discussions around homosexuality and masculinity. In the detailed analysis of interviews with respondents 1 and 11, the disapproval of "queers" and "double timers" is contrasted with the joys of John Inman and Larry Grayson's 1970s' representations of camp:

"Think of that in the '70s, everybody sitting down at 7 o'clock on a Saturday night to watch a really, really flamboyant puff flirt with a load of straight boys."

The Interviews and 'I'

Chapter 1 outlines the personal location of the thesis and attempts to chronicle the development of my own interest in men and masculinities as an area of study and to explain the importance of The Beatles, as men, in terms of my own identity. My interest in the idea of heroes/role models and the importance of The Beatles to other

men was one of the areas explored in the interviews. In retrospect this could be seen as attempting to impose the perceived importance of my “heroes” onto other men. As can be seen from the previous section, however, what did become apparent was that my choice of male heroes as a tool through which to explore social change acted as a trigger for discussion of the participants’ heroes.

The “I” is also apparent in the interviews with the decision to use clips from The Beatles’ films, analysed in the documentary stage of the study (see Chapter 6), as trigger material for discussion. One result of this was my role as “expert” in the interview situation – and many of the transcripts contain questions from participants about the clip or about The Beatles generally. “What year was this?” and “What year was Lennon shot?” were two recurring questions. The interview with respondent 11 is interesting in this respect in that he had little knowledge of The Beatles and, at times, he becomes the interviewer as he digs for further information, both factual and of the “What was it like?” variety. This interview is discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

All interviewers, are, obviously, a presence within the interview situation. May (1997) talks about establishing rapport and Spradley (1979) outlines how different interview stages can lead to full participation by the interviewee (see Chapter 5). While these ideas were taken into account, the fact that the interview took place through a man asking other men about their ideas about masculinity added an extra dimension and the relationship between “I” and the interviewees varied from interview to interview. Some interviewees were known to the interviewer, some were not. In some instances, for example, comments of the “as you know” or “you’ll vouch for this” variety indicated a relationship between interviewer and interviewee. The interview with respondents 4, 5 and 6, discussed later in the chapter, often reads as a conversation between a group of men, interspersed with laughter and some ribbing and joking between participants. The interview with respondent 11, as previously discussed, sees questioning on both sides and, at times, is almost flirtatious. The interview with respondent 2 ends with a trip to the pub, respondent 1’s wife brings in lunch (“soup time”) at the end of the interview, while, after being thanked for his participation at the end of the interview, respondent 7 responds as follows:

“It’s my pleasure sir. Let me take this opportunity to wish you well with your PhD and I’ll say I know it is a lonely road but if you are determined you should be able to do it.”

The presence of the interviewer as a man and a Beatles fan can be seen as an example of the way that authors such as Spradley (1979), Haug (1992) and May (1997) conceptualise qualitative approaches to interviewing (see Chapter 5) as a process of interaction and interpretation with the facets of the interview often adding rather than subtracting from the process of exploring the research questions through the establishing of relationship and dialogue.

Detailed Analysis

Following the analysis of the 11 interviews it was decided that the further analysis of three interviews would be used to provide a basis for the discussion in this chapter, interviews which would enable the themes outlined in the previous section to be explored in more depth and detail.

These were conceptualised as case studies and the arguments presented in Chapter 5 about the value of the case study in relation to the documentary stage of the research are also relevant to the choice of the three interviews presented here as a sample of the total number. Stake’s (1998: 101) ideas about choosing cases from which we feel we can learn the most and his assertion that “potential for learning is a different and sometimes superior criteria for representativeness” was seen as particularly relevant.

However, the interviews with respondent 1, respondent 11 and respondents 4, 5 and 6 were chosen (just under 50% of the total sample) using a number of criteria. The three interviews chosen represented a cross section of ages within the wider sample, with the five respondents in the smaller sample ranging from 34 to 74. A similarity in engagement with the subject matter, the interview process and interaction with the interviewer exists within these three interviews and the “texture of the text”

(Fairclough, 1995 : 184) has a similar feel both when listening back to taped sessions and reading the transcripts. There is engagement with the research questions and all three interviews yield rich data, albeit in different ways. All three interviews contain a number of themes identified within the full cohort, as discussed in the previous section. Interviews with respondents 7 and 9 (see Appendix 10) were excluded, for example, because of their lack of engagement. The initial idea was to interview men over the age of 35, who would have some recollection of the 1960s. It was later decided that an interview with a younger man might provide a different perspective on the questions asked. However, the interview with respondent 9 (aged 18) lacked engagement with the trigger material and the questions. Similarly, respondent 7's "politician's" interview revealed a fascinating narrative around cultural differences and experiences but it feels as if it operates outside of the context of this study.

Having examined the idea of the representations of different versions of masculinity in earlier parts of the thesis it, therefore, seemed logical to try and sample a variety of "versions" in the interview section. Respondent 1 was, therefore, chosen as a "man's man"; hegemonic man, perhaps, certainly Segal's (1988) 1950s' man, a fan of Sinatra and the Rat Pack. Both respondents 3 and 8 (see Appendix 10) could also have fitted this description, and so he represents this aspect of the overall sample.

Respondent 11 was chosen as a direct contrast; camp queen meets urban metrosexual, a twenty first century version of masculinity. However, while the only openly gay respondent, some of the discussion in his interview around feminized appearance, androgyny, showbusiness and the way in which representation and identity are linked was also reflected in other interviews, notably those with respondents 2 and 10.

The homosociality at work in the group interview made it an obvious choice of something which seemed to lie between the other two and offered the opportunity to examine the relationship between the respondents in the interview. The relationship between respondent 4 and 5, their experiences and life journeys, apart and then back together, seemed to have given them a certain vulnerability, and this seemed to represent another "version" of masculinity. Their engagement with the interview process and the material was particularly strong. Again, some of the discussion in this interview was reflected in other interviews. For example, relationship with fathers/

“establishment” figures (respondent 3; 8), discussion of the feminized male (respondent 2; 3; 10) and the 1960s as social change (respondent 2; 3; 8; 10).

All three of the interviews chosen certainly contained the majority of themes which emerged from the analysis of the 11 interviews conducted. It was felt that the use of these three particular transcripts would allow the themes to be explored and discussed in further depth.

Having chosen to present the data from the documentary section film by film, seeing each as a text in its own right, offering different perspectives on men and masculinities, it was decided to apply the same approach in the interview stage. Each interview was, therefore, seen as an individual text offering a different perspective within the context of the “sample of the sample” approach outlined. That is not to say that similar discussions and ideas did not emerge. Similarities have already been outlined and, in the “presentation and discussion of findings” section, occasional footnotes are used to illustrate this. However, having decided on discourse analysis rather than, say, thematic analysis, this approach seemed a better fit with the way in which both the documentary texts and interview transcripts had been conceptualised.

Presentation and Discussion of Findings

Respondent 1

Barry (a pseudonym), a retired professional footballer and plasterer, married with two children and four grandchildren, was 74 years old at the time of interview and had, therefore, experienced the 1960s as a man in his 30s (see Appendices 9 and 10).

The Beatles and the 1960s

Barry was shown some trigger material drawn from the documentary research stage, outlined in Chapter 6, and engaged freely in discussion about the

Beatles from the outset of the interview, conceptualising them in terms of “the best”.

“we thought they were a really good group at that time ... ‘60s it went into groups so you really jumped on the back of the best group I suppose ... the Beatles was (sic) the number one group.”

The interview provided a good example of Willig’s (1999) notion that, as themes emerge through discourses, the respondent draws on their own lived experiences to make sense of the interview situation. Much of the interview was hung around football, an area where the respondent clearly felt comfortable.

“I can talk about football ‘til the cows come home ...” he stated early on in the interview and this will be discussed later. However, interestingly, discussions of the Beatles were enmeshed with 1960s football icon George Best often referred to by populist 1960’s commentators as the fifth Beatle.¹

In discussing Best he states:

“Oh yes, he was the – what can I call him – I suppose an icon of football – a lot of lads followed his dress code and what have you – everybody – Beatles’ haircut that he, he wore for football. Then a lot of footballers started getting Beatles’ haircuts. There was a link there before in football, he was like the Beatles to music. He was the top slot ...”

Discussions around the Beatles in the interview tended to mirror much of the discussion in Chapter 1 and the “Waxing Lyrical” quotes in Appendix 1, arguably drawing on discourses about the Beatles at work in the 1960s, and in retrospect. The comments on the ordinary/extraordinary discourses that

¹ Best was first dubbed “El Beatle” by the Portuguese press in 1965 following a stunning display for Manchester United in a European Cup match in which United beat Benfica 5-1. The term, a reference to Best’s style and appearance which mirrored the Beatles’ look at this time, was taken up by the UK press (www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/premierleague/the-birth-of-a-beatle-518425.html).

surround the Beatles as male cultural icons, at one point describing them as “robust kids” and later, in discussion of their increasingly flamboyant visual appearance as the decade progressed, he contextualises them in terms of show business history:

“I think it was George Harrison had the, er, bright colours on, but I mean ... they’re showbiz wallahs and there has always been showbiz wallahs that are on the stage ... that dressed like that, but then people copied them, didn’t they? And I think that’s all that happened – more people copied them than used to copy people before.”

This statement both contextualises the Beatles in a showbiz tradition but also attempts to explain their influence in terms of visual representation for men in the 1960s. When questioned about The Beatles’ “girly”² appearance in a clip from *A Hard Days Night* (1964) Barry replied:

“I didn’t see anything in the Beatles that said they were ‘girly’ ... I can’t say I ever thought they were like big lasses, because that was one of my sayings – anybody – ‘they’re like a big lass’ – I never thought of those as because they were robust kids – their attitudes and their act.”

Barry, then, seemingly familiar with using terms which juxtaposed a traditional view of masculinity with that of the feminine, conceptualises the Beatles’ masculinity in terms of attitude and act as well as appearance, a recognition of the operation of discourses of masculinity. Similarly, when asked the question, following a look at The Beatles wearing kaftans and beads in *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967), “Do you think that is effeminate dress?” he replied – “Do I think that that’s effeminate dress? ? I would – looking at it now – I can’t remember thinking it at the time ... I can’t remember thinking

² Other respondents also picked up on the “girly” appearance of the Beatles. Respondent 4 described them as “running like big daft girls”, a quote used in the title of the thesis and discussed later in this chapter. Respondent 2, after watching a clip of *A Hard Days Night* (1964) described John Lennon as “running a bit like a girl” and commented on the Beatles “allowing themselves to be chased by girls and running away from them”. Respondent 3 described the Beatles as “a sort of girly band.”

‘well, they’re like big lasses’ but now looking at it, maybe I’d think what have they got on?! You know ...”

Barry implied that, even as a man in his 30s in the 1960s, he would have seen their visual appearance in a different context, as a part of a change of the way that men and masculinity were represented in the period and that his retrospective view is probably something different again, given his current age. Again, though, he goes on to comment “... well, it was a way out song anyway so maybe it goes together ...” at once, seemingly a recognition and dismissal of counterculture influences at work at the time.

Football and Dominant and Resistant Masculinities

As previously stated, football (and other masculine environments such as Barry’s experiences of National Service) provided a focus for much of the discussion. Here the use of the female as negative and male as positive, akin to Segal’s (1988) observations on 1950s’ man in Chapter 3. The use of the term “like big lasses” as not masculine has already been discussed. There was a good deal of discussion of changes in the game over time with discourses around a more manly game in the 1960s emerging.

When asked explicitly “was it a more masculine game?” Barry replied: “it goes together, I think, the physical and the masculine” followed by a discussion on how women’s sports are inferior, mainly because of physical differences:

“I think there’s a vast difference between women playing sport and men. They’re good at what they do but it’s a different ball game.”

The “hard” physical nature of the game again came up in a conversation comparing the past and present. On the modern game he stated:

“... they’re still tackling like men and when it comes to the crunch. I think, I hope, God, I hope it doesn’t ever go soft, completely soft.”³

A dominant discourse around the “man’s game”, therefore, emerged, but as the conversation again returned to the subject of George Best there was a recognition of Best’s position, as a high profile male, part of the social changes of the 1960s and the repositioning of football within 1960s discourses.

“Well, Besty changed for a younger fella – he changed the dress style. He used to wear the right jeans, but with chains on and these heeled boots and all this stuff and he was an icon ... He was the Best – his name was right and footballers copied him as they always will – they always copy the top dogs.”

Best’s position as “the top slot” was deemed important and, a bit like the “showbiz wallahs” idea, Barry seemed to interpret this as license to be different, more feminized, perhaps, and this led on to discussion of Best’s modern-day counterpart, David Beckham. Interestingly, football-wise, Barry saw Beckham as not being in the same league as Best.

“Well Becks is same – to be fair to Becks – the player bit – I mean – no comparison, for me, but from the icon point of view he’s way with it.”

Barry outlined Beckham’s iconic status in terms of hair and fashion and hero-status to young boys. The hero discourse is important, here and will be discussed in the next section. The complexity of Beckham’s modern day masculinity (and its links to Best and the Beatles) are recognised again. As with the Beatles, despite their non-traditional visual appearance, the ability of men to be masculine and “girlified” is recognised and this is particularly interesting coming from Barry, who seemed to have roots in discourses that were centred around masculinism (Brittan, 1989).

Of Beckham, he stated:

³ The hard/soft juxtaposition could possibly be read as a phallic metaphor.

“Well, I suppose you can say some of this dress style’s a bit girlified – I don’t know but as long as you – you see, he doesn’t look like a lass does he? To me he doesn’t anyway. He still looks as though he’s a biggish, strongish fella so ... if he’d have been a bit looking effeminate I would think it was a bad do but I think he carries it.”

While, elsewhere in the interview Barry revealed traditionally masculinist (Brittan, 1989) views on “queers” and “double-timers” it seems that in The Beatles, Best and Beckham he recognised something of the complexities at work in representations of masculinities and this was, interestingly, further revealed in discussions of his own heroes.

Constructions of Masculinity

At various points in the interview the respondent seemed to be positioning himself in the world of men – football, national service – and, through the use of language, in the world of hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004). The use of terms such as “blokes” and “fellas” was frequent and this originally emerged in the interview through a discussion of his musical heroes, (from a period [the 1950s] when he was in his 20s), The Rat Pack.⁴ This is particularly interesting in the context of the Rat Pack’s retrospective construction as icons of a bygone age of masculinity (Levy, 1999). Barry states:

“In preference to the Beatles, you know, I preferred that type – Dean Martin – all this type of fella.”

He goes on to talk about “Sinatra and these fellas”, “Sammy Davis and them lads” while talk of his ex-footballing colleagues is peppered with the term “the lads”. Barry

⁴ The Rat Pack was a term allegedly coined by Lauren Bacall for a gang of friends (including a young Frank Sinatra) who hung around The Brown Derby restaurant in Hollywood with husband Humphrey Bogart in mid 1950s. Following Bogart’s death Sinatra “inherited” the term and the 1950s/60s Rat Pack is commonly used to refer to Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr, Joey Bishop and Peter Lawford, John F. Kennedy’s brother in law, who made a number of appearances together in Las Vegas and appeared in the original version of *Ocean’s 11* (1960). The Pack also included “honorary” female members Lauren Bacall, Marilyn Monroe, Shirley Maclaine, Judy Garland and Angie Dickinson (see Levy, 1999).

recalled a number of stories about his footballing days with narratives of good times, drinking and, interestingly, a discussion on suits, linked to the Rat Pack, describing how the team would go to a branch of Alexander's (the tailors) where the manager was a fan and would give them discount. Again, these narratives, along with tales of National Service adventures in Hong Kong, served to establish the respondent's masculine credentials in the interview. However, the recognition of the complexities at work in the discussion of Best and Becks re-emerged in a section where he discussed a particular hero,⁵ Dennis Compton, the England cricketer and Arsenal footballer.⁶

“Well, my heroes were sportsmen ... if I was fair with myself, Dennis Compton was probably an idol of mine from being a kid because he played football and cricket you see, and I loved both games ...”

So, while his “idol” is chosen because of his sporting prowess there is something else at work and, as the narrative unfolded it emerged that it was Compton's lifestyle, dress sense and flair that also appealed.

“... you see, Len Hutton⁷ was the big man then. But Compton was a dashing fella, you know, Len Hutton were probably a more solid bat but Dennis Compton came in and he had loads of flair. You thought that was the in thing then.”

The use of the term “solid bat” to describe Hutton is juxtaposed with descriptions of Compton's “flair” and these terms can be read as part of a discourse about different types of masculinity, arguably Hutton's masculinism (Brittan, 1989) eclipsed for

⁵ Chapter 1 and the “Waxing Lyrical” section (Appendix 1) explores hero discourses around the Beatles. What emerged from the interviews was the way in which men often identify other men as heroes, based on a range of attributes, including success in their field and their visual appearance and style. Heroes identified in the interviews include The Rolling Stones, Boy George, John Inman, David Bowie, Bert Trautman, Eric Clapton, James Bond and Bob Dylan.

⁶ Dennis Compton played cricket for England and Middlesex in the post war period between the mid 1940s and late 1950s. He also played football for Arsenal and was a member of their 1950 F.A. Cup winning team.

⁷ Yorkshireman Len Hutton played cricket for Yorkshire, captained the England cricket team and was a contemporary of Compton.

Barry, by Compton's more feminized version (Cohan, 1993; Neale, 1993), despite his engagement with masculinist (Brittan, 1989) discourses elsewhere in the interview.

When asked "When you say he was dashing do you mean in terms of his sporting style?" to he responded:

"His play and his life I think. His play and what went on. He had a reputation for being a man about town and all this stuff", and later he added "... he had big flair. He played with flair, he went about town with flair."

Mulvey's notion of "to be looked at ness" (Mulvey, 1975 : 18) and the discussion of men looking at men in respect of the Beatles in Chapter 6 is then reflected in what Barry had to say next. In probing further around the man-about-town-ness of Compton, Barry was asked "What did he dress like?"

"Well – in them days it was the smarter the suit the better, wasn't it. He had smart suits. One of the best pictures I had of him was in his Arsenal cup final gear – I had a picture of him in that at the time."

He then went on to describe how Compton's image was used on billboards to advertise Brylcreem a direct link to "Becks", 50 years later, and Barry makes the link between sports image and product which provides an interesting historical perspective on Simpson's (2008) work on sport-porn/imagery in the 21st century and work on the new man, the groomed man and the Brylcreamed man of the 1980s (Edwards, 1997; Nixon, 1997).

"... The Brylcream boy, as he was called then ... I would think he was one of the first I ever remember to be an icon of dress and grooming and his was Brylcream – that was his big advert. And, as I say, it was all over the London tube stations. Big photographs of Dennis Compton."

In his discussion on Compton, then, Barry provides an interesting perspective on the hero discourse at work when men talk about other men, with looking and visual style seemingly important to the discourse, and also to the emergence of resistant

discourses around masculinity. Men about town like Compton, Sinatra⁸ and his Rat Pack, Best and Beckham, may have been contextualised in a masculinist (Brittan, 1989) environment but there is a recognition by the respondent of something of the feminized (Cohan, 1993; Neale, 1993) at work. If the Beatles are pre-metrosexual (Simpson, 2004) in *Help!* (1965) then Compton, as described by Barry in terms of his “dress and grooming”, his image magnified on London bill boards for all to see, must surely be pre- pre metrosexual.

The 1960s as Social Change

Barry stated early in the interview that the 1950s “is alive in my mind” and later saw the 1950s, when he was a young man in his 20s, as “a lively period” implying that he was engaged in a social scene at the time, although he did not elaborate on this. In contrast, his view on the 1960s, draws on a “family man” discourse which is, in many ways, in contrast to his own 1950s’ man-about-town-ness.⁹

“I got married in ’58 and the kids were young so it was probably a period in my life where I had to concentrate more on the family, you see, instead of what was going on in music and such as that ...”

The respondent described a “traditional” division of family labour with talk of a family wage and a wife looking after the money reflected in some of the social surveys of the period (Young and Wilmot, 1962). The discourse around marriage and family life also resonates with Ehrenreich’s (1983) and Segal’s (1988) ideas documented in Chapter 3 and some of the British kitchen-sink films discussed in relation to the Beatles’ films in Chapter 6. At one point the respondent described family life and, implicitly, his role within it and he conceptualised it as “the system”. The escape discourse at work in the Beatles’ films also emerged:

⁸ Sinatra (and the Rat Pack) were well known for their smart suits, in particular, the Italian short-jacketed “bum-freezer” suits (Respondent 1 mentioned these) which became popular in the early 1960s. Sinatra’s attire in *Ocean’s 11* (1960) is particularly flamboyant including his appearance in a brightly coloured mohair jumper in an early scene.

⁹ After the interview had finished the Respondent continued (over lunch) to recount some of the stories from his footballing days, including one which concluded with the respondent and several team mates ending up veering off the road into a field following a particularly long night out, only to be “let off” by the police officers who had found them, as they were big fans of the team.

“But ... I’ve got to be perfectly fair here. I was footballing as the time, I suppose and I stayed away some weekends and all like that so really Jean (his wife) had a harder time with that, bringing the bairns up, than I did because I was out of it quite a lot ... not like they are now, for weeks on end, but there’d be a weekend away and all like this so you got out of the system.”

Elsewhere discussion of ‘traditional’ approaches to masculine parenting (“when man ruled the kids”) is juxtaposed with a recognition of social change in the 1960s and discourses of upward mobility as chronicled by Sandbrook (2005; 2006). Of the 1960s the respondent stated:

“... I think it was a couldn’t care less time. Straight after the war everybody wanted things to go right and I think there was enthusiasm, get the ruddy thing going and all this and then, in the ‘60s, I think they thought it’s great, is this, and they were just enjoying their selves.”

This suggests a certain detachment from those “just enjoying themselves”, again redolent of the marriage as an end to pleasure discourse outlined by Ehrenreich (1983) and Segal (1988) but the respondent was positive about the upward mobility on offer in the period with his own home and car ownership by the end of the 1960s seen as an indication of this.

Conclusion

When asked at the end of the interview if he could define masculinity Barry stated:

“I’m old fashioned. I’m for a man being a man and a woman being a woman ...”

This explicit statement, positioning himself within the boundaries of hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) [see Chapter 3], reflects much of the construction of masculinity at work in the

interview, but Barry's reflections on what can be conceptualised as resistant masculinities exhibited by the Beatles, "Besty", "Becks" and man about town Dennis Compton – these fellas – provide, it can be argued, a recognition of representations of masculinities which are at odds with his stated position. The discussion on Compton, in particular, reveals more of a complexity at work in his construction of identity than he, himself, recognised and reflects the ideas discussed in Chapter 3 around representation and identity (Dyer, 1993; Hall, 1997; Gripsrud, 2002). Barry, therefore, recognised different types of representations of men and masculinities that emerged in the 1960s and gave examples, as part of the dialogue within the interview, of those which seemed to be resistant to the dominant. While positioning himself as 'rooted' in the 1950s, the respondent had much to say about his "family man" role in the 1960s and gave an illuminating personal account of his own upward mobility. Despite his self-stated "old-fashioned" perspective of men and masculinities the interview revealed some of the complexities around the construction of his own masculinity (style and visual appearance being seen as important) and around the men he admired, flamboyant "showbiz wallahs" in many cases.

Respondents 4, 5 and 6

Arthur (a pseudonym) was a sales director and Eric (a pseudonym) was a retired journalist and teacher. Both were 59 years old at the time of interview. Stephen (a pseudonym) was an accountant, Arthur's nephew, and 38 years old at the time of interview (see Appendix 10). Arthur and Stephen were both married without children. Eric was not married. The opportunity to do the interview as a group came about by chance and is the only group interview in the study. The interaction and relationships at work within the interview and within the transcribed text form a vital part of the "texture" of the text" (Fairclough, 1995 : 184) and "the play of its internal relationships" (Foucault, 1984 : 103). This made dividing it up into bite-size, sub-headed chunks quite difficult. The whole text is really a self contained narrative, a story of

homosocial relationship between two men in their late 50s¹⁰, dating back over 40 years, with discourses around The Beatles, the 1960s and masculinities woven into the text at different points.

The Beatles and the 1960s

Arthur and Eric (both 59 years old at the time of interview [see Appendix 10]) were interesting interviewees. They had lived on the Wirral in the late 1950s and frequented the places where the Beatles, and the other Liverpool groups on ‘the scene’ in the early 1960s, played (including the Cavern)¹¹. Their connection to “the scene” and its conceptualisation in masculine terms reflected Frith’s (1978) work, discussed in Chapter 4. The interview, therefore, began, with recollections of dancing, girls, pop groups and their connection to a version of the 1960s often retrospectively represented (Marwick, 1998; Sandbrook, 2005, 2006). However, interestingly, much of their identity in the period was established by defining what they were “not”¹²; not Scousers, (come from the Wirral), not necessarily Beatles fans, and, definitely, not fans of the “feminized”, famous Beatles, which they separated out from the “authentic” more masculine Beatles they had seen in the early days at the Cavern. Eric stated:

“Yeah, but I also don’t think the Beatles were thought of straight away as the number one group – there were hundreds of groups. Everybody had their favourite – The Searchers, The Big Three, Merseybeats ...”

Arthur added:

¹⁰ Sadly, Eric died in 2008. Arthur contacted me, via Stephen, to ask for a transcript of the interview as a memento.

¹¹ Arthur recalled how on a first date with a girl to the Cavern she asked if he wanted to go backstage to meet the group as she knew a couple of them. He declined. It was the Beatles.

¹² Respondent 11 identified that identity is often defined by what one is “not” as much as one is and this is apparent in the interviews with respondent 1 and respondent 4, 5 and 6. Dyer (1993) and others have discussed this and the ideas around dominant/resistant discourses. In Chapter 6 The Beatles are examined as “not” hegemonic or “not” masculinist.

“I mean one of things that people were disappointed with the Beatles (sic) was that once they were famous they were gone and everybody detested them for that.”

Eric identified this as being linked to “when they became the mop-tops and pursued by girls onto the train, etc.”

Later on in the interview they returned to this theme:

Arthur: “They were groomed by then weren’t they?”

Eric5: “Exactly.”

Arthur: “The clothes, the hair, everything.”

Eric: “That’s’ right, because in our day they came back from Germany and they had the leather gear on ...”

Arthur: “They smelled sweaty.”

Eric: “... and associated cigarettes and the Chelsea boots, but that’s why, probably, we found the films and the fashion and all that a little bit effeminate.”

There is a linking of the “authentic”¹³ to what they interpret as a more masculine rocky sound of the early Beatles and a “we were there to witness this” discourse at work here.

Eric: “We did have our guts churned by McCartney’s bass. The big volume, tight, sweaty, bang bang. Great.”

¹³ See Frith (1978); Whiteley (1997).

This discourse was juxtaposed with descriptions of the famous “effeminate” Beatles described by Arthur as “Running like big daft girls” in the opening scene of “*A Hard Day’s Night*” (1964).

Arthur: “They’d gone by then.”

Eric: “They’d gone – they were dead, basically.”

This “feminized” equals “dead” discourse is interesting, partly because it takes Ehrenreich’s (1983) and Segal’s (1988) ideas about marriage as trap and the female or feminine as a barrier to pleasure a stage further. However, it is articulated through a discourse which sometimes seems to be veering towards the homosexual end of the homosexual/homosocial continuum (see Chapter 6). Their descriptions of the Beatles’ to be “looked-at-ness” (Mulvey, 1975 : 18) reflect later works on men looking at men (Cohan, 1993; Neale, 1993; Bruzzi, 1997; Simpson, 2006) discussed in previous chapters. At the same time the use of the term “groomed” in respect of the Beatles, a term associated with male grooming (in the Byrcream sense) and more recently used as a term in connection with paedophilia¹⁴, and their “attraction” to the Beatles in their early Cavern incarnation, based on their traditionally masculine attributes, resonated with ideas expressed by respondent 11 (see later section) about the appropriation of macho signs and signifiers by the gay community. Arthur and Eric seem to be identifying something homoerotic in their descriptions. Arthur and Eric went on to discuss Brian Epstein’s role in this process, something which they explicitly identified as a retrospective perspective.

Eric: “... anybody in the know would think in terms of Epstein having his own toy boys there, being able to groom them and probably have lustful thoughts about them, therefore, ... I’m not sure we were very aware of gay issues.”

Arthur: “Yes.”

¹⁴ Tory MP Damian Green, arrested in December 2008 for leaking information, was described by the police as having “groomed” civil servant Christopher Galley in order to obtain information. This caused controversy and press comment on the fact that the term “groomed” is usually used in relation to the action of paedophiles.

Eric: “Nevertheless, as it appears later, probably retrospectively, we think in terms of here was a gay man who had access to these beautiful boys and so the idea of shampooing every three hours and getting the flop – you know – effeminate.”

It seems unclear whether it is Eric who is seeing the Beatles as “beautiful boys” or whether he is conceptualising Epstein’s position and, while the conversation draws on popular discourses about Epstein’s homosexuality, alleged Lennon obsession and his relationship with and motivation towards the Beatles (Norman, 1981; Goldman, 1998), there seems to be a complexity at work in his own attitudes to the ways in which the Beatles’ masculinities are portrayed and a recognition that a process of feminization was at work in representation of the Beatles as the 1960s progressed.¹⁵ The term “grooming” was, again, used in this context.

Arthur and Eric also commented on the ordinary/extraordinary discourses at work around the Beatles conceptualising themselves as connected yet distant with a hint of “it could have been me”. In describing a visit to the childhood homes of Lennon and McCartney, which he had undertaken with Arthur, Eric stated:

“... one of things that struck me was the ordinariness, the background, so that everybody could, in fact, hope to buy that guitar, write a song, make big money, attract dolly birds, move to London, buy a house in Sussex or Surrey ...”

Here he uses the story of the Beatles to outline a male fantasy linked to the upward mobility discourse often used in connection with the 1960s (Marwick, 1998; Sandbrook, 2006) and this will be further explored in a later section.

He later added:

¹⁵ There was an interesting discussion in the interview around the fact that while during the rooftop concert in *Let it Be* (1970), three members of the group seem to be wearing women’s coats, Eric identified them as still being “very masculine” because of “the mastery of their guitars” and the fact that they were independent: “not in anybody else’s hands.”

“... part of me feels as if it came back to round again, I might, this time, manage to be McCartney. Strange, same time, same place and the lightening struck just slightly too – a mile away.”¹⁶

There is a quasi-religious discourse at work here and Eric also commented on the quasi-religious nature of the Beatles. Although unfamiliar with McKinney’s (2003) work,¹⁷ (see Chapter 6) Eric identified, after watching a clip of The Beatles performing on the Apple rooftop in *Let it Be* (1970), a quasi-religious discourse at work:

“... this is an act of magnificent defiance – putting two fingers up to the whole of London and the Police and the Establishment, you know. But that height as well is a symbol isn’t it? They’re high ... pissing down on people musically ... symbolic as Christ’s ascension! Going up onto a high place ... The Beatles, when they are last seen together – they’re like – they’re Christ like, Christlike – they’re taken up into a higher place from which they will be plucked and then they will sit on the right hand of media God – wonderful.”

This quote also recognises The Beatles as a force resistant to ‘the establishment’, anti-hegemonic in their women’s coats, “putting two fingers up”, their resistant discourse of masculinity making them superior to what he conceptualises as the mere mortals below.

The 1960s as Social Change

The narrative structure of the interview was shaped having around a story of two friends who hung out together in the early 1960s in the North of England. One went South to seek his fortune, as a music journalist; the other stayed in a solid reliable sales job. They lose touch but meet up again in their late 50s. The plot is redolent of the kitchen-sink Brit-films of the early 1960s discussed in Chapter 6. It is a true life reflection of the social mobility discourse outlined by Marwick (1998) and Sandbrook

¹⁶ Respondent 1, in talking about his hero, articulates the idea of wanting to be someone else. “... that was the first fella that I would have ... ‘by I wish I was him’, you know ...”

¹⁷ This was established after the conclusion of the interview.

(2006) and the escape discourse at work in the films of the Beatles and Northern early 1960s' new wave film (Stafford, 2001). While Arthur choose to stay in the Wirral, ("I just plodded on"). Eric described how, just like the Beatles going from the Northern feel of *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) to the swinging London of *Help!* (1965), a relocation which also happened in their "real" lives, he took the same route.

"... in some ways you could say I almost followed the Beatles down and I, although I had a bum job to start with, I actually got onto Beat monthly, Beat Instrumental, so in some ways, my career ... I was now writing and being published nationally and going out for drinks with these people, erm, the Port Sunlight Birkenhead lad made good ..."

He even described this as "almost a sort of 'Billy Liar' effect, you know."¹⁹

This "escape" discourse centres around escape from his father²⁰ and the Methodist Church as forms of authority and control and throughout the interview, he recalled the strict regime of the Methodist Church and rows with his father about wanting to leave home.

The 1960s as "dangerous and wild" discourse is apparent here, both in discussions of "the scene" in the North in the early 1960s and the London "scene" later on.

Arthur: "Oh, yeah, that was our bag, wasn't it, alcohol?"

Eric: "... and going out with groups and people waving twenty pound notes and fifty pound notes after they'd been paid for a gig, erm the alcohol was very very dangerous for me."

Stephen: "Was there a lot of booze around at the time?"

Arthur: "Oh yeah, yeah."

¹⁹ See Chapter 6.

²⁰ Discourses around fathers and conflict also formed a large part of interviews with respondents 3 and 7.

Stephen: “Were you drinking quite heavily?”

Eric: “Oh yes, yes.”

Eric went on to recount his exploits in London; drinking fortified Barley wine and Watney’s Red Barrel in Bayswater after work, interviewing his guitar hero Eric Clapton, and “free loading” at Chuck Berry’s Hilton reception:

“... that was the first time I saw caviar and expensive drinks, wafting around on a silver tray ... the young Birkenhead lad still in me was grabbing, grabbing ...”

The narrative is shot through with the notion of the pleasures of masculinity (Stacey, 1992; Simpson, 2008) available in this period and therefore reflective of accounts of “swinging London” often retrospectively dismissed as myth (Melly, 1970; Sandbrook, 2006). His summarising of the 1960s is reflective, though:

“... very dark days, very exciting days but, erm, very dangerous days as well, very dangerous ... many people did go, fall by the wayside. Some people were, I think, probably, you know, inevitably damaged or they aspired to much and got nothing.”

Eric’s journey South ended up, perhaps, with him hitting Hunter S. Thompson’s high water mark²¹ of the 1960s and returning North to a safer, more secure, life:

“So, ’67, that was the year I went back, almost went back. I think I was getting more legit and conventional because I’d been through all this and I’d been through all the drinking, and I was trying to be self-educating, doing “A” levels through the rapid results colleges ...”

²¹ See Chapter 6.

In a song called *Debris* (1971) a song about a young man's relationship with his father, the late Ronnie Lane wrote:

“I went there and back
Just to see how far it was
And you, you tried to tell me
But I had to learn for myself”

The journey metaphor, now used ad infinitum by reality TV stars, is well established in discourses of masculinity and that most masculine of film genres the road movie, (Biskind, 1999) and Eric's story provides an interesting reflection of this in the context of the social changes of the 1960s, a period when men began to explore the space between living at home with mother and living with a wife, and a period where this space (previously non-existent for many) began to become visible in the cultural products (film and sitcom, in particular) of the period.

Constructions of Masculinity

As stated earlier, the texture of this interview text is moulded around a homosocial narrative and much of the construction of the participant's own masculinities at work in the interview is bound up in tales of a two man gang and a male friendship. At the end of the Beatles *Anthology* (2000) Ringo Starr describes the Beatles as:

“Just four guys who really loved each other. It was pretty sensational.”

(The Beatles, 2000 : 357)

This sense of homosocial bonding which contravenes essentialist-based myths about women being better at friendships/relationships than men (Butler, 1990) was present in this interview; both in the text and in the actual event itself²³. The relationship between Eric and Arthur was interesting in that Eric dominated and, at several points, apologised for hogging the microphone before going on to elaborate on his last point.

²³ The tape of the interview, despite the dominance of Eric, plays as a four way conversation with much laughter and interaction.

The following exchange is representative of a number of similar occurrences in the interview:

Interviewer: “What about their appearance in that clip?”

Arthur: “I dunno, not really got any comment on that. He’s saying nothing.”

Eric: “I’m trying to get you to speak.”

The following (somewhat lengthy) quote sums up much of the male friendship discourse at work in the text and Eric, as at many points in the interview, is highly reflective, on their lives as men and on the value of their homosocial friendship.

Eric: “Yes, yes and it’s strange because I think it’s fair to say that there was a sense of growing away from Arthur and I’ve said all this to him when we first met again that I think probably this notion of how I was going to move away and be a journalist and how I was going to fulfil my grammar school potential and actually do a degree of some description, you know, erm, I think probably I was moving away from that era, and with that, I wouldn’t say I consciously rejected Arthur but there was no time to keep those links up. I mean, you came down once or twice so I’m not saying I rejected Arthur but what I did say to him was when I met him again, I’d been all through that period and I’d have done the B.ed., done some teaching, come out on ill health – well a few years back now – but I’ve done other things ...but what I’d found when I met Arthur and we talked about it, not in any maudlin, sentimental or ‘do you remember when’ sense, I felt that in meeting Arthur again, he sort of brought greater integrity to me. He allowed me to sort of meet up again, symbolically, through him, what I’d in some ways forgotten, rejected because I was moving away from being a mediocre, Wirral Grammar School Student, four ‘O’ levels, you know, and, erm, heavy drinker etc but then making something of myself with the rapid results college, a real degree, Durham, talking to young theologians etc, erm,

living more in the head. But I think meeting Arthur coming back round again, I've put a lot of my life back together.”

Arthur: “mmm”

Ideas about transgressing class boundaries, Bourdieu's (1998) notion of cultural capital, the 1960s upward mobility thesis and the breaking out discourses at work in the Beatles' films (and some of the quotes in Appendix 1) and McDonald's (1994 : 18) “revolution in the head” are all at work in this quotation. In many ways it reflects the pressures on and/or opportunities available to young men in this period. Hoberman's (2003) previously discussed ideas about the '60s' dream life also comes into play here. This quote, in particular, and the narrative of the interview, in general, could easily be the basis of a retrospective film script about two young men and the impact of the social changes of the 1960s on their lives.

Constructions of traditional hegemonic (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) masculinity occur throughout the interview with reference to dancing, girls and an admiration for James Bond as hero, as well as discussion of their other male heroes. There is also a lengthy and interesting discussion on guitars, a good example of the “Boys' toys” discourse at work²⁴, a discussion which begins with an explanation of what it was that interested them about the Beatles' films, perhaps an attempt to distance themselves from the Beatles “to-be-looked-at-ness” (Mulvey, 1975: 18) in the film clips. Comments from Eric about trying to identify guitars and a reference to Frank Hessey's²⁵ guitar shop in Liverpool were followed up:

Interviewer: “So when you say you'd be interested in guitars and stuff would that be from a technical or an aesthetic point of view?”

Eric: “A totemic point of view.”

²⁴ In an interview with Steve Wright on Radio 2, in November 2008, Paul McCartney outlined his continued obsession with guitars and amplifiers, remarking on the fact that people often cannot believe he is still so interested in the technical aspects and ‘shiny guitars’ after playing in groups for 50 years. The “Boys–Toys” discourse is also well illustrated by a current cultural product, BBC2's *Top Gear*.

²⁵ Frank Hessey's music shop in Liverpool was where the Beatles purchased much of their early musical equipment.

Arthur: "Totemic!"

He then went on to describe the first time he ever saw a real Fender Stratocaster²⁶.

Eric: "Now that's the first time I saw – stop me if I'm boring you about the Stratocaster – that was the first time I saw that beautiful Flamingo Red Stratocaster which Hank Marvin had in real life. It wasn't the Shadows, it was the Moroccans – more rockers – and the lads – the lads – actually came to the front and they gathered around this Fender tweed case and we looked in at this wonderful Stratocaster – there it was – in the wood – in the flesh – we'd seen on the telly with Hank Marvin etc but this was real. There was also something about the ambience ..."

The reference to "the lads" (the gang) resonates with discussions in Respondent 1's interview and Eric then went on to draw together an explanation around the phallic shape, and the power given by the guitar, seemingly an attempt at on-the-hoof theory building, but guitar references continued throughout the interview – who had what guitar, which guitar they had owned and observations on the guitars played by the Beatles in the film clips. Here knowledge of technical trivia and an obsession with boys' toys emerges as a way of constructing their own male identity [Hornby, 1995]. They then continued in this vein describing how they would stand by the stage at concerts to work out the chord structure being played.

These very male-associated activities, however, were juxtaposed within the interview, with narcissistic references (Neale, 1993) to their own physical appearance at the time with Arthur producing photographs of himself from the early 1960s and Eric recalling photos of himself:

"... with sort of quite tight jeans and a chunky sweater and my hair still swept back but plenty of it ..."

²⁶ The Fender Stratocaster was launched in 1954. Pre CBS buy-out (1965) models now command large prices. A 1962 Stratocaster once owned by Hank Marvin, of The Shadows, was recently seen on Ebay for £67K. Dave Gilmour of The Pink Floyd owns the first 'Strat' ever made (a fact recounted, in the interview, by Eric).

And later an observation that:

“I went straight from Beatles to Clapton²⁷. I went straight from Rockabilly Birkenhead, er, low dive pub all the way through to wanting to look like Clapton with the long sideboards and I’m not sure I was a Beatle at any particular time.”

Later on in the interview they discussed jackets.

Eric: “Did you have one of the cutaway German jackets?”

Arthur: “No.”

Eric: “No, we never.”

Arthur: “I had the Jon Gustafson sports jacket.”

It is apparent that hair, clothes, grooming and a sense of narcissism and spectacle (Neale, 1993) were all at work in their 1960s’ lives and there is a certain pleasure in their retrospective recall. They are Edwards’ (1997) “men in the mirror”, contemporaries of mid ‘60s pre-metrosexual Beatles.

Conclusion

As in the interview with Respondent 1, constructions of hegemonic masculinity are juxtaposed with alternative versions and the respondents’ identification with the more traditional masculinity of the early Beatles’ appearance and a seeming rejection of their later more feminized look in the films is subverted, it can be argued, by their later reflections on their 1960s’ narcissism and their language in describing the

²⁷ Eric Clapton played with John Mayall’s Bluesbrothers and the Yardbirds in the early 1960s before going on to form the Cream with Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker. Clapton went on to have a successful solo career and Cream reformed for a series of concerts at the Albert Hall in 2005. Eric identified him as a particular hero.

“masculine” Beatles. The homosocial nature of their relationship is apparent in the interview dialogue, and is reflective of discussions about The Beatles and their homosocial relationship in Chapter 6.

The intersection of class and gender in the 1960s (Marwick, 1998) emerges as a key discourse with the personal narratives of Arthur and Eric reflecting different experiences of this. The pleasures and dangers of life for young men in the 1960s is also a discourse operating within the text and is redolent of broader 1960s discourses at work in media re-presentation of the events of the decade (Sandbrook, 2006). Eric claimed “not” to have been a Beatle at anytime (the “not” discourse being important in the interview) yet his North-South journey reflects theirs and the “script” of his ‘60s’ dream life “film” draws on ideas at work in *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964) and *Help!* (1965).

The juxtaposition of dominant and resistant discourses of masculinity on show in the interview, and the respondents’ reflections on images of the Beatles , shows an appreciation of the changing nature of representations of men and masculinities in the 1960s.

Respondent 11

Jason (a pseudonym), an “out” homosexual postgraduate student and freelance photographer, was 34 years old at the time of the interview. As he was not born until the 1970s, Jason had no lived experience of the 1960s to recount, but, having decided to include in the sample men from a wide range of backgrounds and age ranges, it was inevitable that this would be the case with some respondents. As he was not that familiar with The Beatles, the film clips were particularly useful as trigger material, as he came to much of the material for the first time, and so his responses were interesting, in that they were an immediate reaction to the visual material without any obvious preconceived ideas about, or previous exposure to, The Beatles. The interview differed from the others in that there is much two-way questioning, with Jason asking for more detail/ information about the subject area as well as wanting to exchange opinions about some of the issues around men and masculinities. In some

ways, on listening back to it, it had a similar atmosphere to the group interview, in that there is a lot of laughter and a relaxed dialogue between interviewer and respondent. Jason was well-versed in some of the language around representation and masculinities and some of the responses reflect this in a way that was not apparent in other interviews.

The Beatles and the 1960s

Having launched into the interview with a discussion on changes in the notion of what masculinity is (with a focus on David Beckham), Jason was shown a clip of *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) immediately responding with a discussion around the Beatles' campness, reflecting similar observations from other interviews²⁸. The clip of the opening scene from the film, showing the Beatles running from female fans produced the following response:

“I mean, what’s really gay about that opening sequence is that they’re running away from girls and hiding together ... I think they were quite camp.”

He cited “those big mushroomy haircuts and the suits ... those lovely little mandarin collar things ... And also, the fact that they’re all wearing virtually identical suits.”

He acknowledged that “they were masculine because they were sold to young girls, of course ...” but his response, noting the Beatles fleeing from “female attention” reflected much of the discussion in Chapter 6 on the Beatles’ feminized (Cohen, 1993) appearance and the subversive nature of the accessorized suit (Bruzzi, 1997). Interviewer and respondent continued to discuss the notion of “feminized” with Jason defining it as “just the opposite of the traditional norms of masculinity” and explaining, in a similar way to Ehrenreich et al., (1992) and Stark (2005), how, particularly from a US perspective, they would have fitted the bill as typically “foppish” Englishmen with “that whole sexual ambiguity thing.” This is an interesting point as it suggests that the idea of resistant masculinities is somehow rooted in a particular version of Englishness and that The Beatles, themselves, were

²⁸ See footnote 2.

drawing on this particular discourse. There is discussion in Chapter 1 around the notion of the Beatles in their *Sgt Pepper* period as presenting a resistant version of the Englishman. “Oh, I mean the Sgt Pepper outfits, you know!” Jason stated at one point in the interview, but interestingly, he had a similar perspective to Respondent 1’s assertion that they were “showbiz wallahs” and could get away with it because of that:

“That’s a fame thing as well, it’s like, you know, you can get away with so much more on an album cover.”

The Beatles as a camp/feminized discourse permeated the whole interview, much of it reflecting some of Shillinglaw’s (1999) discussion of queer codes at work in the first two films, or observations made about women’s coats on the Apple rooftop (in *Let it Be* [1970]) in Chapter 6. The respondent observed the juxtaposition of brightly coloured clothing with beards and moustaches in the later film. Of the clothes he observed:

“There was definitely something very girly about that. To wear colours like that. Even nowadays, for men to wear colours that bright, you’d be called, especially in the North, you’d be called ‘puff’ in the street.”

However he asserts that the “puff” “worry” is dispelled by the fact that three of them were married:

“... so that buys you out of that worry as well.”

The use of the word “worry” and the idea of being called “puff” in the street (in the North!) is interesting. Later in the interview it became apparent that the respondent was drawing on his own experiences and adolescent “worries”, but in identifying The Beatles as not worried, identifying marital status as a “defence” against such jibes, he is acknowledging their flamboyance and appearance as a sign of resistance (Hebdidge, 1978) and a challenge to traditional masculinity (Brittan, 1989) as reflected through their clothing.

The signifiers of masculinity, Jason noted, are important in that they somehow allow a playfulness within the Beatles' definition of masculinity, a knowing use of such signifiers as part of the process of resistance. He identified this as particular noticeable in their kaftan and beads period, around 1967:

“Yeah: It's kind of a really significant thing that's kind of, so, o.k., we might be wearing psychedelic clothes and long hair, playing next to plastic flowers but we've got moustaches ... kind of has the hallmark of 'don't worry everybody, we're married with moustaches and there are girls'.”

Jason saw this as highly significant in terms of handing others “permission” to incorporate part of this resistant discourse into their own construction of self-identity, something which will be discussed later in relation to his own ideas about constructions of masculinity. He stated:

“... it kind of hands you the permission to do it, you know, you can almost imagine boys at the time, teenagers at the time, wearing something similar, but saying 'John Lennon did it and he's married', you know, a lot of it is what things signify rather than what they actually are ...”

Jason's reading of the Beatles and their relationship to dominant and resistant discourses of masculinities was, it seemed, closely aligned to his own sense of gay masculinity. This was illustrated by the observations on the Beatles as camp from the start of the interview and he identified the “dressed-by-Brian” homoeroticism of the *Hard Day's Night* (1964) period without really knowing anything about Brian Epstein's role (“wasn't Brian Epstein gay?” he asked at one point) or the relationship between Lennon and Epstein discussed in Chapter 3. However, after being shown a clip from *Help!* (1965) featuring the song *You've Got to Hide Your Love Away* (1965) his immediate response was:

“That song, is, er, I mean that song could have been about being gay – you’ve got to hide your love away.”²⁹

This led to a discussion and information exchange between the interviewer and respondent around Epstein’s influence and the Lennon/Epstein rumours outlined in Chapter 1.

Jason: “Did John Lennon write that song?”

Interviewer: “Yes.”

Jason: “That’s interesting.”

Interviewer: “It’s interesting that you picked that up without knowing anything of that.”

Jason: “Anything that you hear that’s remotely, you know, hiding your secret or whatever, you straight away take that on board.”

Interviewer: “And interestingly – in the – there’s this whole box set – The Beatles *Anthology*, and the bit in that they have about Epstein, they use that song.”

Jason: “Oh really? That’s interesting.”

Interviewer: “I mean they edited that in the ‘90s ...”

Jason: “Well now I’m just convinced that it’s about them because I want it to be!”

²⁹ Respondent 5’s response to the same clip was to discuss the Gibson J28 jumbo guitars being played by John Lennon and George Harrison and to examine the chord shapes, a good example of contrasting constructions of and reflections on masculinity in response to the same trigger material.

Again, this recognition of a gay subtext reflects Shillinglaw's (1999) ideas on queer codes and the Beatles and Brocken's (2000) work on the gay scene in early 1960s Liverpool. The recognition of this within this particular song, by the respondent, is interesting in the context of the reported rumours of the Epstein/Lennon relationship (Norman, 1981; Goldman, 1988) and a further example of the queer codes/camp discourses at work in the Beatles' films, which form part of their resistance to dominant versions of masculinity.

Constructions of Masculinity

The fact that Jason started the interview with a discussion of "how gay in general has changed" and how "masculinity changes gay men" and then went on to apply a gay lens to the subject matter throughout the interview means that his construction of his own gay masculinity was revealed and explained throughout the texture of the interview text (Fairclough, 1995). He also made explicit and articulated his experiences of being a gay man, of coming out, and of the significance of role models in that process. Jason had a perceptive insight view on the relationship between "gay" and "straight" in recent years, discussing David Beckham in the context of the metrosexual debate (Simpson, 2004; 2008) and how gay and straight masculinities have become interdependent.

"Masculinity changes gay men, of course, because so many gay men try and recreate that pastiche of masculinity ... but the idea of gay men being really clean cut and well dressed ... heterosexual male ... sees that – sees the effect it has on straight women and, thus, changes them, all ... that's how – similar to how David Beckham's done (sic)."

What's interesting is that, although he does not explicitly state it, Jason, uses the term "masculinity" to distinguish between traditional conceptualisations of masculinism (or, perhaps, hegemonic masculinity) and other versions in a similar way to Stephen Fry, as discussed in Chapter 3. However, at the same time, he presents a case for "gay" as part of masculine, a matter of-fact acceptance of the notion that masculinities (plural) is a better way of informing the debate around men and masculinity,

(Brod,1987) or even the idea that the term “men” might be more appropriate (Hearn, 2004).

There is much interesting discussion about how “gay men go for more masculine men than straight women do” and he reflects on how gay men have fetishized a “traditional” masculine look and on his own desires:

“... I’d want to be sexually involved with the most clichéd masculine man, which doesn’t really exist, it’s an act just as much as the drag is ...”³⁰

Here, Jason draws on Butler’s (1990) ideas on gender as performance, even seeing Elvis, discussed in Chapter 1 as an early example of groin-centred masculinity in music (Frith, 1978; Stark, 2005), in his later Las Vegas period, as akin to a drag act. He was also articulate on the importance of representation and on the changed landscape of men and masculinities in the 21st century, amusingly concluding:

“Most straight men now, your average straight man on the street, doesn’t really rely on being that masculine, it’s just probably not that necessary, especially to attract women ... if you’re like Bruce Willis in *Die Hard* you’re going to attract much more gay men than you are women ... you’re asking for trouble really.”

Jason, then, identified a complex set of representations of masculinities, aspects of performance and a need for masculinity literacy among modern men. There was other discussion relating to constructions of masculinity, particularly in relation to “authentic” gayness but this will be included in the discussion in the next section on social change, which revolves around Jason’s own experiences.

³⁰ Respondent 11, when discussing his own male heroes/fantasy figures chose 1980s’ pop cross-dressers Boy George and Marilyn but also the very traditionally chiselled masculine-looking Morton Hackett (of 1980s’ pop group Aha) and actor Nigel Havers: “they, obviously, represented a different sort of thing.”

Social Change and (not) the 1960s

Jason's comments on the Beatles and the 1960 were the result of the viewing of film clips and a two-way discussion with the interviewer. In terms of lived experience he drew on his experiences of growing up as a child in the 1970s and an adolescent in the 1980s.³¹

As the interview progressed, Jason made links between his observations on the "camp" and "foppish" Beatles, given permission to push the boundaries because of their fame, and male stars of the 1970s and 1980s who were much more open about their gender fluidity (Whiteley, 1997):

“... Think of David Bowie, of course, with the face make up and everything, saying, at the time, well, hinting that he was bisexual.”

Jason went on to question the interviewer about David Bowie and 1970s' glam-rocker Marc Bolan and what people made of them being so "girlified":

“Cos, David Bowie, dressing like that and having one bare leg showing and the thunderbolt across his face, that was pushing it further than the Sgt Pepper stuff, wasn't it?”

He advanced the argument that Boy George, in the 1980s, seemed to get a much harder time than Bowie had in the 1970's, because of his flamboyant "girlified" appearance and raised interesting questions about permission/being allowed to do so:

“I wonder why that went down before then everything Boy George did in '82, '83. There must have been something about the '70s that was allowing them to.”

The permission discourse reappeared later in the interview in relation to the respondents own "coming out", but it is linked to ideas around there being particular

³¹ Similar to the Respondent 1's ascertain that the 50s – the time of his youth – was “very much alive in my mind”, respondent 11 drew his adolescent experiences from the 1980's, identifying them as influential in shaping his future.

historical movements when attitudes shift and a hint of Foucault's (1984) notion of history not being linear:

“I mean I grew up watching John Inman in *Are You Being Served*, I just thought he was just the business, you know, I understood that he was a boy but he was really girlyfied and I was a very girly child. I just grew up watching him being accepted and, er, his friendship with Mrs Slocombe and everything ... it's completely different to David Bowie and his painted face but still ...”

He prefaced this with “I suppose in the '70s it was a much better period” and later added “in some ways it was more radical then than it is now.”

Jason discussed Inman's stereotypical portrayal of a gay man and the way it was retrospectively attacked by gay rights groups, but argued that he was an important role model (for him). He also cited the *Carry On* films, again the victim of 1980s' attacks by feminist writers, and others, for their crude sexism and stereotypical portrayals of gender and sexuality, as a site where the pleasures of gay masculinities could be seen.

“It was still queens being really camp and having a laugh about promiscuity or male nurses bending over to the sound of a whistle going off, or whatever, but either way it wasn't actually a grim portrayal. It looked like it was a laugh, also, and this is also the case with Mr Humphries (John Inman's character). They were shown to be integrated in amongst straight colleagues or whatever and for them not to have to hide it?”

The respondent's identification of the importance of representations of resistant masculinities (in this case, gay masculinities) in relation to identity certainly resonates with some of the ideas advanced in Chapter 4. (Dyer, 1993; Gripsrud, 2002).

Larry Grayson, camp host of *The Generation Game* in the same period, was also cited as important to the respondent mainly because “it wasn't played that safely, he wasn't encouraged to be desexualised.” Despite Graham Norton's outrageous late night camping in the 1990s, seen by many as pushing the boundaries in terms of gay media

visibility, Jason saw Grayson's appearance, in the 1970s, in the mainstream prime-time Saturday night family viewing slot as far more radical and subversive.

Interviewer: "... he had a friend called Everard."

Jason: "... yeah, he used to talk about the friend and then they'd have on natives dancing, or whatever, you know, he'd be flirting with these half-dressed men and it was really, really sexualised."

Jason saw Grayson's performance of gay masculinity within the mainstream, conceptualising the 1970s as a golden age of more tolerant times, as an important landmark:

"Think of that in the '70s, everybody sitting down at 7 o'clock on a Saturday night to watch a really, really flamboyant puff flirt with some straight boys. When you think about it, it's really out there, much more than now in a way. And all before the watershed."

He then contrasted this with the containment of gay men like Graham Norton and Paul O'Grady (formerly drag-act Lily Savage) within the mainstream, something the respondent saw as "selling out" and a betrayal of previous "authentic" gay performances. Of O'Grady he stated:

"Well, I mean, there's so many gay celebs at the moment just totally selling out. I mean I remember Lily Savage when I was first going on the scene. He'd be really, you know, really rude comedy, really out there ... and suddenly he's now on at tea time in a suit ..."

He also saw Graham Norton's transition from "phoning up prostitutes" and other "really risqué stuff" to presenting prime time BBC TV Saturday teatime programmes as "selling out". Unlike Grayson, the respondent felt that Norton had left his gay identity at the door:

“... he’s got to watch his language, so, er, it’s almost like you’re allowed in if you sell out a little bit. I think probably it won’t be that long before you don’t even see camp appearing on TV.”

In terms of the debate on representation of masculinities (particularly those resistant to the dominant) this is an important point and he went on to critique the “born from PC” representation of gay men on the BBC.

“... but most representations of gay men now, ... are the most ungayish gay people, ever you know. Really straight-laced. There was that couple who lived in Albert Square, weren’t at all camp, no gay people came to visit them ever, they probably created them because they were frightened of this whole stereotype thing.”

Jason identified a gap between representations of gay masculinities and his own lived experiences, a closing down of opportunities for alternative representation seen in previous decades, and a need “to assimilate” in order to be accepted.³²

“... and yet, and you’ll vouch for this, most of us are really that camp.”

He also articulated a worry that while more realistic portrayals of gay-ness are to be found on contemporary TV they are hidden in late night slots and that appearances by gay men on prime-time TV are controlled and contained. The fact that Paul O’Grady now appears as himself in a suit (the most traditional masculine attire [Bruzzi, 1997]), rather than as the flamboyant outspoken Lily Savage, in a dress and a wig, is seen, by the respondent as evidence of decline:

“... you know, you watch, there isn’t one thing that he would say that refers to being gay in the tangible way ... he plays it safe.”

³² This has some similarities to the way in which the Labour Government has moved from the idea of multi-culturalism to cohesion, with a focus on assimilation and “Britishness” as a form of acceptance of societal norms. “The Man” at work in the 21st century.

He also saw this as a negative thing for younger gay men, a decline in appearances (or representations) of men who gave permission just to be that way:

“God. Yeah, when you think about it, the ‘70s you know, TV and media was inundated with puffs being really loud about their sexuality much more than now. That’s my – because I can’t remember much about the ‘70s. I was really little but I watched *Are You Being Served*, *The Generation Game* and the *Carry On* films. Just being handed that you were allowed to be like that and it was accepted.”

Conclusion

In the interview, Jason identified a number of discourses around resistant masculinities with particular reference to his lived experiences as a gay man. Jason took a gay lens to the films of the Beatles, drawing some interesting conclusions about the Beatles’ campness (also discussed in Chapter 6) and about the importance of that in granting permission to others to further advance representations of gender tourism (Reynolds and Ross, 1996) in subsequent decades. High profile gay-ness and “camperaderie” was also a key theme with representations seen as important to identity, with Jason drawing on his own experiences and the idea of being given “permission” because certain gay characters acted in a particular way on TV and in film. He also challenged what he identified as “PC” discourses around the representation of gay men in the media and outlined, through a number of examples, the complexities at work in the representation/reality debate. Discourses around pleasure were also at work within the interview in relation to the Beatles, the idea of pushing boundaries and being “out there” and the pleasures of gay masculinity, portrayed in several 1970s’ cultural products, were seen in a positive light.

The Interviews: Conclusion

The development of the study, outlined in Chapter 1, documented how the idea of using interviews as a way of excavating the private past of men in conjunction with using documentary research to examine public representations of men (Popular

Memory Group, 1982) came about. Haug (1992) sees the interview as a site not only to explore questions around how things were at a particular time but also as a place where respondents may engage in a process of construction of their own identities, identify possibilities for change and identify oppressive forces which may be barriers to change. She describes this as a framework of cultural politics which may contain the respondents' "coloured subjectivity" (Haug, 1992 : 20) as well as their hopes, desires and fears. Jackson (1990 : 3) argues that the "diverse life histories" of men are key to the exploration of ideas around masculinities, how they are constructed and how they operate within society.

In concluding this chapter, it is apparent that what emerged from the interviews at this stage of the overall study was consistent with the ideas advanced by Haug (1992) and Jackson (1990). While the initial intention of the interviews may have been to "check out" private memory against the findings of the documentary stage of the research, what emerged was something more complex and more interesting in that the respondents not only commented on the questions asked about changing representations of men and masculinities in the 1960s but also engaged with, and drew on, existing discourses of masculinity to answer these questions and to construct their own masculine identity within the interview. This was particularly interesting aspect of the interview stage and has been previously referred to as a "bonus". The complexities inherent in the debate about how discourse operates within texts (see Wetherall et al, 2001 for a review) was illustrated by what appeared to be happening within the interview situation. Whitehead (2002 : 101) discusses Foucault's later ideas on the "technologies of self" that are at the disposal of the individual" in the creating of identity and presentation of self, incorporating the notion of agency and the way in which subjects draw upon existing discourses (in this case, of masculinity) to do so. In the three interviews discussed in this chapter some of these complexities seemed to be at work. Jason, for example, was able to identify and draw upon resistant discourses of masculinity both in relation to The Beatles and in the construction of his own identity. Barry, while for much of the interview seemed to be contained by discourses of hegemonic masculinity, also drew on examples of counter-hegemonic masculinity and identified particular individual men and their "to-be-looked-at-ness" (Mulvey, 1975 : 18) as being important to him. Eric seemed both bound by discourses of hegemonic masculinity and masculinism (in the form of his

father and the Church) and resistant to it, breaking out and following the Beatles south, to be a music journalist in “swinging” London, only to return to the safety of a “normal” job in the North. Eric and Arthur’s story reflected much of the discussion around the discourses of masculinity at work in The Beatles’ films in Chapter 6.

In many cases there was an interlinking of “real-life” experiences, the trigger material on The Beatles and discourses around the 1960s outlined in previous chapters. This resulted in discussion of a number of topic areas and the identification of a number of discourses around men and masculinities at work in both the documentary and the interview texts. These discourses of masculinity included ideas around The Beatles as feminized or “girly”, touching on the complexities of their shifting masculine identity within the decade. The importance of representation and visual appearance was a key theme of discussion for many respondents, some making the distinction between the “extraordinary” Beatles and “ordinary” men, identifying Haug’s (1992) barriers and oppressive forces at work in society and in some cases identifying, through their role as “showbiz wallahs”, how The Beatles were able to resist dominant discourses of masculinity. While some conceptualised The Beatles’ “feminized” masculinity as part of this resistance others used the idea of the female (or feminized) as negative or oppressive, akin to Segal’s (1988) work on women in literature and UK new wave cinema in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Other ideas which emerged were the role of male heroes and men looking at men, the relationship between youth and male identity, the 1960s as a period of potential upward mobility for men, drawing on discourses of danger and pleasure. All of these ideas were explored in previous chapters and their re-emergence at the interview stage can be read as a vindication of the choice of a multi-method study, illustrating as it does, the relationship between the two stages of the research process.

Finally, what emerged from discussion on the “feminized” Beatles, and the feminisation of 1960s man, were more explicit explorations of the relationship between gay men and straight masculinities, illustrating the ways in which the use of the term “masculinity” (singular) has become “masculinities” (plural) [Brod, 1987] as work on men and masculinities has developed within the Academy. The role of “The

Beatles”, in representational terms, in preparing the ground for representations of men and masculinities in subsequent decades was explored and questions were raised by some respondents about whether a high water mark may have been passed.

In the majority of cases the interview respondents were able to identify changing representations of masculinity in the ‘60s (research question [i]), identify dominant and resistant discourses at work both in the Beatle texts used as trigger material and within the narrative of their own life stories (research question [ii]). Data relevant to this particular question also emerged as some respondents drew on competing discourses of masculinity in the construction of their own identity within the interview situation. Many respondents were able to articulately discuss the 1960s as a period of social change, telling stories which illustrated how these changes had impacted on their lives and how representations of other man had been influential on them (research question [iii]). In the end, the interview stage of the study uncovered ideas about construction, possibility, pleasure, resistance and oppression, all contained in time present, past and future, Robson’s (2002 : 273) “rich and highly illuminating material” indeed.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

This final chapter aims to draw together concluding thoughts on the arguments presented in this thesis. The multi-method study has examined representations of and reflections on men and masculinities through “The Beatles” as a text. This chapter includes a summarising of the contribution that this work makes to the field(s) in which it is located, a reflection on the process and method of the study and a consideration of the development of further work in this area of study.

The study set out to examine changing representations of men and masculinities in a particular historical period to answer the following questions

- (i) How did representations of masculinities change in the ‘60s? (with particular reference to the Beatles as a case study).
- (ii) Can examples of masculinities be identified in this period which appear to be resistant to dominant discourses?
- (iii) Do men, in retrospect, recognise the ‘60s as a period of social change for men and can they identify the role of representation within the process of social change?

The study used a case study approach to examine whether or not examples of representations of masculinity which were resistant to those dominant in the period could be identified. This piece of documentary research, examining The Beatles’ films as a sample of broader Beatles’ texts, was combined with a set of qualitative interviews to elicit the views of a range of men on this question and to gather their recollections and memories of what happened to, and for, men in that particular period. An examination of the role of representation in the media formed part of this process.

Contribution to the Field(s)

This study is located within a number of different fields within the Academy – popular culture, media and film, men and masculinities and music – and this section will outline some of the contributions made to these fields. Mäkelä (2004 : 65) argues that pop stars “ought to be situated in a continuing and shifting cultural debate”. This study, then, has examined the cultural significance of, perhaps, the ultimate pop stars, the first real global musical phenomenon (Whiteley, 2000), drawing on a number of academic fields in an interdisciplinary approach. The Beatles “challenge” to traditional expectations of both pop/rock stars’ cultural position and their representation vis-à-vis masculinity is a central theme of the thesis. Frith (1978 : 144) has stated that the music celebrity is “not just about the music but also about the things and attitudes that the music embraces.” This resonates with ideas advanced by Dyer (1993) and Grisprud (2002) about the role of representation in relation to identity. The film sample used in the documentary stage of the study also represents an example of “low” culture often ignored within the Academy. In this sense, then, the study draws on and contributes to debates in the fields previously mentioned, and the following quote provides a reflection on the ways in which these fields intersect within the study.

“Historically, the *hommes serieux* of the establishment have ever bad-mouthed popular culture with a distinct gender bias – poets as effeminate, the working class literature of the 60s as “kitchen sink”, and TV drama as soap, all implying a below-stairs disqualification. The language is no accident.”

(JoePublic Blog, 2009 : 1)

Using the ideas of feminist writers Barbara Ehrenreich (1983) and Lynne Segal (1988) as a starting point, the study has examined changes in representations of masculinities in the 1960s and the impact of those changes within the context of the idea of male revolt, a challenge to the masculinity in crisis discourse (Tolson, 1977; Kimmel, 1987; Whitehead, 2002)

Within the study, the 1960s has been identified as a key period with reference to the emergence of representations of alternative or resistant versions of masculinity within

popular culture. This has been related to the emergence of a new populist media (particularly television), and the study has a focus on the popular, rather than examining more radical elitist cultural developments in the period. It also draws on McLuhan's (1964) ideas on the global village and the way in which the medium itself became important, an argument which supports the idea that representation is a key concept in relation to social change and identity. Within the thesis it has been argued that representations of multiple masculinities and resistant masculinities become much more visible within society in this period, as does pre-metrosexuality, camperaderie for the masses, gender fluidity and tourism, and radical changes in male attire and appearance. That is not to say that these things are not present in pre-1960s texts, just harder to find within cultural texts accessed by the masses.

The relationship between representation, social change and identity has been explored and the thesis builds on the work of authors such as Dyer (1993) Gripsrud (2002) and McKee (2003) in arguing for the importance of the impact of representation on "reality" and the way in which images of men impact on male identity. In addition, popular culture and the arts are presented as key components of social change, with particular reference to the notion of resistant and alternative versions of masculinities. In doing this, the thesis looks at the ways in which social change, for particular groups, happens, and provides an argument for the examination of texts from specific historical periods to explore this.

Chapter 1 provided a rationale for using The Beatles as a case study within a thesis on men and masculinities, naming them as men (Hanmer, 1990; Collinson and Hearn, 1994) and arguing that they have an important place within the study of popular culture and the study of men and masculinities. While there are, perhaps, thousands of popular texts on what has been characterized here as an extraordinary male phenomenon there are still few academic texts, a point made by Ian Inglis (2000a) whose work proved influential in the early stages of this research, and it is hoped that this work will add to this small body of existing work.

Overall, the thesis aims to add to the sum of knowledge circulating in current debates on men and masculinities, and, within the study, it is argued that the emergence of representations of masculinities which appear to be resistant to dominant images can

be conceptualised as revolt and opportunity rather than simply a response to the “crisis in masculinity” discourse (Tolson, 1977; Kimmel, 1987; Whitehead, 2002). Mulvey’s (1975:18) concept of “to-be-looked-at-ness” has been explored within this thesis and the debates raised about feminised metrosexual males and the positioning of men in the media (Studlar, 1982; Cohan, 1993; Neale, 1993; Edwards, 1997, 2008; Simpson, 2004;2008) have been further explored as part of this debate. Within the thesis it has been argued that The Beatles are an early example of the male as an object of desire offering “the possibilities of pleasure” (Stacey, 1992: 249), acknowledging that other famous men (Valentino, Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley) had already fulfilled this role by the early 1960s. Neale’s (1993) ideas around narcissism and spectacle, Cohan’s (1993) feminized man and Edwards’ (1997) “man in the mirror” are all at work in the films of The Beatles and those ideas are discussed in Chapter 6. Research on men in the Social Sciences is often focused on the darker side of masculine behaviours; men as murderers, criminals, perpetrators of domestic violence and workplace oppression. The focus of the case study in this work, on the pleasures and possibilities of The Beatles as men, offers a stark contrast in this sense.

The interviews with different men produced some interesting ideas on the theme of the ability of famous men to be more outrageous (or more feminized) in appearance because of the nature of their business. Their role as ‘Showbiz Wallahs’ (as one participant put it) arguably, gave them permission, as part of their “to-be-looked-ness” (Mulvey, 1975 : 18), to push the envelope and move things on, both in terms of appearance but also, with particular reference to The Beatles, in terms of challenges to the establishment and the masculinism (Brittan, 1989) that was at work in the period in which they operated.

It has also been argued that the development of mass communication at work in the 1960s and its consequent expansion, as McLuhan (1964) predicted, is vital to this process. The expansion of TV into homes in the UK in the 1960s, the launch of global satellite links and the renaissance of British cinema in the period are all examples of the way in which their “to-be-looked-at-ness” (Mulvey, 1975:18) as men was facilitated in that particular historical moment. Their appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show* in the US in 1964 to a record audience of 73 million (Stark, 2005; Gould, 2008), their appearance as Britain’s representatives on *Our World* (1967) the first global

satellite broadcast or the shipping of film reels of *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and *Help!* (1965) to Australia, Japan and Indonesia provide but three examples. For The Beatles the medium was TV and film but the advent of music videos in the 1980s (spawning MTV), DVD and the expansion of satellite TV channels in the 1990s, and the mobile phone in the 21st century are all forms of media through which men's "to-be-looked-at-ness" (Mulvey, 1975:18) is increasingly expanded in McLuhan's (1964) 21st century global village made real.

The use of The Beatles as a text has already been discussed. One of the things that emerged from this choice was an examination of The Beatles as a male cultural phenomenon, and their importance in establishing new ideas about the role of famous men in society. Chosen as an extraordinary phenomenon, their ordinariness within this (the "four working class lads from Liverpool who changed the world" discourse) emerged as something which was (and is) seen as integral to their fame and popularity. Their power to pronounce on world events and cultural and social change (the "spokesmen for a generation" discourse) was something new in terms of celebrity, youth, class and status. As has been discussed, the history of the 1960s is re-presented, as with other historical periods, as a history populated by men, but The Beatles are unusual in that the other men in these narratives are imbued with power through traditional channels i.e. political. Inglis' (2000b : 1) conceptualisation of The Beatles as "men of ideas", as men who transgressed the usual boundaries of pop stardom, is important here and has been discussed at some length in Chapters 1 and 6. Whitley's (2000) ideas on The Beatles' knowing self-commodification and Lennon's emergence as a focus for the idea of world peace in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Mäkelä, 2004) exemplify this argument. His death, and associated mourning, in 1980 adds weight to the ideas around the quasi-religious nature of The Beatles phenomenon as outlined by authors such as Mäkelä (2004) and McKinney (2003). In this sense, then, the thesis explores the intersection between masculinities, celebrity, popular culture and social class. The research study also offered the opportunity to examine the way in which others viewed The Beatles as "men of ideas" (Inglis, 2000b : 1), their role in social change and the shaping of identity, via the interview stage of the study and the documenting of other sources (see Appendix 1).

In examining The Beatles as men who were important in shaping social change for other men what also emerged (via the interviews) was the importance of male heroes to men and the complex ways in which ideas of masculinity operate in this sense. Thus, the seemingly traditionally masculine Dennis Compton, footballer and cricketer was also much admired, by one participant, because of his dress sense, reputation as a man about town and his role as 1940s' Brylcreem poster boy, his "to-be-looked-at-ness" (Mulvey, 1975 : 18) as important as his sporting prowess. Elsewhere, the much maligned, so-called stereotypical portrayal of gay-ness by John Inman in the 1970s' sitcom *Are You Being Served?* was, to one respondent, a vital stepping stone to his own gay identity. He cited Inman's close friendship with Molly Sugden's Mrs Slocombe (and her infamous pussy) and his acceptance as part of a heterosexual workplace community as a positive representation of the way that being a gay man in society could be "ok" and discussed the way in which this was a revelation to him. These examples, then, which pre and post date The Beatles 1960s' existence, illustrate the way in which challenges to hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004) operate through representation and are interpreted through the "reality" of everyday life.

Method

There are a number of conclusions to be drawn from a reflection on the methods used and the methodological approach taken. At various points in the early stages of the research the use of documentary material alone was considered. However, the resultant findings validated the use of a multi-method study, illustrating the value of a multi-method approach in addressing a set of research questions from different perspectives. While the original idea of juxtaposing "representation" and "reality" as two different areas of study via two different methods was naïve, as the study progressed the value of exploring this relationship, by a cross-fertilisation of methods, became apparent. This was mainly achieved by the use of trigger material from the documentary stage as part of the interview process, a linking of public representations and private memories of the past, examined in the present, based on ideas suggested by the Popular Memory Group (1982) and Haug (1992). The combination of documentary research and interviews, as part of a multi-method study, is not a commonly used approach but here it provided a rich set of data which resulted in a

number of related findings discussed in the previous section, in relation to the original research questions posed.

The decision to use “The Beatles” as an extraordinary case study through which to study the ordinary drew on ideas advanced by Yin (1984; 1989), Stake (1998) and Silverman (2000) and, it can be argued, represents a creative approach to the study of men and masculinities. Part of the original intention was to use advertisements, films and sit-com texts as a way of examining changing representations of masculinities, but the use of “The Beatles” as a text, and the films as a case study within that text, seemed to offer a more original approach. The juxtaposition of the “extraordinary” phenomenon of The Beatles, naming them as men (Hanmer, 1990; Hearn and Collinson, 1994) within what Marwick (1998) and others see as an extraordinary decade, with the “ordinary” population, as featured in their films and as featured in the interview stage of the research, proved to be a useful way of exploring social change, with particular reference to men, in the 1960s.

The resultant findings of the thesis are also an illustration of the value of documentary research as described by May (1997), McKee (2003) and others and also an illustration of the way that discourse operates within texts (Foucault, 1984; Hall 1997; Whitehead, 2002) An exploration of Fairclough’s (1995 : 184) notion of “the ‘texture’ of the text” as a method of analysis was a particularly interesting aspect of the method used. The decision to use similar methods of analysis, examining discourses at work in both the films and interviews is outlined in Chapter 5 and, again, this combination of documentary research and fieldwork examining oral histories, with an emphasis on the relationship between the two, is not a common approach to research methodology.

On reflection, there is an argument, that could be made, that, actually, there is too much in the thesis for one study. Looking at The Beatles, men and masculinities, the notion of representation and locating the study in “the sixties” meant, in essence, providing a literature review on each of the four areas. The documentary stage could well have provided enough material for a single method study, yet, as argued previously, the combination of a piece of documentary research with a set of interviews provided different perspectives or approaches to the questions. As discussed in Chapter 7, the interviews also yielded some “bonus” material around the

construction of masculine identity, resulting in a process through which men made their own version of masculinity explicit while answering questions on how masculinity is represented in the media, and produced some interesting discussion points on the way in which men interact with discourses of masculinity.

With reference to the interviews, given the focus on The Beatles as a case study, it could be argued that it would have, perhaps, been better to advertise for Beatles fans of different ages as respondents which may have led to further engagement with the documentary material used in the interviews. However, using a crudely stratified and somewhat opportunistic sample yielded a number of different perspectives and, most interestingly in the context of the study, the men interviewed identified their own particular male heroes and articulated their importance in relation to identity, within the context of their own lives and the things that interested them as men.

Only one group interview was carried out and this turned out, through a combination of subject matter and the interaction between the participants, to be particularly fruitful in providing ideas, answers to the research questions and a good example of the way that men construct their own masculine identities within such settings. It would, therefore, have been interesting to do more of these. However, the personal narratives and accounts given in some of the individual interviews were equally revealing. Much of this was discussed at various stages in the research process and the resultant outcomes of the multi-method approach, it can be argued, validate the decisions made around methodology and method.

Further Research

The ideas in the previous section offer further possibilities for research into the role of popular culture in social change, whether specifically around men and masculinities or within a broader remit.

The idea of obtaining different perspectives on the questions asked about the Beatles, social change and masculinity offers a possibility for further research. This would be interesting to explore from the perspective of Beatles' fans of various ages or with women, rather than men, as participants.

The use of a historical perspective proved useful in the study and there is further potential, particularly in exploring the “crisis in masculinity” discourse, in relation, perhaps, to the ideas of revolt and resistance. This also relates to Hearn’s (2004) question about terminology around “masculinity”, “masculinities” or “men” and something tracing the way in which these terminologies have developed in the field of Critical Studies on Men (see Brod, 1987) would also be interesting.

Idea 2 (see Appendix 3), submitted as a possible starting point for a thesis, provides some interesting ideas for further research based on 1970s’ texts. This “idea” advanced the notion that the representation of men and masculinities in the early 1970s, in particular, is a reaction to some of the social changes for men in the 1960s and links to work on the crisis in masculinity discourse (Tolson, 1977; Kimmel, 1987; Whitehead, 2002). The popularity of *Dad’s Army* and its emphasis on continuity with more certain times (and masculinities) has been discussed within this thesis. Another example would be the use of the cop-show as case study. *The Sweeney*, for example, with its hard-boiled, no-nonsense masculinism (Brittan, 1989) and a buddy format drawn from the Western genre or Clint Eastwood’s *Dirty Harry* trilogy from the US, in the same period, fulfils a similar function in that they represent a return to representations of hegemonic masculinity. All of these cultural products were then re-presented as part of a “’70s as a golden age of masculinity” discourse in the new-lad culture of the 1990s, what Hunt (1998 : 8) sees as a retrospective construction of “a male heterosexual utopia.”

Appendix 11 contains an example of an abstract for a paper accepted for the conference “New Wave, New Views; Revisiting the Post-Punk Movement” in the School of Music at the University of Leeds in June, 2009. This builds on some of the ideas resulting from this research study, applying them to a later period in UK history. This paper argues that that post-punk new wave period represents a return to more fragile masculinities at work in popular music, and is a reaction to the cock-rock Spinal Tap masculinism of 1970s’ rock and the militaristic aggression of punk. The paper provides a case study around three texts from the Summer of 1978: *Jilted John* by Jilted John, *Ever Fallen in Love* by The Buzzcocks and *Down in the Tube Station at Midnight* by The Jam, which, it is argued, represent a return, both musically and

visually, to early 1960s' Beatle-influenced pop. Jilted John's mushroom hairstyle and "girly" backing vocals, The Buzzcocks' Peter Shelley's "out" gayness and camp vocal delivery and Paul Weller's McCartneyesque narrative format in The Jam's *Tube Station*, juxtaposing the hero of the song with men who "smelt of pubs and Wormwood Scrubs and too many right-wing meetings", are examples of discussion points.

Another possible area for further research is the relationship between the Beatles and their relationship to India in the mid 1960s, a piece of work which would take Hutnyk's (2000) observations on exotica and popular music as a starting point.

And finally, as this is being written, Liverpool Hope University are advertising a new MA; "The Beatles, Popular Music and Society", a programme which combines study of The Beatles' musical and cultural significance, an indication, perhaps, of the timeliness of this research and an opportunity for possible future academic collaboration.

Epilogue

"Who so would be a man should be a non-conformist" Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, a direct challenge to much that has been written about what masculinity and being a man actually is, a challenge to the notions of hegemonic masculinity and masculinism outlined in this thesis, and a plea for the triumph of the resistant over the dominant. It has been my intention in this piece of work to offer an example of how this might come about in a specific historical period, how a particular group of men emerged at a particular time to provide such a challenge, and how the representation of such a challenge might impact on the wider society. The opening section of this thesis outlined my personal location within the subject area and the process of researching and writing this thesis has, I feel, been another phase, for me, personally, a combination, perhaps, of personal and academic exploration. And, of course, it represents an attempt to move from Mister to Doctor, something which feels like a suitably subversive act in itself, in these times when rampant masculinism seems to have pervaded the public sector; where men, who really should know better, tell us that the University is a business and that we must all expand our portfolios. Battle

lines are being drawn and, it seems to me, that it is time for a return to the function of academic as non-conformist, the intellectual as radical, in a world where too much thinking is seen as a threat to the box-ticking culture in which we seem to have found ourselves. Someone once told me that when I had finally finished writing my thesis I would miss it, but I have always liked that bit at the end of *Revolver* where Lennon, surrounded by swirling tape loops disappears into the distance, in a sea of interesting noises, singing “Is it the end or the beginning?” or the jangling optimism of Orange Juice’s 1980s’ classic *Upwards and Onwards*. I just hope I passed the audition.

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Upwards and Onwards

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We Can Work it Out

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The Beatles

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Help

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Rubber Soul

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Revolver

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Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band

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The Beatles

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Abbey Road

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Let It Be

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The Beatles

Let It Be: Naked

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The Beatles

#1

© Copyright 2000 Apple Corps Ltd.

Bryan Ferry

These Foolish Things

© Copyright 1973 Island Records Ltd.

George Harrison

All Things Must Pass

© Copyright 1970 Apple Corps Ltd.

John Lennon

Imagine

© Copyright 1971 Apple Corps Ltd.

John Lennon and Yoko Ono

2 Virgins

© Copyright 1969 Apple Corps Ltd.

The Rolling Stones

Out of Our Heads

© Copyright 1965 Decca Records.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

WAXING LYRICAL

Waxing Lyrical

“Speaking in November 1997, at a luncheon in the Banqueting Hall in Whitehall, to mark her golden wedding anniversary, Queen Elizabeth II reflected: ‘What a remarkable fifty years they have been for the world ... Think what we would have missed if we had never heard the Beatles’.”

(Inglis, 2000a : XV)

“The Beatles were Gods back then.”

(Michael Palin on Parkinson, 2003)

“It is hard to over estimate the grip of the fab four on the popular imagination of the time.”

(Dick Lester, 2008)

“I think that particularly in the old days, the spirit of the Beatles seemed to suggest something very hopeful and youthful.”

(The Beatles, 2000: 143)

“It didn’t feel sexual as I would describe that now. It felt more about wanting freedom. I didn’t want to grow up and be a wife and it seemed to me that the Beatles had the kind of freedom I wanted ... I didn’t want to sleep with Paul McCartney, I was too young. But I wanted to be something like them, something larger than life.”

(Lewis, 1992: 22)

“The Beatles have indeed changed the world and our perceptions of it in a way that only a handful of popular entertainers ... have been able to do.”

(Inglis, 2000a: xv)

“The Beatles saved the world from boredom.”

(The Beatles, 2003)

“... the time when the Beatles changed the way we spoke, thought and had our lives and country perceived. We may have sung out of tune, but the songs of theirs we all sang embraced us for that time into the whole world.”

(Oldham, 2002)

“For me, nothing has or ever will top the Beatles. I love all their records and I never get tired of hearing them. Thank God they came along when they did.”

(Wilson, 2002)

“I thought the Beatles were light years ahead of everyone else, and I think they changed the world.”

(Pressley, 2000: 35)

“... they were the Beatles and we were ready to break out – with their help.”

(Pressley, 2000: 35)

“I remember Revolver coming out and we all took it very seriously: it wasn't just the Beatles doing their thing, it was educated parents sitting down and talking about it with us, and giving us the notion that what we did was

important. Then The Times did that piece on the Beatles and all the other groups paled into insignificance.”

(Pressley, 2000: 35)

“The Sixties seem like a golden age to us because, relative to now, they were. At their heart, the counter cultural revolt against acquisitive selfishness – and, in particular, the hippies unfashionable perception that we can change the world only by changing ourselves – looks in retrospect like a last gasp of the western soul. Now radically disunited, we live dominated by and addicted to gadgets, our *raison d’être* and sense of community unfixably broken. While remnants of our once stable core of religious faith survive, few are very edifying. ‘Til hard drugs are legalised, the old world will retain some moral hold on us; but when they are, as the dictates of vulgar pragmatism predict, the last ties will be cut with our former way of life, far away from us on the other side of the sun-flooded chasm of the sixties – where, courtesy of scientific technology, the Beatles can still be heard singing their buoyant, poignant, hopeful, love-advocating songs.”

(MacDonald, 1994: 33)

“I declare that the Beatles are mutants, prototypes of evolutionary agents sent by God with a mysterious power to create a new species – a young race of laughing freemen. They are the wisest, holiest most effective avatars the human race has ever produced.”

(Leary, cited in Norman, 1981: 787)

“The biggest influence of all was the Beatles. At the time it involved much more than music. It was a whole connection with your peers and an idea of an alternative method of becoming successful besides going to college and becoming a doctor or a lawyer.”

(Somach and Sharp, 1995: 230)

“Though ultimately the product of influences deeper than pop, the Sixties soaring optimism was ideally expressed by it, and nowhere more perfectly than in the music of the Beatles.”

(MacDonald, 1994: 1)

“By virtue of their own example, the Beatles gave people faith in their ability to change themselves and the world around them.”

(Hertsgaard, 1995: 191)

“The most important single element in British popular culture of the post war years.”

(Evans, 1984: 7)

“The Beatles have served a quasi-religious function ever since the days of Beatlemania, when they were objects of youth and devotion and sources of comfort to American teenagers after the death of President Kennedy.”

(Burns, 2000: 176)

“Dear Ones: Yesterday to show my loyalty, I bought a Beatle wig, a Beatle sweatshirt and four Beatle dolls. I spent \$24.79. I adore you. Take my heart. It is all I have left. Fondly, Karen A., Springfield, Mass.”

(Adler, 1964: 81)

“Through their music they rendered articulate a generation.”

(Mellers, 1973: 188)

“The Beatles were the best band ever.”

(Ozzy Osborne on MTV, 2003)

“The nation held its breath because that evening the four Beatles, all the Fab Four, were appearing live on Juke Box Jury: John, Paul, George and Ringo being cool, hip, smart, lippy, charming and funny. It was heaven to be alive.”

(Joanna Lumley cited in Pressley, 2000: 37)

“Some bands change your life, but deeper still are the bands that shape your life and make you the person you are. The Beatles were that band for me.”

(De Curtis, 2006 : 302)

“The Beatles screwed it up for everyone – including themselves. They joked about being the biggest band in the world – the topper most of the popper most – and then pulled it off with such self-deprecating humour, such sustained musical brilliance, such casually savvy self-marketing, such off-the-cuff charm, that no rock band since has even come close to achieving that level of fame and influence.”

(Kot, 2006 : 322)

“The Beatles set me free. The first time I saw them on TV, at age seven, I started thinking of going places, of doing something as exciting as what they were doing.”

(Cooper, 2006 : 299)

“Philip Lakin famously wrote: ‘sexual intercourse began/in nineteen sixty three/between the end of the Chatterley ban/and the Beatles first L.P.’”

(Wilde, 2004 : 44)

“In the distant future when our descendants study the history books, they will see one word printed against the year 1963 – Beatles! Just as convincingly as 1066 marked the Battle of Hastings or 1215 the Magna Carter, so this year will be remembered by posterity for the achievement of four lads from Liverpool.”

(New Musical Express [1963] cited in Sandbrook, 2005 : 717)

“They changed the sound, the form, the ambition, the scale and the language of popular music.”

(Goodall, 2004)

“It seemed they were everywhere, when you turned on the telly, listening on the radio, the advertisers used them, there were pictures of them in shop windows.”

(Don’t start me talking about the Beatles, Radio 2, 2008)

“... for men they maybe represented more freedom, more ability to be part of a huge worldwide phenomenon ... I think representationally they meant more to men than women.”

(Don’t start me talking about the Beatles, Radio 2, 2008)

“You just dreamed of being as cool as them in those films.”

(Don't start me talking about the Beatles, Radio 2, 2008)

“You kind of thought this is a possible way that we could live. They seemed to open all the doors to, you know, being yourself.”

(Don't start me talking about the Beatles, Radio 2, 2008)

“It gave you the confidence to be who you were, because that's what they did, you know, they were just being themselves.”

(Don't start me talking about the Beatles, Radio 2, 2008)

“I grew my hair because of the Beatles.”

(Don't start me talking about the Beatles, Radio 2, 2008)

“Dear Paul, I think you are very sexy and I don't even know what it means. Your little fan, Shirley D., Louisville, Kentucky”

(Adler, 1964 : 22)

“Summer 1966: A female fan, fifteen, maybe going on sixteen – is being interviewed by a television reporter. She holds a painting she has done. It shows Paul McCartney, with a large head and elfin body, amid greenery and hills; oversized and sponge-like, he seems to be rising from the earth. The girl describes the painting and explains the meaning.

‘And the name of it is ‘A Sprout of a New Generation’. It shows Paul McCartney coming up from the earth, like sproutin’ – a sprout. A start, a new dawn. You see, the Beatles are the original. They started the look, everything. And they are the greatest group ever. And here is the thing – if you notice, he's like grownin’.’”

(McKinney, 2003 : 86)

“No-one expressed the heart and soul of the sixties as powerfully as the Beatles did through the words, images and rhythms of their music.”

(McKinney, 2003 : dust jacket)

“This music is bringing on the revolution, the organised overthrow of the establishment. The Beatles know in the sense that the subconscious knows.”

(Felton and Dalton, 1972 : 370)

“Their music made my happy with tears to (sic), and I am guy. I just can’t explain the feeling. It’s almost as if they were heaven sent.”

Koolbossjock (youtube.com, 2009)

“John: I think the Beatles were a kind of religion and that Paul epitomised The Beatles and the kind of things that were a hero image more than the rest of us, in a way ... I think the sixties were a great decade.”

(The Beatles, 2000: 356)

“John: When I was a Beatle, I thought we were the best group in the goddam world ... I’ve grown up. I don’t believe in father figures anymore, like God, Kennedy or Hitler. I’m no longer searching for a guru.”

(The Beatles, 2000: 357)

“Paul: I think we gave some sort of freedom to the world. I meet a lot of people now who say the Beatles freed them up. If you think about it, the world was slightly more of an upper class place until the Beatles came along.”

(The Beatles, 2000: 356)

“Paul: I’m really glad that most of the songs dealt with love, peace and understanding.”

(The Beatles, 2000: 357)

“George: The Beatles somehow reached more people, more personalities, more parts that other bands couldn’t reach ... I think we gave hope to the Beatle fans. We gave them a positive feeling that there was a good time to be had and that you are your own person and the Government doesn’t own you. Those were the kind of messages in our songs.”

(The Beatles, 2000: 356)

“George: I’d like to think that the old Beatle fans have grown up and they’ve got married and they’ve all got kids and they’re all more responsible. But they still have a space in their hearts for us.”

(The Beatles, 2000: 357)

“Ringo: I do get emotional when I think back about these times ... The music was positive. It was positive in love. They did write – we all wrote – about other things, but the basic Beatles message was love.”

(The Beatles, 2000: 356)

“Ringo: There were some really loving caring movements between four people ... just four guys who really loved each other.”

(The Beatles, 2000: 357)

Appendix 2

PROPOSAL

Changing Representations of Masculinity in the Popular Media 1962-1977

“Masculinity has a history ... it is subject to change and varied in its forms”

(Roper and Tosh, 1991 : 107)

“... we consider the proper focus for men interested in and concerned about gender and gender politics is men”

(Hearn and Morgan, 1990 : 203)

These quotes contain, I think, the essence of my personal location in this subject area and my interest in it. At a purely personal level I am interested in what made my life/roles as a male different to that of my father’s generation. And, of course, what similarities remain in terms of definitions of masculinity and particularly in the way that has been represented in the popular media (newspapers, TV, film).

My interest in this area has also developed out of putting together and teaching a module on ‘representing health in the mass media’ and my feeling that gender and its representation in the popular media is a key component of the study of health (King and Watson, 2001).

Ehrenreich (1983) traces the roots of “men’s liberation” back to the 1950s and the rise of “Playboy.”

Middleton (1992 : 20) stages:

“the fantasy of manhood seems to be created out of a *bricolage* of fragments from the masculine public world.”

The growth in writings on men and masculinity since the 1980s (Hearn and Morgan, 1990) emphasises issues around changes and “crisis in masculinity”. Initially using Ehrenreich’s (1983) ideas about changes in masculine roles and perceptions of these

between the 50s and the 70s, I am interested in exploring these changes and their representation in the popular media.

In order to do this it will be necessary to engage in a debate about the role of the popular media and the relationship between media and audience.

One argument put forward by Kellner (1995) is that there is a complexity to this relationship that goes beyond the ideas of audience as passive recipients.

“Media culture reproduces existing social struggles and discourses, articulating the fears and suffering of ordinary people while providing materials to produce identities and make sense of the world.”

(Kellner, 1995 : 157)

The work of Gramsci (1971), Hall et al. (1980) and Saco (1992) is important here in that it looks at media representation and its relationship to the social and political environment. Saco (1992) talks of a “hegemonic masculinity”. What is particularly interesting about the period 62-77 is that it contained a number of important political and cultural changes in the UK, e.g. a period in which the country began to move away from post war consensus politics, feminism and the rise of the woman’s movement, legalisation of homosexuality, abortion and concerns about the so-called “permissive society”, the three day week, and the decline of traditional “male employing” industry.

This provides the backdrop for a “crisis” in masculinity. There are two things here which particularly interest me. One is that while we can trace changes in men’s roles during the social changes and upheavals over this period and, outwardly, men’s appearances became “feminised” (see Tremlett, 1974, 1975; McRobbie, 1989; Hunt, 1998 on “Glam Rock” for example) as we move through the period, the response to this in the popular media ranged from ridicule to an evocation of images of masculinity of an earlier, seemingly more certain era (Hunt, 1998).

Thus, by the time we get to the 1970s a number of TV and film representations of masculinity seem to hark back to the 1940s and 1950s. The Carry On films and much

70s sit com and the ever popular Morecambe and Wise all have their roots in music hall. The Kung Fu, Blaplotation films, Eastwood's "Dirty Harry" trilogy and cop shows like "The Sweeney" all drew heavily on the Western, that most traditional male film genre.

The other interesting idea here is the "past-present relationship" (Popular Memory Group, 1982 : 211). The 90s loaded generation, the so-called new lads, trawled this particular period for its heroes, "real men", an antidote to the PC 1980s. The 60s provide icons such as Michael Caine and the Krays; the 70s, George Best, Clint Eastwood, Sid James. It's a world of birds, booze and sideburns, what Hunt (1998 : 8) refers to as a yearning for a "male heterosexual utopia."

In research this area, therefore, it is important to try and identify the "real" cultural and social changes happening for men in this period. In doing this we must recognise that "men" are a diverse population and age, culture, race and class will be key mediating factors.

In doing this it will then be necessary to examine the way in which changes were reflected (or not) in changing representations of masculinity in the popular media.

It will be important to engage in the debates around the relationship between media and audience and to examine the question of why "masculinity" as a concept is subject to change in reality and in its representation.

Gramsci (1971) is, I feel, important here. Baxter (2000) in discussing Edward Stratemeyer's work (juvenile fiction at the end of the nineteenth century) argues that you cannot divorce works of popular culture from their political context.

"I would argue that the Statemeyer series books for boys are also of general interest to current studies of masculinity because of the interesting ways in which the ethics of capitalist production adhered to by the author can be seen in the plot, characterisation, and material qualities of the boys themselves ..."

(Baxter, 2000 : 168)

The preferred method would be to use two case studies – one with a focus on the period 1962-70, the other 1970-77.

The first will be a piece of documentary research (Scott, 1990; Berger, 1991; Hill, 1993; Moores, 1993; Priest, 1996) examining The Beatles as iconic representatives of masculinity in the period 1962-70. It will be necessary here to examine the nature of fame and the processes by which those in the public eye become a focus for the media in tracing changes in cultural norms and the examination of gender roles. Contemporary parallels, e.g. the Beckhams, will be drawn. This would trace changes in the reporting/presentation of The Beatles in this period, both at the time and in retrospect, and would examine a number of themes. These include work on the body (Fox, 1993; Peterson, 1998; Burkitt, 1999) and the concept of inscribed meanings, such as obsession with changing hair length and meanings attached to this, changes in outward dress (Bruzzi, 1997), the nature of fame and male stars (Mulvey, 1975; Cohan and Hark, 1993), the male bond (The Beatles, 2000) perceived as being finally broken by a woman.

The second case study will focus on the period 1970-77. This will take the form of focus groups (Stewart and Wayne, 1990; Edmunds, 1999; Morgan, 1999; Kruger, 2000) with a sample of men in the 40+ age range.

A number of clips of 70s sit com, music shows and film will be shown and participants will be questioned about their recollections and feelings about “masculinity” in the period; whether they feel it shaped their values. The past-present relationship idea will also be explored. The actual instrument used will be developed from the literature search and first case study. Ethical issues around confidentiality and potential effects on participants will need to be fully considered (Kimmell, 1998; Sieber, 1992).

I would envisage registering for four year’s part time to complete the study.

- Year one – background, literature review to be completed.
- Year two – methodology to be researched, case study one to be completed.

- Year three – development of research instrument, case study two to be completed.
- Year four – writing up.

Appendix 3

IDEA 1/IDEA 2

Idea One: Something like “The Cultural Significance of The Beatles in Changing Representations/Perceptions of masculinity 1962-70.”

“... we consider the proper focus for men interested in and concerned about gender and gender politics is men ...”

(Hearn and Morgan, 1990 : 203)

“It didn’t feel sexual as I would now define that. It felt more about wanting freedom. I didn’t want to grow up and be a wife and it seemed to me that The Beatles had the kind of freedom I wanted ... I didn’t want to sleep with Paul McCartney, I was too young. But I wanted to be something like them, something larger than life.”

(Ex-Beatle Fan, quoted in Lewis, 1992)

Ehrenreich (1983) traces the root of ‘men’s liberation’ back to the 50s and Playboy – this quote seems to fit in with that – I suppose, as a personal location, I am interested in what has made life/roles as a male difficult to that of my father’s generation: for me this period seems to be important. McCartney recently quoted (when talking about young people and values today), “It’s like the 60s never happened.”

1. Examine Beatles’ iconic nature – as ‘representatives’ of something but different role models as men – yes ‘breadwinners’ and rich, through their jobs, but developing that counter culture rejection of the 9-5 attitude. Look at the nature cf. fame of Diana/the Beckhams – “Posh has meningitis” mirrors “Ringo has flu” headlines.
2. “Media culture reproduces existing social struggles and discourses, articulating the fears and sufferings of ordinary people, while providing materials to produce identities and make sense of the world.” (Kellner, 1995 : 157) – examine this idea.

- Relationship of audience/media presentation.

- Using Gramsci (1971) Hall et al. (1980) etc.
- ‘Real’ changes in men’s roles/attitudes – reflected – Beatles as a focus for this (see below). Look at Saco’s (1992) analysis of ‘hegemonic masculinity.’

I use a number of films from this period and extending into the 1970s in some teaching I do – tracing the different portrayal of men and masculinities from “Saturday night and Sunday morning” to films like “Easy Rider” and “Shampoo.”

I would see this use of other texts as important in tracing through changes in this period.

3. Context of Masculinity and Media (Fejes, 1992).

Trace changes in reporting of/presentation of Beatles in this period. Also look at changes in terms of work on the body (Fox, 1993; Petersen, 1998; Burkitt, 1999) and the concept of inscribed meanings.

From black leather, dressed up in suits by Brian Epstein homoerotic period, through psychedelic feminisation to full blown hippy. Hair length a media obsession. Their outward appearance mirrors a number of cultural changes in the decade for men.

4. Iconic relationship to women – obvious ‘Beatlemania’ and sexual attraction cf. earlier screen idols like Valentino, but also quote at beginning from ex-fan.

Relationship to men. See screening the male (Mulvey, 1975; Cohan and Harke, 1993).

“As a spectator identifies with the main male protagonist, he projects his look on to that of his like, his screen surrogate, so that the power of the male protagonist as he controls events coincides with the active power of

the erotic look, both giving a satisfying sense of omnipotence. A male movie star's glamorous characteristics are thus not those of the erotic object of his gaze, but those the more perfect, more complete, more powerful ideal ego conceived in the original moment of recognition in front of the mirror." (Mulvey, 1975 : 12)

Epstein's moulding of "his boys" and supposed obsession with Lennon is important here too.

5. Role of women in relation to media presentation important – Lennon's 'hidden' wife, fans' aggression towards Beatle girlfriends, traditional groupie behaviour (back to the hotel, two girls each) cf. 'loveable mop-top' image, retrospective emphasis on the male bond finally broken by a woman (Yoko).

Method – Analysis of texts – biographics, TV, film, newspaper reports of the time (this is a key one, I feel).

Plus possible interviews – academics, producers of 'The Beatles Anthology' TV documentary, male fans/ex-fans 40+, a Beatle!

This is probably all too much and somewhat confused but these are the basic ideas.

References

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Idea Two: something like “Crisis, what crisis? Men, masculinity and the 1970s.

My personal location here is that, having been an adolescent in the 70s, it seems to me that there has been a retrospective oversimplification of images and representations of men/masculinity from this period.

The ‘90s’ Loaded generation/new lad movement has been highly selective in choosing birds, booze and sideburns as its key concepts. What Hunt (1998) refers to as a yearning for a “male heterosexual utopia” (Hunt, 1998 : 8). Again I use some of this stuff in my teaching.

I am interested in this idea of ‘the past-present relation’ (Popular Memory Group, 1982 : 211).

I accept Hunt’s (1998) assertion that:

“Nostalgia about the 1970s tends to focus on specific parts of the decade – largely pre-punk, pre-jubilee, pre-Winter of Discontent, and above all, pre-politically correct – and thus offers a distinctive set of pleasures.” (Hunt, 1998 : 4).

Linking this to Tannock’s (1995) ideas on nostalgia, I am interested in the retro-popularity of the decade and the idea of the ‘loaded’ 90s as a backlash against the supposed PC 80s (but who could possibly have been less PC than Mrs Thatcher?) This needs exploring as background and its links to a plethora of writings on ‘masculinity in crisis’ and the growth of men’s studies (Hearn and Morgan, 1990).

The reality of the 70s is that a wide range of options opened up for men, the feminisation of men’s dress began in the 60s reached its culmination in Glam Rock (Tremlett, 1974, 1975; McRobbie, 1989; Hunt, 1998) and rejection in Punk Rock (Hebdidge, 1979; Savage, 1991).

Changing political/cultural environment led to first ideas of “crisis in masculinity.” Would argue that the very traditional images of masculinity focused on 70s’ retro chic, loaded etc were actually a response to this, and this is the key idea I would like to explore.

70s as 'crisis'

Political/cultural change

Heading towards ending of post war consensus politics

Feminism and rise of women's movement

Legalisation of homosexuality, abortion and concerns about the 'permissive society'

3 day week and threat of unemployment/threat to traditional 'male industries/roles'

Response representation of masculinity in the mass media – masculine roles/values of an earlier, 'more certain' era were evoked. A return to 'certainty' – again (Gramsci, 1971; Hall et al., (1980) Kellner (1995) important in exploring relationship of media/society at large and values, through:

Sit-com

Carry ons

Sexploitation films

Horror and Victoriana

Eastwood/Bruce Lee/Shaft

Cop shows

All, I would argue, evoke images/values of masculinity which were not 'in tune' with contemporary thinking/changes – again, as if the '60s' never happened in some senses, e.g. much sit/com, carry ons the popularity of Morecambe and Wise all had roots in pre/post war music hall. The Kung-fu, blaxploitation and Eastwood's Dirty Harry all drew heavily on 'the Western', that most traditional male film genre. Cop shows like The Sweeney and The Professionals showed 'real men' fighting for 'real justice' amidst over-bureaucracy and feminisation.

Method – analysis .

Possibly focus groups of 40+ males – looking at clips, exploring past present relationship. In terms of how they perceived their values. Gender roles were shaped by these texts. Then and now?

References

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- Hearn, J. and Morgan, D. (eds) [1990] *Men, Masculinities and Social Theory*. Unwin Hyman.
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- Hunt, L. (1990) *British Low Culture from Safari Suits to Sexploitation*. London, Routledge.
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- McRobbie, A. (1989) *Zoot Suits and Second Hand Dresses: An Anthology of Fashion and Music*. MacMillan.
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- Tannock, S. (1995) *Nostalgia Critique Cultural Studies 9,3 : 453 – 64*
- Tremlett, G. (1974) *The David Bowie Story*. Futura.
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Appendix 4

STRUCTURE OF THESIS

Martin King: PhD: A Plan

Title: "Running like Big Daft Girls": A multi-method study of representations of and reflections on masculinities through "The Beatles"

Abstract

Acknowledgements

1. Introduction

- Personal location and why the Beatles (personal) [chapter on 'Why the Beatles?' and 'Waxing Lyrical' already exist/needs edit/rewrite] Beatles as a case study
- Rationale for study and why the Beatles (academic)
- Flag up developmental process of theoretical and methodological framework
- Structure of thesis
- Research questions – give a flavour without stating plus discuss what else came out of interviews (bonus)
 - (i) How did representations of masculinities change in the '60s'? [with particular reference to the Beatles as a case study]
 - (ii) Can examples of masculinities be identified in this period which appear to be resistant and/or adaptive to dominant discourses?
 - (iii) Do men, in retrospect, recognise the 60s as a period of social change for men and can they identify the role of representation within the process of social change?

Part 1: Literature and Methodology

2. Social change in the '60s' in the UK – what were the key social changes for men.

Specialness of the Beatles vis a vis the 60s [section on work by Ehrenreich/ Segal already exists. Notes from works by Marwick, Sandbrook etc to construct this section].

3. Men and masculinities

Lit on men and masculinity [chapter exists – needs edit and additions from more recent literature]

The Beatles vis a vis masculinities [some material in 'Why the Beatles?' Chapter plus notes on work by Starke/Makela etc]

4. **Lit on representation** (film)
 - Representations of men and masculinity [material within broader chapter on representations already exists]
 - Representations of the Beatles (brief)

5. **Methodology** [Research questions] [part chapter plus extensive notes on this chapter]
 - Possibly re-state research questions
 - Epistemology and paradigms
 - Development of research process and rationale for multi-methods
 - 1 documentary pilot
 - 2a films
 - 2b interviews
 - Time line?
 - Methods
 - Discourse analysis [extensive notes on this section]
 - analysis-films: textual/discourse [Why?]
 - interviews [Why?]

 - Documentary analysis** [material on documentary research and analysis in existence]
 - [start section and refer to some other work which has done this – how analysed?]
 - Analysis

Part 2: Analysis and Findings

6. **The Beatles' films**
 - Method [how analysed]
 - Sampling issues and choices
 - Ethical issues
 - Texts and other representations about the Beatles
 - Mention all possible textual materials on the Beatles
 - Texts vs artefacts
 - Why not the music
 - Say why focus is on magazines, books, tv programmes

 - Findings and discussion [some of material is 'Why the Beatles' chapter plus extensive notes in existence]
 - Summary – how this leads to 2a and 2b [intertextuality]
 - Analysis (pick up DA issues from chapter 6) [What did I find?]
 - Findings and discussion [chapters on 'A Hard Day's Night' and 'Help!' in existence need edit. Extensive notes on 'Magical Mystery Tour' and 'Let it Be'.]
 - Summary

7. Looking back – what do men say?

Method [how analysed?]

- Sampling issues and choices
- Participants
- Ethical issues
- Design of interview schedule
- Procedure: venue, recording, signing consent forms, briefing and debriefing etc

Analysis (pick up DA issues from 6 and maybe relate to 8) [extensive notes on coding/findings in existence] [what did I find?]

Findings and discussion

Summary

8. Discussion and conclusion

References – categories [at present all written/TV texts in one Harvard list with another list for songs/albums]. Do three lists bibliography (written), visual (film and TV), audio (songs/albums)

Appendices [SREP material sample interview, letters etc]

Appendix 5

THE FILMS THAT NEVER WERE

The Films That Never Were

Carr (1996), in “Beatles at the Movies: Scenes from a Career”, details four potential film vehicles for the Beatles which were never made for one reason or another.

The first of these, *The Yellow Teddy Bears* (1964), was made but without the Beatles’ participation. They had been offered the opportunity to perform in two or three scenes but it was turned down on the grounds that the songs used would be written by someone else and, as discussion was underway in 1963, it became apparent that the Beatles could afford to wait for a more suitable vehicle. The racy plotline, given Brian Epstein’s concern for his ‘boys’ and their clean-cut image at this stage in their career may also have been a factor. The Time Out Film Guide describes it thus:

“One of the first British sex films cashing in on a tabloid report that schoolgirls showed they were no longer virgins by wearing brooches that were being given away as a sales gimmick by a jam manufacturer; at the time it caused a minor sensation, but now seems merely risible.”

(Walker, 2005 : 995)

The second proposed project, *A Talent for Loving* based on a novel by Richard Condon, was actually publicly announced as the follow up to *Help!* (1965) and was due to be filmed in 1966. The plot was to be based on a real-life story about an overland horse-race which took place in 1871 between the Rio Grande and Mexico City. The film was to be the first of a number of films, Brian Epstein announced, that would be made for a new company he was to set up with a former United Artists executive, and would be shot in Spain. However, the deal fell through and the film was never made.

The third film that never was, was a much more interesting proposition. Producer of the first two films, Walter Shenson, announced in April 1966 that there would be no new Beatles’ film that year and that the search was on for a good script, one which marked a progression from the first two films. He said:

“We are more or less agreed that the Beatles should not play the Beatles. They will be played by four characters who look, think and talk like the Beatles but are different characters.”

(Carr, 1996 : 91-2)

The budget for '*Beatles 3*', as it was known, was to be much larger than for the previous film, with a soundtrack comprising Beatles' original songs. Eventually, Owen Holder, who had previously written a screenplay for director Dick Lester, was commissioned to write a script.

Details of the plot eventually emerged with one of the Beatles lined up to play a man with a three way split personality. The Beatles would, therefore, play four parts of one person, the parts based around their own personalities. By June 1967 the title *Shades of a Personality* was being used, with *Blow Up* director Michelangelo Antonioni being touted as a possibility. However, by this point, the *Magical Mystery Tour* (1967) project was underway and plans for *Yellow Submarine* (1968) were also in motion, and it seems that the film project was dropped because of a lack of time but also, perhaps, because Shenson was offering the idea to other potential authors.

Perhaps, though, the most intriguing of the four films never made was notorious playwright Joe Orton's *Up Against It*. Paul McCartney, particularly, through his association with actress Jane Asher in the mid 1960s, had an interest in the theatre at this point and had put up some money to back the original stage production of Orton's *Loot*. Orton was approached by Walter Shenson in January 1967, with the result that he agreed to go away and produce something. *Up Against It* was an idea for a novel, *The Silver Bucket*, that Orton had worked on with his lover, Kenneth Halliwell as far back as 1953. He mixed this with ideas for a further novel (published after his death as *Head to Toe*).

Given Brian Epstein's homosexuality, his influence on his 'boys' appearance in the early stage of their career and the queer codes at work in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and *Help!* (1965) [see Chapter 6] a collaboration between Orton and the Beatles had

interesting potential. Walter Shenson seems to have been unaware of Orton's unorthodoxy (Carr, 1996)

“I haven't the heart to tell him wrote Orton on 11th February, that the boys, in my script, have been caught in-flagrante, become involved in dubious political activity, dressed as women, committed murder, been put in prison and committed adultery.”

(Carr, 1996 : 133)

The ideas of four aspects of one personality had been retained for the first draft of the script but Carr (1996) suggests that Orton did not really expect his script to be accepted. The dark, sexually ambiguous anarchy at work in Orton's plot was a step too far for the Beatles and their public image, even at this point in the 1960s. Director Dick Lester also advanced the view that the discipline and linguistic dexterity needed for the script would have been beyond the Beatles' capabilities as actors (Carr, 1996). In addition, Paul McCartney had this to say:

“The reason why we didn't do *Up Against It* wasn't because it was too far out or anything like that, we didn't do it because it was gay ... it wasn't that we were anti-gay – just that we, the Beatles weren't gay.”

(Carr, 1996 : 135)

The script was returned to Orton and it was then sold to producer Oscar Levenstein for £10,000 plus a percentage of the profits, with director Dick Lester, Mick Jagger and Ian McKellen touted as possible participants in its production. On the morning of 9th August 1967 a chauffeur sent to collect Orton for a meeting at Twickenham Studios with Lester and Levenstein “discovered a horrific, some would say, Ortonesque scene of carnage” (Carr, 1996 : 136). Orton had been killed by nine hammer blows to the head delivered by Halliwell, his lover, who had then killed himself by taking 22 Nembutal tablets.

Orton's funeral took place on 18th August 1967, a service which started with Orton's favourite record, The Beatles' *A Day in the Life* (1967). Nine days later Brian Epstein was found dead at his Belgravia flat.

Appendix 6

SREP: UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD APPLICATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD
School of Human and Health Sciences – School Research Ethics Panel

OUTLINE OF PROPOSAL

Please complete electronically and return to:

Judith Moody, School of Human and Health Sciences, SREP Administrator: j.moody2@hud.ac.uk

Proposal received from: **MARTIN KING**

Title of study: **REPRESENTATIONS OF RESISTANT AND ADAPTIVE MASCULINITIES, 1960 – 1970: THE BEATLES – A CASE STUDY**

Department: School of Human and Health Sciences

Date sent:

.....

Issue	Please provide sufficient detail for SREP to assess strategies used to address ethical issues in the research proposal
Researcher(s) details	<p>Mr Martin King Department of Health Care Studies, Manchester Metropolitan University, Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0JA 0161 247 2541 m.king@mmu.ac.uk B Social Sciences (Hons) Social Administration – Victoria University of Manchester, 1984 MSc Health Education – Victoria University of Manchester, 1991 Proposed study is for PhD</p>
Supervisor details	<p>Professor Jeff Hearn; Dr Viv Burr, University of Huddersfield, School of Human and Health Sciences.</p>
Aim / objectives	<p><u>Statement of Intent</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To examine changing representations of masculinities in the mass media in the period 1960-70. <p><u>Aims</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To outline key social changes for men in this period. • To examine changing representations of masculinities in the mass media 1960-1970, using the Beatles as a case study. • To identify examples of representations of masculinities in this period which appear to be resistant/adaptive to dominant discourses of masculinities. • To generate information (via a number of interviews/focus group) on a sample of men's opinions of changing representation of masculinities in this period. <p><u>Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current literature on the social history of the 1960s and men and masculinities. • To undertake a case study, using documentary research methods, on the Beatles. Four films will be used as a sample of their work. • To carry out individual interviews (approximately 10) with men in the age bands 70+, 55-69 and 35-54. • To run one focus group with a mixed aged group of men.
Brief overview of research methodology	<p>Using a structure suggested by the Popular Memory Group (1982) I have used a method which seeks to examine public representation of the past (using a documentary method to examine a case study) and private memory of the same period (using interview/focus group)</p>

	<p>Stage 1 of the Study will use documentary research methods – an analysis of four film texts. Stage 2 of the Study will use a small focus group followed by semi-structured individual interviews (approximately 10).</p> <p>[Popular Memory Group (1982) Popular Memory: Theory, Politics and Method in CCCs, making histories: studies in history, writing and politics, London: Hutchinson, pp 205-252]</p>
Permission for study	N/a
Access to participants	<p>For Stage 2 it is intended to sample men from 3 age bands:- 70+, 55-69 and 35-54. These age bandings reflect the different generational experiences the participants may have had of the period under study.</p> <p>The participants will be identified by myself (in conjunction with my supervisors) and will be approached by myself. General advertising and snowballing are two possible methods of recruitment. Participants will be identified via the main criteria i.e. age banding. However, a purposive sample will be sought based on additional characteristics i.e. class, education, race, sexuality.</p>
Confidentiality	<p>Access to raw interview data by myself. Storage of interview tapes and transcripts will be at my home in locked desk drawer.</p> <p>It will be made clear to participants that direct quotes will be used in writing up the study, that these will be anonymised, and that these will be seen by supervisors and examiners, be available in the University Library and may be used in conference presentations/journal articles.</p>
Anonymity	See attached documentation.
Psychological support for participants	All participants will be fully informed about the project, and full consent will be gained. It will also be explained to participants that they are free to stop the interview/focus group at any time they wish. If participants appear to be distressed during the interview/focus group, they will be asked directly if they wish to continue. A selection of suitable counselling addresses will then be made available if participants wish to be so informed.
Researcher safety / support	The researcher will take full precautions for personal safety, in terms of interviewing in a safe environment with other responsible persons within earshot, and leaving clear information on his whereabouts, and expected times of start and finish. The researcher will carry a mobile phone. This and the previous issue has been discussed with the supervisors.
Please send copies of all relevant supporting documentation electronically or explain if not available	
Information sheet	
Consent form	
Letters	
Questionnaire	
Interview schedule	
Dissemination of results	See attached documentation
Other issues	

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Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like clarification of any of these issues.

An invitation will be sent to you to attend the meeting of SREP at which the proposal is to be discussed. I do hope you will be able to attend.

Best wishes – Linda Bindless, Chair of SREP

Appendix 7

INTERVIEW LETTERS/CONSENT FORMS/ INFORMATION SHEET

Letter of Invitation

Dear Sir (or name)

I would like to invite you to participate in an interview School of Human and Health Sciences (or focus group) as part of my PhD study at the University of Huddersfield, – “Representations of Resistant and Adaptive Masculinities, 1960-1970: The Beatles – A Case Study.”

I enclose an information sheet which provides details of the study and your participation in it.

The interview will take approximately one hour and can be arranged at a time and location to suit you. Your participation in this process is entirely voluntary and you are free to leave at any point without giving a reason and without jeopardy.

If you would be interested in participating please contact me on 0161 247 2541 or m.king@mmu.ac.uk and we can discuss any further questions you may have.

Yours faithfully

Martin King

Consent Form - Interview

I _____
agree to participate in an interview (focus group) with Martin King as part of his PhD study at the University of Huddersfield, School of Human and Health Sciences – “Representations of Resistant and Adaptive Masculinities, 1960 – 70: The Beatles – A Case Study”.

I have read the information sheet provided and understand the purpose of the research and the uses to which the data will be put (including dissemination of results which may include the use of direct quotes from participants). I understand that my participation in this process is entirely voluntary and that I am free to leave at any time without giving a reason or without jeopardy.

I am satisfied that issues of confidentiality and anonymity have been satisfactorily dealt with.

Signed: _____
(Name)

Date: _____

Information Sheet

Information relating to interview (focus group) with Martin King for PhD Study, University of Huddersfield, School of Human and Health Services: "Representations of Resistant and Adaptive Masculinities, 1960-1970: The Beatles – A Case Study."

- Participation in this interview (focus group) is part of Stage 2 of the Study which comprises a series of interviews plus a focus group with men in a variety of age bands. The aim of the interviews is to generate information about their memories of and opinions about social change for men in the period 1960-70.
- Participation in this interview (focus group) is voluntary and participants are free to leave at any time without giving reason or without jeopardy.
- Participation will take the form of an individual interview or focus group lasting approximately one hour at a mutually convenient time and venue.
- Interview (focus group) will be taped and transcribed with the participants' agreement.
- Access to interview tape will be by researchers and member of university admin staff to transcribe the tape.
- Tapes/transcripts will be kept in a secure location at the researcher's home.
- In writing up the interview results the identity of participants will be anonymised and confidentiality maintained.
- Results will be available for participants to read. Results will also be seen by supervisors and examiners at the University of Huddersfield as part of the PhD examination process. Results will also be available as part of the final PhD document in University Libraries. Results may also be disseminated via journal articles and conference presentations. Results may include direct quotes from participants.
- Further questions can be discussed with the researcher on 0161 247 2541 or email: m.king@mmu.ac.uk

Appendix 8

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview Schedule – Broad Questions

1. What do you remember about that time (1960s)?
2. What did you make of the Beatles?
3. Do you think anything changed for men in this period?

Interview Schedule: - Possible Triggers

Clip 1 (1964)

- What memories does that bring back?
- What was life like for you at that time?
- Hair/clothes - What do you make of them?
Do they look feminine in any way?
What did you look like then?

Clip 2 (1965)

- Are there any differences between this and the last clip?
- Do you think things were changing for men at that time?
- Which other men were heroes/favourites at that time? Why?

Clip 3 (1967)

- What changes are there in that clip?
- Were the Beatles different to what had gone before? In what way?
- Hair/clothes – what do you make of them?

Clip 4 (1969)

- What memories does that bring back?
- Do you think things changed for men in the 1960s?
- Did this affect you?
- Do you think the Beatles look masculine in this clip?
- Could you define masculinity?

Appendix 9

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: EXAMPLE

PhD Interviews

Respondent 1 [74 years old]

- R: I was saying I expected questions on the '50s as against the '60s because the '50s is very alive in my mind.
- I: Right.
- R: Well from '53 it is ... but into the '60s I have to concentrate a little bit. That will be more question and answer to ring a bell in my brain.
- I: Well I've got some video clips of the Beatles that might help to jog your memory.
- R: Well ... I can remember – the group – I can remember the Beatles obviously – we were very much into them – and I bought quite a number of Beatles records, you see.
- I: How old would you be in 1960 then?
- R: In '60 I'd be 29 wouldn't I? Erm 29 – I was born in '31.
- I: So 1970, you'd be 39 then? So that's quite interesting then that you would buy those records anyway.
- R: Quite a number of them because we liked them.
- I: Because you would be in your 30s by then, wouldn't you?
- R: We thought they were a really good group at that time – and when they replay them now people still like them a lot - I don't like them as much as I did at the time.
- I: Why do you think that is?
- R: I don't really know. I think – erm – my taste in music is big band stuff from the '50s. '60s it went into groups so you really jumped on the back of the best group I suppose. Personally, I liked the Stones quite a bit to be truthful, but the Beatles was the number one group and I thought they was.
- I: Well we'll come back to that and maybe have a look at a couple of clips – not just the music but see what it reminds you of in that period. Go on, go back to the '50s thing then because you were saying that's the time when you ...

R: Well from coming out of the army – I came out in '55 but, but from going into the army in '52, well it was a very lively period for me ... I can remember a lot of things. From 52 to 60 is clear in my memory to be truthful. If I go past these I have to think about it.

I: And is that because in the '50s – you would be in your early 20s then ...

R: In '62 I'd be 31 so I was in my 30s. I enjoyed the 30s – I got married in '58 and the kids were young so it was probably a period in my life where I had to concentrate more on the family, you see, instead of what was going on in music and such as that ...

I: So in the '50s then it's interesting – just coming this morning and hearing you talk with _____ - it's all based in a certain period.

R: But that's football. I can talk about football 'til the cows come home – nearly all different periods since the war. I have pretty vivid memories of football through different clubs and what have you, quite clearly. Football's no problem. When it comes onto things I suppose that matter – politics for instance, in the '60s and all like that – wouldn't be very clear to me – I'd have to think about it.

I: Ok – well let's stick with football then. One of the things I've been looking at is images of men like on the telly and in films. You played professional football which is a very male environment.

R: Very much so, yes.

I: Is that the same today do you think? Did anything change between the '50s and the '60s or not noticeably?

R: It was starting to change – it was starting. When I first started it was a maximum wage – a poor maximum wage at that time for them who were good players – the top players. It started to change then - for the better from the point of view of football – gone over the top now for my money – but at that time it was something that needed doing – these lads – the Professional Footballers Association at the time, did it. Got the maximum wage squashed and then things altered rapidly I think in football.

From the point of view of playing what happened different, from my view, was the tackle – the gear you played in – your boots, your shorts, your shirts – the game's changed to be twice as quick, was the game and, er, the reason for that in my opinion was the gear they played in – half the weight and all like this. Of course, then the training methods made them quicker still, but the main difference was

speed at that time was that everybody had light gear on, boots that were like slippers, whereas our boots were like Wellington boots.

I: People often say about that period between the war and the '60s that it was more of a man's game and all that sort of stuff.

R: Well why they say that is they allowed – to be truthful I'm all for it still – they allowed a lot more body to body – they let you knock the other fella over, you put your weight in and for me it was a better game that they allowed that. The tripping bit and all like that they've tried to cut out – yeah – fair enough. But the man to man stuff – it doesn't happen now. Goalkeepers for instance, you know, in my day they gave you some stick. Rightly so, it was part of the game. Now they can't touch them.

I: So was it a more physical game?

R: It was a more physical game.

I: Was it a more masculine game?

R: Yes, that's what you've got to call it. It goes together I think the physical and the masculine, it has to – you have to put it together I would think.

I: Why's that then?

R: All women's games aren't – well I don't think they're as physical. They put themselves about when they're playing football. It isn't the same in terms of bodily contact – but even now it isn't the same. I can't see it. I think there's a vast difference between women playing sport and men. They're good at what they do but it's a different ball game.

I: So let's go back to the clothes thing because that's quite interesting.

R: Clothes? Oh, the gear, the kit.

I: Yes – the gear that they played in. Like the goalkeeper, would play in a jumper and a cap, wouldn't he?

R: The jumper we played in – the woollen jumper we played in – if it rained heavy it used to finish up round your knees did the bottom. If it really rained all through the match then your jersey would finish up round the bottom of your knees and they weighed quite a bit those goalkeeping jerseys. And, actually when I went to Hong Kong in the heat, I took one of these with me and you couldn't wear it. You only had to wear really a singlet type of jersey – it was only about as light

as a singlet. Er, going back to in here. Nowadays – they're very very light are shirts.

I: I'd not thought about this but do you think that's something to do with it – wearing more manly gear, more masculine clothes to play football in?

R: I think now they're wearing gear that's made for the job, you know. They're making shirts now that you can't grab – or they're trying to – so its to suit the game I would think – and boots for instances. They used to be like Wellington boots – they're as light as feathers. Well, they come off as they're running – they're sprinting boots really.

I: People used to go on about – it's quite interesting because you get this with lots of things about changes in clothes – like when in the late '60s and early '70s when the shorts went very very short.

R: Well, they went nearly like swimming trunks – what they wear for swimming trunks now – they got that short and that tight – that was the thing with them – and then they've gone back. What they're doing now – it's like everything else – they're getting it to the best they can for what they're trying to do – and its modernization isn't it? It'll change again – I don't know how but it will because it always does.

I: If we're talking about the '60s and football then we've got to talk about George Best.

R: Oh yes.

I: He seemed like a very different – talking about looking at men in the media and men that had a very high profile then he was probably the first ...

R: Well, Besty changed – especially for a younger fella – he changed the dress style. He used to wear the right jeans, but with chains on and these heeled boots and all this stuff and he was an icon and the disappointing thing, I suppose, about George is that he never went on as long as a lot more did because they'd have gone with him – because he was an icon of dress and that for younger footballers and that. They copied him didn't they?

I: But people thought he was a bit – that's when the debate began about footballers becoming more effeminate and what have you ...

R: Ah, well, I wouldn't have thought – I can belittle them sometimes in what they'd wear but mostly I don't think – they're still tackling like men and that when it comes to the crunch. I think, I hope, God, I hope it doesn't ever go soft, completely soft. Well, I wouldn't go me.

I wouldn't watch it if it got really non-tackling. Still think they're putting about a bit too much.

I: So do you think that he was just part of that whole thing at that time – that he was dressing like that?

R: Oh yes, he was the – what can I call him – I suppose an icon of football – a lot of lads followed his dress code and what have you – everybody – Beatles haircut that he – he wore for football. Then a lot of footballers started getting Beatles haircuts. There was a link there before in football he was like the Beatles to music. He was the top slot and everybody copied him, or a lot copied him, not everybody.

I: And was that, I mean, when you say he was the top slot, to do with the fact that he was just something else, really?

R: He was – if you mean in a player sense – yes, he was a great player – how good he was, ... I don't know ... a great player. Never proved his going out bit into his 30s but in that 10 years, in his 20s, he was something else was Besty. He was the Best – his name was right and footballers copied him like they always will – they always copy the top dogs.

I: What about someone like Beckham then?

R: Well Becks is same – to be fair to Becks – the player but – I mean – no comparison for me but from the icon point of view he's way with it. I mean those kids, well you see them, they dress like him don't they, they have their hair cut like him and that's why those people, I presume, pay him to change his hairstyle and all those clothes so often, I would think, but I mean he's – they can belittle him as I suppose I have at sometime or other – but he's got it, he's got the eye of most youths and that. I think. Being no youth I can't really say, but ...

I: Well, he – not so much now that he's not in our league – but all that stuff about him being more effeminate ...

R: Well, I suppose you can say some of this dress style's a bit – girlified – I don't know but as long as you – you see, he doesn't look a lass does he? To me he doesn't anyway. He still looks as though he's a biggish, strongish fella' so ... if he'd have been a bit looking effeminate I would think it was a bad do but I think he carries it. I'd not say he's the greatest player. He's a good player but, er, that carries him into clubs wanting him. So he's going to keep the limelight for a bit yet I think.

- I: That thing about effeminate – if you look back on George Best – if you look at old film of him now when he was in the '60s – it's a bit like the Beatle haircut I suppose – when people said that they had long hair.
- R: That's right, yeah.
- I: When we look back on it now it wasn't really that long.
- R: You see these styles that Becks has gone through there's a lot of them been near to what Besty wore – well, I think so – and all these different hairstyles ... they can make a hairstyle up tomorrow for anything so I'd think he's on a good thing there – I would have thought – I think there's money in it for Becks.
- I: I suppose that' the difference – he's like a walking advert really.
- R: When, erm Besty went on to this is was just all happening that, wasn't it? They were making money selling clothes, instead of just football gear and that. They were getting it through selling clothes and the haircut style and I presume people paid him to have his hair different ...
- I: But that would be very different from when you were a player in the late 50s and early 60s ...
- R: Well they had an image then of big boots and what have you and that was the image they had. They were men – I suppose – that kicked each other a bit.
- I: Do you remember any footballers being in adverts in the '50s, or early '60s?
- R: Yeah, well, I know it changing a bit from football, because he was a football international as well as a cricketer – but I would think, for me remembering, Dennis Compton – we're going way back here – but the Brylcream boy as he was called then – but his posters were in every tube station in London you ever went in. He were – I don't know – I can't think so clear back after that but I would think he was one of the first I ever remember to be an icon of dress and grooming and his was Brylcream – that was his big advert. And, as I say, it was all over the London tube stations. Big photographs of Dennis Compton.
- I: So in that sense, this idea that men have only been interested in grooming products since the '80s or whatever ...
- R: It's not true. Well it isn't as I said because – anybody who remembers as far back as that – his picture was everywhere ... and they were not

just little pictures – big posters and, well, he must have sold a lot of Brylcreem I would have thought.

[Clip 1]

- R: I didn't see anything in the Beatles that said they were girly ... I suppose some did think so
- I: I suppose it depends what you mean by girly. Do you remember people being outraged by their hair?
- R: Oh yeah, I remember a lot saying they looked like ... a lot said they looked like lasses but ... a lot said that to each other but they never did, that's not how I saw them, I just saw them as ... I didn't go over the top for them but I just ... I enjoyed the music to be truthful, at the time.
- I: So – I mean that's quite interesting then, isn't it, that some people go on about their hair and girly but you say you can't see that.
- R: I can't say I ever thought they were like big lasses, because that was one of my sayings – anybody – "they're like a big lass" – I never thought of those as ... because they were robust kids – their attitudes and their act.
- I: Do you remember – that film clip – do you remember 'A Hard Day's Night' coming out?
- R: I do. I never went to see it. I didn't see it until it came on the telly. I wasn't that interested in the Beatles as such, but I bought quite a number of their records because when we used to go to dances and that, they were on – their music was on.
- I: I find that interesting because you would be in your early 30s – you'd be 33 when that film came out.
- R: Well there you go, that's what I mean, I was maybe getting past the Beatles stage.
- I: But you still had some of the records.
- R: Oh, we bought the records, _____ and I, supposedly for the young'uns, supposedly for our _____ and our _____ but we bought them for ourselves as listening to what we liked or what we thought we liked.

- I: What was life like for you at that time?
- R: Well we had a young family at the time, you see. We had that bit to go through _____ didn't work at the time. She stepped off and looked after them. My footballer's wage at that time – which was good in comparison to some others – it had to be looked after, which _____ did, I didn't – she'd make sure it went well. We weren't ... we were alright but that's about all. We weren't well off or anything like that.
- I: Did you feel that you were upwardly mobile – as they say – do you think you'd moved up?
- R: Well, we'd moved up in as much as we owned our ... we finished up owning our own house around that back end of that period, er, and we finished up at the back end of that 10 years having a car which was something at the time – not a new car but we had a car. But we didn't through the '60s as such – we didn't have one – went everywhere by bus.
- I: And what were you doing – when did you play football?
- R: I played football from 19.. I signed in '51 and I finished part time football in the Yorkshire League in 1964, I should think, and then I went back to my plastering game.
- I: Is that something you'd done before?
- R: Well, I'd served my time before I signed pro ... well, even when I signed part time pro I was serving my apprenticeship – 7 years apprenticeship at that time – and then I went straight in the army from my apprenticeship you see and I came out and signed full time pro.
- I: You did national service, didn't you?
- R: I did national service.
- I: And were you near the end of national service?
- R: Fairly near the end – I forget the year but the lad you've been talking to this morning _____ he was in the last batch and he's a few years after me – 4 or 5 years so there might have been 4 or 5 years to go when I came out.
- I: What was that like?
- R: National Service?
- I: Yes.

- R: It was ok, it was something when you just went in, you thought 'what the Dickens am I doing here', you know, but then you got into it. I was abroad. I was posted within 3 months – went to Hong Kong – best part of 18 months in Hong Kong, which I enjoyed, it was ... probably a paid holiday plus the army ... and just came home and tried to pick up where you'd left off. You'd lost 2 years but it was ok. It was a learning period I think. You had to accept discipline – no option.
- I: And do you think that's something at that time that men just accepted?
- R: I think they did, yeah. There wouldn't be ... There weren't many refusals or conscientious objectors or anything like that I don't think. And I think – I might be wrong – I think now you might have a few of these lads wouldn't go in – I think a lot of them would say I'm gonna do what I should do.
- I: So again, that's a very sort of male environment.
- R: Oh, well, yes it is. It was really they had to do it in 2 years but the only army hard discipline bit was in your first 6 or 8 weeks. When you got that over with you were into a system which you could manage. You could even enjoy at times.
- I: So most people – men at that time would have thought well ...
- R: Yeah ... but there was an end to it, there was an end to the 2 years – I had 2 years – some had 18 months I think. I had 2 years to do, so you had an end time to come out. You were ok. You could get out and the, of course, they stopped it. People say 'bring back national service' ... I don't know ...
- I: You don't know whether that would be a good thing?
- R: I don't know. It ... it ... you can say it didn't do us any harm. You just lose 2 years at what you were getting established in. But I don't think it is too much. I mean, even apprenticeships, they're getting them in 3 years now, well it took 5 – 7 years when I was doing mine, so that's altered. I don't know how they learn it in 3 years to be truthful, but there you are.
- I: So ... this whole thing about the Beatles. They were a big thing for some people in the '60s but like you say, you were a bit older. Who would you say were your heroes at that time?
- R: Footballers, you see, Bert Williams when he was in goal for Wolves, Dennis Compton was a cricketer but say, singers, for instance, Frank Sinatra, Andy Williams, these type of blokes.

- I: So they were the people you liked when you were younger.
- R: In preference to the Beatles you know, I preferred that type – Dean Martin – all this type of fella.
- I: Is that because that is what you grew up with when you were a teenager?
- R: It's an era isn't it and you fit into a slot somehow. I don't know whether that's good ... I thought ... I still think they're good. I still enjoy listening to Sinatra and these fellas.
- I: People say that Sinatra was the first – even before Elvis – he was the first person to cause mass hysteria a bit like Beatlemania.
- R: Well that's right – the Bobbysoxers thing and all like that, they did. But having said that Crosby did beforehand, didn't he – er – it just livens up doesn't it. What was he called – we're going back now – Rudy Valee, he had his following and this it grew and grew and like it is now, they're crawling about on their hands and knees after them. I don't know if it's good – doesn't do no harm, I don't suppose.
- I: But your heroes were footballers?
- R: Well, my heroes were sportsmen. And I don't mean sort of sport ... if I was fair with myself Dennis Compton was probably an idol of mine from being a kid because he played football and cricket, you see, and I loved both games and then, of course, I went onto the goalkeepers. Bert Williams was my favourite, Bert Trautmann ... people like that.
- I: Like, with the Dennis Compton thing, was that ... was it just about him being a footballer and a cricketer or was it something else?
- R: He was projected from everywhere as I said to you before about these posters, so obviously he was in your mind and I went ... I must have seen him in about 12 test matches ... I saw him play ... and I enjoyed what I saw ... and for a Yorkshireman, you see, Len Hutton was the big man then. But Compton was a dashing fella', you know, Len Hutton were probably a more solid bat but Dennis Compton came in and he had loads of flair. You thought that was the in thing then.
- I: When you say he was dashing do you mean in terms of his sporting style?
- R: His play and his life I think. His play and what went on. He had a reputation for being a man about town and all this stuff, whether or not he was, who knows? You see I'm, talking '50s all the time here ...

- I: It's interesting the Dennis Compton thing because we often think of people later on as like – George Best – as being the first sporting icon ...
- R: Which he wasn't!
- I: But what you're saying is it was something about Dennis Compton – not just that he was at the top of his game ...
- R: He had the personality ...
- I: Some sort of lifestyle?
- R: Exactly – yeah – he had a big flair. He played with flair, he went about town with flair.
- I: What did he dress like?
- R: Well – in them days it was the smarter the suit the better, wasn't it. He had smart suits. One of the best pictures I had of him was in his Arsenal cup final gear. I had a picture of him in that at that time. He, er, I'm trying to think because I feel sure you can go before that but you're going before the war then – I can't remember that far back. They'll have been people in that mould before – but I think to get into adverts and stuff like that I would think Dennis might have been the first big personality to go on the boards.
- I: Something about having a high profile – the first media sportsman?
- R: I would think so. Somebody could easily come up with something before that and it might ring a bell with me but that was my bloke ... that was the first fella that I would have ... 'by I wish I was him', you know.
- I: And ... do you think that's a thing that men do with heroes? That's why they relate to people?
- R: You can't speak for everybody but you all set yourself little goals – I think – well, you'd like to do as well as him, whatever. Whatever your line of duty – you know, whatever your line is – if it's at work – the bloke who's above you – you might think "I wish I was in his job". And it's there to do. It's there to do and everything – if you set your stall out you might be lucky. If you're unlucky, hard luck.

[Clip 2]

I: Do you think that is effeminate dress?

R: Do I think that that's effeminate dress? See I would – looking at it now – I can't remember thinking it at the time.

I: So you wouldn't have thought it was necessarily effeminate? It's very different to the other clip though?

R: I can't remember it – I can't remember thinking – “well they're like big lasses” – but now looking at it, maybe I'd think what have they got on, you know ... well it was a way out song anyway so maybe it goes together ... I am the eggman. I remember that quite well now, but I can't remember them being dressed in such stuff at the time.

I: Well – they're wearing some pretty mad stuff anyway!

R: Well – they played half of it for laughs, didn't they? They were a bit mad – they went on a while you see – lasted a long while – and as usual they split up – someone left the group like. You see all this era, while it went on, my personal favourites were still that group of Sinatra, Sammy Davis and them lads – were what I liked to listen to most, if I was sat on my own.

I: And they were still performing weren't they?

R: Oh – very much so, they were big big big names. He got into films of course, did Sinatra, but he was still a big singer. See I loved the big bands, you see, 20-odd piece orchestras and all like that – but these groups came and took over and pushed them a bit back and they're coming back again now, like. Yes the groups come and took over completely.

I: Would you remember watching this at the time?

R: Bits of it – can't remember that particular shot but I remember a shot of them walking across the back with the sheet on – can't remember this bit – wasn't there a bit ... I don't remember them clothes.

I: What did people make of this at the time? Can you remember that?

R: Well, yeah, older people thought they were ruddy crazy and, you know, thought they were useless. I was on the brink of just going past that. I felt they were ok but my kids thought they were good and that's how I came to like them quite a bit through having to listen to them that often. It were brainwashing really!

- I: I mean that's very different to look at – and musically as well I suppose – but that's very different to look at than 'A Hard Day's Night' in that first clip.
- R: Ah – yeah – well 'Hard Day's Night – I don't know – I didn't really – I think it failed a little bit in what it were trying to do I thought. I presume a lot went to see it bit I thought it didn't quite do the Beatles justice for that matter. It just came over as a daft picture.
- I: What about those changes in fashion, then between the early '60s and that clip that we've just watched.
- R: Oh, dress fashion you mean ... yeah, well it's these – what did they call the streets – Carnaby Street at that time, used to sell all this stuff and people used to go from all over the country to buy this stuff but I were never into 'out like that'. I was just too old probably to be into that fashion-conscious type of thing.
- I: But were you ... do you think you were fashion conscious?
- R: In as much as – if see we're going back to Sinatra and all that. I like the Italian suits and all like that when they first came out – the bum freezers as they used to call them – I had, I used to go along with all that and that type of suit and that but it was a slightly older idea – think. But they were – they used to wear these Italian suits – very rarely, but they did ... and fashion ... you used to have shops – City footballers used to use Alexander's in Parliament Street – they had a couple of shops – they were all over the country at the time and the main reason we went there is because the manager was a big York City supporter and he used to treat us well and maybe give us a little bit off and we all got our suits there for a bit ... but then that's altered now. They're big groups now aren't they ... like C and A and all these type of ...
- I: What about – would you still have worn suits generally?
- R: What, now?
- I: No – in that period.
- R: Oh yeah – I was into suits – to be truthful I probably wore suits when I should have had casual on – when the lads maybe had casual on – but I was into suits, always was. I've been more casual since I got into my 60s and 70s than I was in my younger days when most other people were. It took a long time to get out of suits.
- I: But was that – so you would say you were fashion conscious but it was something that came more from the '50s again?

- R: Yeah ... I think ... I was ... I lived with my gran and granddad and they bought my clothes 'til I were about ruddy 19, so I was really into what she bought me – I never suddenly rebelled and went dead opposite. I stuck with it, so I was a bit staid, I would think, in my clothing ... I wear more way out stuff now.
- I: So when you say 'staid' what do you mean by that?
- R: Well – traditional – not what the young lads were into and wearing a lot. You used to go along with it into your 30s and 40s but I stuck with suits ... fashionable suits – they were the fashion at the time but I stuck with them for many a, many a year – well – I say – I altered a bit in my 60s and I should think I'm more casual now in my 70s than I was when I was a kid. As you know, I lived with my gran and granddad and they bought my clothes – they paid for them right up to when I was an apprentice – well into my apprenticeship and er, ... so I more or less got what they bought me up to then and it didn't bother me – I thought the stuff was quite good – they bought what they thought was right stuff.
- I: So do you think things changed much for men between 1960 and 1970?
- R: I would think it changed quite a bit. I would think like you was on about, saying about clothes – I would think they went that way quite a bit in that bit. They were always trying to dress you different – aren't they – because it's big money. It's how much the people bite off and I think they struggle with blokes. I mean I know they're selling it now, they're selling it to kids but in the end I think it comes back to nearly what they always wore. When it comes to going – I mean you still get way out fellas who are going to a wedding and funeral dressed outrageously or whatever you want to call it but most people at a wedding and a funeral are dressed traditionally, aren't they?
- I: Do you think that's – we just looked at that clip there from 1967 and fashion seemed to have gone very strange or way out. They'd got right away from the suits. Do you think that's gone back again?
- R: I think generally - even in that shot – I would have thought that it was a minority of people. There was a lot and they sold it – they sold it big time – but I still think over all the country that would have been a minority dress.
- I: What do you remember about people in York in that period? Do you think it was very different?

R: Yeah, I'm sure it was very different. I'm trying to think of a real way out shop – I can't remember but they dressed pretty normally – well a kid I worked with went into what they call – again that's '50s isn't it, Teddy Boy outfits – a lot of those got worn, er, right through all classes I think, but that's the '50s again, isn't it? You see – '60s I think it must have been a big changeover because nothing sticks in my memory in dress in the '60s.

I: What about other things? What other things changed for men in that period?

R: I think things have changed but then I'm getting political and I aren't a politically minded person but they've gone way over the top but like now it isn't Labour as I knew it. I dunno, it's er – you go to any of these – like Parliament or whatever – they still dress the same as I can remember nearly in the '40s. You know the established things like Government and office work and that, they haven't changed much, have they? They're still into suits and what have you. But they try to change things through the country to make you dress different but you'll only put on what you want to in the end and I think that's right. I don't like this hard sell but it does work I think.

I: What about other things like work?

R: You see work's altered quite a bit, you see. When I was an apprentice I served 7 years. I think they do 3 now – I think they can pass out after 3 now. I'm pretty sure that's right. Now we were maybe slower, God knows. I don't know but you can't learn a trade properly in 3 years – not for me you can't and the bit I'm on about, they made us labour a bit in the first year or two, maybe that's why it took 7 years whereas now they'll go straight in and learn the trade I would think. Before you used to have to do a bit of labouring and carry the hod and all this. But you were learning the trade all the time and you would have thought at that time they were better tradesmen. But things altering through life which at work is a fact of life – people will go mad if they hear me say it – things can be easy if you want to dodge the system. If you want to get money without working it seems to me on the face of it that it's easier to do.

I: Do you think that wasn't the case when you were younger?

R: Ah – it still happened but they didn't get as much money. I know it's selective but even relative, they didn't get as much money. If they were on the dole they were struggling. And some people who were fair and square now, they may be struggle on the dole but there's a lot can work the system now, I don't know whether there was then. I can't remember anybody then because there wasn't enough money in it but they have different allowances now that they can claim for and if

they're clever enough they can make a ruddy living out of it. It seems to me on the face of it anyway.

I: What was it like for you bringing up a young family in that period?

R: But ... I've got to be perfectly fair here. I was footballing at the time, I suppose, and I stayed away some weekends and all like that so really _____ had a harder time with that, bringing the bairns up, than I did because I was out of it quite a lot ... not like they are now, for weeks on end, but there'd be a weekend away and all like this so you got out of the system. We ... I think we managed pretty well. We had two or three weeks when we were a bit tight and we had to work things out – with money, I'm talking about. But then by the time we got established with the two bairns and that we could live on pretty – we could go out now and then and ... mind you, I, to be fair, and this is what I'm saying, I still went out like twice a week no matter what, so there was enough money for that. I don't think we were ever short ... but she had to be clever did _____ with the money.

I: Do you think that was part of the culture that you were in?

R: Oh, I think so, I think if either the wife or husband, whichever, didn't work it out with the money ... I don't think it'll have changed much. If you didn't work it out with the money you can easy go to pot. If you're both of the same click and you're both ok. It isn't that you don't care, it's that one of you has to put it in and work it out and make sure you're alright and I wouldn't have thought that had changed much.

I: I mean, the going out thing. You had your two nights out a week and that was ... was that to do with football?

R: Yeah, well it was. That was – they all did it and _____ went along with it. I think she'd have said 'look, we can't do this' I'd have had the sense to say well that's alright I won't do it. But she never ever said that so, it just went along. I don't think things like that will have changed much but attitudes towards the old and the young, I think that's altered. I think it's a completely different ball game. I mean when, we ... res ... and I'm talking not really old but anybody over 50 years you used to, like, respect, wouldn't answer them back nor nothing, even if they were nothing to do with you but now there's no messing. If you ... they'll say anything or do anything. And that is a changeover ... because other people used to protect the aged. I aren't honestly talking from my age now, I've thought this for about 10 years or more. They used to protect them when they were older but not now ... they'll ruddy have them, won't they? That's changed for the worse but I think each generation says what 'm saying about things altering for the worse ... bad things.

- I: Yeah?
- R: But there's a lot of good, isn't there? I keep saying it – whenever it gets to this time in life when things are all going a bit queer shaped, there's a ruddy big war, isn't there? And that's what I don't like. It clears half of them out and things alter again. Let's hope it doesn't happen for many a year.
- I: Did you feel like the '60s were a very optimistic time?
- R: On ... I think it was a couldn't care less time. Straight after the war everybody wanted things to go right and I think there was enthusiasm, get the ruddy thing going and all this, but then in the '60s I think they thought it's great is this, and they were just enjoying themselves, maybe that's alright, I don't know ... but they did, they enjoyed themselves in the '60s and probably – well – halfway in the '70s. Things started to alter about halfway through.
- I: Do you think that's different to other periods – to other decades that you've lived though then?
- R: Yeah, I do. I think every decade's a little bit different because do you say it's the parents or do you say it's the young? The authority of parents doesn't appear to mean much now. Not nowadays. I don't know whether I'm wrong but it doesn't appear – and that started to happen I should think in the back end of the '60s. I think the change came then. Kids were disciplined when I was a kid anyway.
- I: Do you think that's something about the relationship with men in the family? Men's position in the family? Do you think men have a different relationship with their children now compared to your generation?
- R: As far as I can gather ... when man ruled the kids – when he came in at night they passed them on and they reprimanded them and all like this. That's perfectly true what you say. That use to happen. They used to say – in our house – with my grandma and granddad – I'm going to tell your granddad. And I was a little bit feared – I knew I'd get a clout of some description and that were alright. It didn't do you no harm in the end but it's a bit different now isn't it? They'll hop it. They run away quicker now. I believe that for sure. I think they leave home quicker to get out of discipline. But there again, how far do you go back in where this started, you know, parents, which set of parents were to blame. Somewhere along the line that system has gone a bit wrong. Well – er – look – it is altering a hell of a lot because families are a lot older now before they have children, they're getting more – they're getting older so the relationship's bound to be different.

- I: I think that's a definite trend. We know quite a few people who have got to nearly 40 before they've had children.
- R: And I wouldn't have thought that was very good, but we shall see. It might be the best thing that's ever happened but for me, if you're getting to the age I am now and your kids are about 15 or whatever, handling them, your whole outlook must be different. You'd expect them to jump and they won't take no ruddy notice. No, I don't know – I won't see – but we'll see in time whether it's good or bad this older family. I can't see it being any good.
- I: Why do you think it is that people are doing that?
- R: I think the longer you can work the better, and you're getting a bit fed up of work anyway and you think – er, well I'll have a bit of time off – women, I mean – because it's women - that's how it's altered. I'm all for it – equal pay and everything – I am and always was but the only thing I'll say is that they can't seem to get into their head – there's only so much money in any pot and it can only be shared out whatever and if women are getting paid more, like they was, it's going to stop mens' wages going up the same and if it doesn't that's when you get into trouble isn't it. You're still trying to put blokes' wages up when the firm won't stand it – well they won't do that – that's where the trouble starts as I see it – I'm all for them getting the same money – they deserve it – but they didn't used to do the job did they. They used to bring the kids up first the look for a bit of spare time work or whichever it was, which was completely different, but now they're into big jobs and that – fair enough.
- I: Do you think that's changed the relationship between men and women generally then?
- R: It has to, to a certain extent hasn't it?
- I: I suppose when you were working there was still this idea of the man's wage being the family wage.
- R: Oh yeah – your wage looked after the family until they were old enough. And that's what happened to – that's why they – how they got the money – how they got their rises and then when the women started to say 'right, we want to work', you can only take so much money out of the pot, they don't make more to do it ... it starts to level it out, doesn't it? I mean they still – if they stay – if they did pay them the same – even now, crikey it would really skin a few firms, wouldn't it I mean – if you – like when you had a woman Prime Minister – believe you and me, I wasn't for that either – but the thing is, she was a powerful person, wasn't she. She did a lot of good, I suppose, but not for me.

[Clip 3]

R: This is on that roof, isn't it? They're talking about what to do ... ruddy police involvement in something like this! I remember it well. When was this then?

I: Erm – 1969.

R: They were coming to the end of their group bit then.

I: Yeah. What about the way that they look there?

R: Well, you see, that, er, there was one of them dressed right, wasn't there. Well more staid than the others – was it McCartney? He like had a suit type of thing on. I think it was George Harrison had the, er, bright colours on, but I mean ... they're showbiz wallahs and there always has been showbiz wallahs that on the stage ... that dressed like that, but then people copied them, didn't they? And I think that's all that happened – more people copied them than used to copy people before. That's why they started wearing such stuff.

I: Do you think there have always been men on stage that have worn, sort of flamboyant outfits?

R: I'm sure – you see when you get on about the effeminate bit there's always been, er, dames, whatever you call them – such as Max Miller – these drag artists – there's always been drag artists hasn't there?

I: Could you define masculinity?

R: Masculinity – it's how people have ridiculed it over the years – that doesn't mean a thing to me – a man's a man and if he acts – he does what – since time began – for me – that's not quite right as it happens – what I'm saying – you know, what you're supposed to be as a man – is manly, supposed to protect the lady and all like that stuff – I don't see anything wrong in that if they keep that going – I'm all for it but I know it doesn't quite happen like that – it's not much different now, to, from reading history there was still bisexual, whatever you want to call it. There's always been this, always, but now they're making a big fuss, trying to make everything above board with it, aren't they, they're trying to say 'it's ok to do what the ruddy hell you like' – I'm old fashioned. I'm for a man being a man and a women being a woman, but that's probably old fashioned.

I don't take too much bother about what's happening that much because it won't get stopped. You might think it would if everybody put their mind to it but that isn't true either ...

I: But when you talk about masculinity or being a man has been ridiculed over the years – what do you mean?

R: Well, I mean, they've tried ... I think the fashion people and the people at the top and in Government – and there's a lot of queers in Government. There's a word. Call them 'queers' you know. There's always been in Government and every level and now they're trying to push it right above board and make it as though it's ok and a good thing and I think they'll manage it and I won't be around to see it. I wouldn't like to walk down the street and see half the fellas going ... whatever it is they do. It probably won't come to that ... what goes round comes round.

I: Do you think that's always been there then?

R: I do. I'm sure it's always been there. If you read up on your history there's always been something.

I: Did you know any gay footballers?

R: Erm – that was again the difference. It was never really upfront. So you only ever heard rumours about this fella and that fella. In the school I played in – nobody ever turned round to me and said 'well, he's a queer' so I was maybe lucky – there's bound to be – bound to have been because it's coming out now – there's some in most clubs – but it's a queer environment to be a queer in – you know, in the bath and showers and all like that. You see, how these other lads treat them I think that might be dodgy. That's why – if there's only one in the club I would think he was on a hiding to nowt really.

I: Do you think that's still true?

R: I do, yeah. But I don't think in the football world it's come right to the front. Again, it will, because there'll be a few.

I: So there's still these very male environments?

R: There is, there is male environments.

I: Where it's less acceptable, say, than a lot of stuff you see on the TV now?

R: Army, you was always supposed to be men, weren't you and now it's coming out that there's a large number of queers or double timers or whatever you want to call them. There seems to be a lot of them in

the Army. Well, I must say, when I was in the Army, I never say any but there you are. I maybe had my eyes shut, but I can't remember, if I go though all my ... I never thought any of them would be ruddy queers.

I: Right, let's call a halt there.

R: Soup time!

I: _____ . Thank you very much.

Appendix 10

INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS: LIST

PhD: Interviews

- ❖ Respondent 1 (74 years old)
1960 – 29
1970 – 39
Retired professional footballer, plasterer

- ❖ Respondent 2 (46 years old)
1960 – 1
1970 – 11
Comedian, writer, broadcaster

- ❖ Respondent 3 (55 years old)
1960 – 10
1970 – 20
Retired academic, mental health nurse

- ❖ Respondent 4 (59 years old)
1960 – 14
1970 – 24
Sales director

- ❖ Respondent 5 (59 years old)
1960 – 14
1970 – 24
Journalist, teacher

- ❖ Respondent 6 (38 years old)
1960 – 0
1970 – 3
Accountant

- ❖ Respondent 7 (70 years old)
1960 – 25
1970 – 35
Retired GPO worker

- ❖ Respondent 8 (49 years old)
1960 – 5
1970 – 15
Nurse, NHS Manager

- ❖ Respondent 9 (18 years old)
1960 – 0
1970 – 0
BTEC student

- ❖ Respondent 10 (39 years old)
1960 – 0
1970 – 3
Solicitor

- ❖ Respondent 11 (34 years old)
1960 – 0
1970 – 0
MA Student/freelance photographer

Appendix 11

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

“You Spurn My Natural Emotions, You Make Me Feel I’m Dirt, and I’m Hurt.” New Wave, New Men and Fragile Masculinities.

“The words ‘masculinity’ and ‘rock and roll’ commonly conjure up screaming, hip-swivelling singers, virtuosos with medallions banging on their hairy chests and an electric guitar glued to their hips, groupies, sex and drugs – the whole 1970s, decadent Spinal Tap trip.”

(Bannister, 2006 : x)

This quote from Matthew Bannister’s *White Boys, White Noise* (2006) summarises the link between hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995; Hearn, 2004), Brittan’s (1989) masculinism and rock music, drawing on previous texts such as Frith and Goodwin’s (1990) edited collection *On Record* or Sheila Whiteley’s (1997a) edited collection *Sexing the Groove*.

This paper will argue that the post-punk new wave movement represents a stepping stone between the cock-rock masculinism (Brittan, 1989) of 1970s’ rock, the aggression and military imagery of punk (Hebdidge, 1978; Savage, 1991) and a more feminised (Cohan, 1993) angst-ridden set of masculinities at work in the music of the early 1980s. This ranges from the indie guitar rock outlined by Bannister (2006), Orange Juice, providing a good example, through middle ground straddlers such as The Smiths to mainstream heartbreak peddlers ABC and their ilk. Admittedly, visual representations of gender fluidity (Whiteley, 1997b) were at work in the early 1970s’ glam movement. David Bowie, Marc Bolan and Roxy Music provide authentic examples (the visual appearance of The Sweet and The Glitter Band seems, in retrospect, to owe more to Bernard Breslaw’s cross-dressing in the *Carry On* films [Ross, 1996] than a serious challenge to the traditional masculinism [Brittan, 1989] at work in the music of the period).

Set within the context of literature on men and masculinities (Whitehead, 2002; Hearn, 2004) and masculinities and popular music (Frith and McRobbie, 1990;

Whiteley, 1997a; Bannister, 2006). The paper will examine the relationship between these developments and the emergence of 1980s' "new man" discourses (Nixon, 1997). The paper will examine three texts from the summer of 1978 (both audio and visual), a moment identified by the author as a key transitional point from punk through new wave to indie pop. These are *Jilted John* (1978) by Jilted John, *Ever fallen in Love* by the Buzzcocks (1978) and *Down in the Tube Station at Midnight* (1978) by the Jam.

Musically and lyrically these texts reference early 1960s' Beatle-based pop music (Macdonald, 1994; Inglis, 1997). The boy-loses-girl angst of *Jilted John* (1978) with its "girly" backing vocals (performed by men) is redolent of the early Beatle girl group cover versions such as *Devil in Her Heart* (1963) and *Boys* (1963) [Bannister, 2003; Warwick, 2003] and its camp-but-not-gay vocals emphasise a return to the gender fluidity at work in much 1960s' pop music (Whiteley, 1997b; King, forthcoming). Buzzcocks' singer and composer Pete Shelley's "out" gayness makes *Ever Fallen in Love* (1978) a text which transgresses gender boundaries and parallels can be drawn with John Lennon's *You've Got to Hide Your Love Away* (1965), a song used in the Beatles' Anthology documentary (The Beatles, 2003) to accompany a montage of footage of Brian Epstein, the Beatles' gay manager, an act which served to re-open the "did they/didn't they" Lennon/Epstein debate (Goldman, 1988; King, forthcoming). Paul Weller's *Down in the Tube Station at Midnight* (1978) with its McCartneyesque narrative structure and content marks the start of Weller's Beatle-rifling period (*All Mod Cons* [1979]; *Sound Affects* [1980]) as well as signalling a transition from the masculinist (Brittan, 1989) anthemic aggression of songs like *In the City* (1977) to a more personalised and crafted approach associated with the more feminised (Cohan, 1993) singer-songwriter genre (King, forthcoming). Weller's juxtaposition of the song's main male character with men who "smelt of pubs and Wormwood Scrubs and too many right wing meetings" provides an interesting starting point for analysis.

The paper will also argue that Nick Lowe's *So it Goes* (1976) is a major candidate for the source of 1970's new wave and that the early work of the Stiff label, as well as being an obvious starting point for what was to become '80s' indie pop, marks a significant development in the transition from masculinist (Brittan, 1989) rock and

militaristic punk (Hebdidge, 1978; Heylin, 2008) to a return to more fragile versions of masculinities at work in popular music (Whiteley, 1997a; King, forthcoming). This is in spite of its beginnings in the highly masculinised pub-rock scene of the mid 1970s. In addition to Lowe's single, which launched the label, the boxed set of the first ten Stiff singles includes the *All Aboard with the Roogalator EP* [with a sleeve which mimics *With The Beatles* (1963)] and a single by '60s' psychedelic stalwarts the Pink Fairies, while the early works of Elvis Costello and Ian Dury represent a return to a more feminised (Cohan, 1993) singer-songwriter approach (King, forthcoming) wrapped up in visual representations which provide a challenge to the traditional masculine rock star persona (Frith and McRobbie, 1990).

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