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MARKETING AND CONSUMPTION OF POPULAR MUSIC:

THE CASE OF NEW MODEL ARMY

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ABSTRACT

English rock band New Model Army has survived for nearly thirty years without a conventional marketing strategy or mass media support, and for much of that time without major record label support. This inquiry set out to explore the reasons for the durability of this independent band. The study required an engagement with a range of literatures from marketing, consumer studies, popular music studies and cultural studies. The key notions of "circuit of culture" and "text" were adapted to help guide the inquiry, and combined with social identity theory and branding theory. A broadly ethnographic approach, harnessed to a combination of social constructionist, hermeneutico-semiotic and discourse-analytical perspectives was used for the study. A range of data collection methods was used, including participant observation, interviews with band and fans, and photography. In three empirical chapters, data on three sites of cultural production and consumption site are presented: cyberspace, museum spaces and gig spaces. The chapters deal with, respectively, the construction of the New Model Army "Family" as a framing interpretative resource for the band-fan community; the curation by the band of an exhibition of its art and artefacts in order to create a Family heritage; and the importance of live performances as Family "gatherings". Data analysis helps to show how the band and fans together construct the musical project that is New Model Army, while also pointing to some underlying tensions and how these are managed by the band and fans. The implications of these findings are then drawn out for the conceptualisation of tribes and brand communities, and the marketing and branding of popular music groups. The combination of circuit of culture, text, and social identity theory with detailed empirical evidence offers a thickly descriptive and analytical answer to the question about the durability of New Model Army's appeal. This thesis also contributes to the development of theory in the areas of arts marketing, arts branding, cultural studies and popular music studies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	MEANING
AC/DC	Name of Australian rock band
AHM	Arts Heritage Marketing
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
AM	Academy of Marketing
BMG	Bertelsmann Music Group
CCT	Consumer Culture Theory
COPMC	Circuit of Popular Music Culture
CS	Cultural studies
DA	Discourse analysis
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DP	Discursive psychology
DPDA	Discursive-psychological discourse analysis
EMI	A major record label
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FMCG	Fast moving consumer goods
MBA	Masters in Business Administration
MMM	Mainstream managerial marketing
MOBO	Music of Black origin
MP3	MPEG–1 Audio Layer 3, a sound file format
MTV	Music Television (name of leading music media organisation)
NMA	New Model Army
NME	New Musical Express
NRM	New Religious Movement
P2P	Peer-to-peer
PMS	Popular music studies
PO	Participant observation
R&B	A musical genre
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
RIAA	Recording Industry Association of America
SIG	Special Interest Group
SIT	Social Identity Theory
TPATH	Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, a US band
U2	Name of an Irish rock band
WHO	World Health Organisation

ABSTRACT

English rock band New Model Army has survived for nearly thirty years without a conventional marketing strategy or mass media support, and for much of that time without major record label support. This inquiry set out to explore the reasons for the durability of this independent band. The study required an engagement with a range of literatures from marketing, consumer studies, popular music studies and cultural studies. The key notions of "circuit of culture" and "text" were adapted to help guide the inquiry, and combined with social identity theory and branding theory. A broadly ethnographic approach, harnessed to a combination of social constructionist, hermeneutico-semiotic and discourse-analytical perspectives was used for the study. A range of data collection methods was used, including participant observation, interviews with band and fans, and photography. In three empirical chapters, data on three sites of cultural production and consumption site are presented: cyberspace, museum spaces and gig spaces. The chapters deal with, respectively, the construction of the New Model Army "Family" as a framing interpretative resource for the band-fan community; the curation by the band of an exhibition of its art and artefacts in order to create a Family heritage; and the importance of live performances as Family "gatherings". Data analysis helps to show how the band and fans together construct the musical project that is New Model Army, while also pointing to some underlying tensions and how these are managed by the band and fans. The implications of these findings are then drawn out for the conceptualisation of tribes and brand communities, and the marketing and branding of popular music groups. The combination of circuit of culture, text, and social identity theory with detailed empirical evidence offers a thickly descriptive and analytical answer to the question about the durability of New Model Army's appeal. This thesis also contributes to the development of theory in the areas of arts marketing, arts branding, cultural studies and popular music studies.

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CHAPTER 1 – SETTING THE SCENE

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter sets the scene for the inquiry in three ways, namely by identifying the researcher's starting points, discussing the research context (the UK popular music industry), and introducing the band which is the subject of the inquiry, New Model Army ("NMA").

STARTING POINTS

This first section of the chapter is devoted to an account of the origins of the study, the researcher's own background and institutional context. This account of my own starting points is part of my attempt to be clear with the reader, to demonstrate reflexivity, and to explain, partly, why this study takes an interpretive approach.

THE INCITING INCIDENT

Several years ago, I watched a video of a live performance by U2, the Irish rock band, performing *Pride (in the Name of Love)*[1] at an indoor theatre in San Francisco (Joanou, 1988). For much of the song, the video focuses entirely on the band, mixing shots from a variety of positions and angles. Then, suddenly, as the song reaches a significant moment, the house lights unexpectedly come up, and the camera is focusing principally on the fans, not the band. It shows a theatre-style venue packed way up into the "gods"

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[1] Song and album titles are henceforth in *italics*.

with all of the fans standing up, waving their arms, and apparently enjoying themselves hugely. I had been to quite a number of live performances of music, but mostly folk or pop. It was the first time I had seen such a spectacle of the power of music to move people – and this from a video rather than from a live performance. The effect was such that I replayed the scenes from that video many times for my own enjoyment, and also used it in my marketing teaching practice as a way of illustrating how passionate consumers can be about 'products'. I found that this single moment from the video raised a number of questions which wouldn't go away, such as: Why did the consumers get so excited by the music? What was going on at that gig, for the performers and for the fans? What did it <u>mean</u> to all involved to be there? What was it like to be there? Why did this particular band have this effect? How did this connect with their popularity, market position and marketing strategy? How could notions of strategic marketing be applied to this kind of phenomenon?

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

As a former sales and marketing practitioner for nearly fifteen years, mainly in international business-to-business work, I had been used to seeing relationships between a provider and a customer in commercial terms, as an exchange relationship (McIntyre, Thomas, Tullis and Young, 2004), a 'deal'. My theoretical training in marketing, apart from some in-company courses, had been confined to an MBA programme at Bradford University School of Management, which taught what is known in the trade as mainstream managerial marketing (henceforth "MMM"). Later, as a marketing educator, I found that what I was expected to teach students from MMM textbooks often had to be clarified, supplemented, qualified, corrected, or re-interpreted to take account of what I myself had learned in practice. I was also becoming aware of the degree to which marketing theory relied upon questionnaire surveys to develop 'knowledge' about marketing. After nearly fifteen years of sales,

marketing and management practitioner experience, I was deeply skeptical of the validity of questionnaire surveys in generating insights into contemporary marketing and consumption practices. I saw them as a convenient way for academics to avoid dealing with the messiness of business realities, by which I mean the complexity of organisational and consumption cultures and of the social interaction between providers and consumers.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Institutionally, back then, the cause of arts marketing research wasn't helped by the fact that it had allowed itself often to be grouped with areas such as nonprofit marketing, which were seen as marginal to mainstream commercial business. The relevant Arts and Heritage Marketing (AHM) Special Interest Group (SIG) of the UK Academy of Marketing (AM) was essentially moribund. Institutionally, arts marketers were isolated in separate institutions rather than gathered in centres of excellence which could generate some critical mass of research effort, or creative synergies. There were few academic publishing outlets dedicated to arts management or marketing, and the journals in question tended to favour positivistic accounts of 'high culture' art forms (performing arts, large museums). Furthermore, there was a relative lack of access to government funding: the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) was set up only in 2005[2], and within the Economic and Social Research Council research into marketing seemed to secure less funding than "weightier" disciplines. Finally, for marketing academics, there seemed little access to funding which would support the analysis of UK arts policy.

What really mattered in schools of management and business were the 'real' business sectors like computers, machine-tools, and insurance, as well as fast-moving consumer goods with 'exciting' brand 'personalities'. Arts marketing was seen as a kind of

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[2] http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/about/

Cinderella subject. It did not help that arts marketing scholars seemed to lack a sense of collective direction or priorities. They were grappling with the perennial 'bums on seats' issue; trying to explain that promotion was not the whole of marketing; working out ways in which audiences could be 'developed'; and bemoaning the lack of 'proper' strategic marketing within the arts. The development of arts marketing theory was largely being driven by survey methods which lent it a certain validity in the eyes of the custodians of orthodox marketing knowledge. But it was not dealing with literatures specific to the art being studied, it did not have a theory or theories of art(!), treated the art product as a black box (or at best a 'service'), and did not look at the arts consumption experience to any great degree. It was clear to me even back then that marketing scholars needed to draw upon other academic discourses if they were to understand the wider and deeper symbolic dimension of artist/consumer or arts marketer/consumer relationships. I think the 'arts marketing' of today needs to respect the artistic conventions and resources of the arts 'sectors' it studies, as well as accommodating theoretical developments within marketing itself, within consumer studies and cultural studies.

This approach to thinking about the arts and arts marketing failed – for me - to capture or explain the kind of phenomena I had witnessed being generated by U2 and their fans in San Francisco. It was simply not deeply enough rooted in practice or theories to account in a richly and thickly descriptive – or, more importantly, richly and thickly analytical - way for the U2 episode.

It would not have been possible to provide a holistic answer from within marketing back then to the other questions which were going around my head such as: How does a particular band symbolically construct and transmit its identity to fans? How do the fans construe the band's identity? How does the individual fan construe his or her own identity in relation to the band's perceived identity and in relation to other fans? How does the notion of community apply to this context? And where does the exchange relationship sit in this artistic context? Where does the power lie? Is the durability of the

band ultimately in the band's own hands or the fans'? To what extent do fans actively help to sustain a musical project or 'art firm' (see Chapter 3)? What is the importance of the exchange relationship relative to that of the 'art' in the arts marketing context?

Therefore, given my professional background and rather isolated institutional context, finding answers to these questions was going to prove difficult. Add the effect of the UK Government's Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), which privileged certain kinds of mainstream marketing journal outlets - and therefore certain methods of inquiry (positivistic/scientistic) – and, to an interpretively-minded student of arts marketing, the picture looked extremely gloomy.

A QUESTION OF MEANING

At the time, my rather inarticulate sense of dissatisfaction with this situation was centred around the issue of meaning. Arts marketing wasn't saying enough about meaning, or culture in a variety of wider senses (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of 'culture'). It is true that marketing had been developing its own discourse on meaning, namely branding, in order to enable it to speak about the cultural dimensions of exchange. There was also a considerable body of work going on in relation to marketing communications, though essentially this was written to serve the interests of the marketing manager.

Yet, I had originally been a humanities graduate (modern languages and literature), and I was also aware that there was this discipline called 'cultural studies'; there were still <u>relatively</u> few people in marketing looking <u>directly</u> at arts markets from these linguistic and/or cultural perspectives. I had also become aware of the field of popular music studies, and was starting to read some work in this area, too. I felt it would be necessary, for example, to look into popular music studies, not simply – as mainstream marketers would have it - because that was the 'sector' in which the 'firm' under examination was 'operating', but because there is a sizeable body of discourse already developed by popular music scholars about popular music production and consumption.

On the other hand, within popular music studies, and indeed cultural studies more widely, there is a (sometimes marked) degree of reluctance to engage with marketing theory as it is taught and researched in Schools of business and management. This is a pity, because marketing is the body of academic discourse which deals directly with commercial exchanges. There seemed to be an opportunity here to conduct an inquiry which would take account of these different perspectives and seek to bring strands of each of them to bear on band-fan relationships. It seemed to me, in the end, that a culturalist study was necessary in order to understand how the marketing and consumption of popular music are connected – or, to use the cultural studies word, 'articulated' – by culture. In the end, I had little hesitation in deciding to register for a PhD at what was then the School of Cultural Studies at Sheffield Hallam University[3].

My purpose in doing the study in this way was to locate it institutionally within a cultural studies department, to stand on a different hill in order to obtain another view of the field and - to use the clichéd expression - to think outside the (mainstream managerial marketing) box. This brought me into contact with other disciplinary perspectives, not simply through reading different literatures, but through the challenging work of interacting directly with supervisors and fellow students who saw things differently from marketing and consumer behaviour scholars. This introduced me to new ways of thinking, reading, writing and argument, about all of which practices I still have much to learn. This personal 'move to culture' or 'cultural turn' was also, at bottom, an attempt to bring more meaning into my academic working practice, both in terms of knowledge and insight as well as what people used to call 'job satisfaction'[4].

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[3] This has since been absorbed into the Culture, Communications and Computing Research Institute (C3RI) of Sheffield Hallam's Faculty of Arts, Computing, Engineering and Sciences.

[4] I submit that anyone who has taught 'Marketing 101' to 250 entry-level undergraduates for seven straight years, especially in the University of Bradford's Chesham Building Chemistry C4.1 lecture theatre, could be pardoned for wanting to find more meaning and job satisfaction at work – or indeed life.

RESEARCHER MOTIVATION AND VALUES

There were a number of factors relevant to my motivation in relation to this inquiry. Firstly, I wished to bring together several years of marketing practice, a keen interest in art in the broadest sense, and the learnings from my original degree in modern languages and literature in an integrative, sense-making project. Secondly, it was professionally necessary to undertake the customary research academic's apprenticeship. Thirdly, I wished to be able to say something of what I thought to the arts marketing scholarly community.

As for the values which I sought to bring to the study, they had to do with holism, a belief in the value of interpretation and qualitative inquiry, reflexivity, and the need to think outside the MMM box. As Kahn-Harris writes (2007:11): 'Holism provides a perspective that recognizes the interconnection between different elements of social phenomena'. It is one of academia's limitations that scholars like to slice up life, divide it into disciplinary silos, split production from consumption, and economics from society and from culture. Barker (2002: 80) suggests that 'methodological holism argues that the best way to study a complex system is to treat it as a whole rather than be content with analysis of the structure and 'behaviour' of its component parts', and that 'the argument for a multiperspectival approach has always been inherent within cultural studies' (p.186). Again, I am concerned to look at how relationships are constructed and maintained in social interaction and within the circuit of culture, where production and consumption are mutually constitutive. My practitioner experience also impelled me towards a more holistic approach which would look at production and consumption in relation to each other and to their context. I was interested in moving away from survey technology which tended to keep the observer at a physical, emotional and statistical distance from the object of study, and in immersing myself in the field. The social, experiential nature of popular music appeared to offer a rich opportunity to do so. As a

former humanities student, I saw things in terms of texts and readings. I could sense the potential contribution which an interpretive, qualitative approach could make. I am also concerned, for the sake of reflexivity, to be aware at all times of the discursive resources (e.g. 'exchange relationship') which scholars use in their conversations in this area. It is a characteristic of much MMM scholarship, though by no means all, that it is unreflexive about its disciplinary assumptions and frameworks. Finally, I was keen to relativise the importance of the marketing lens in the interests of getting a different 'look' at arts marketing.

THE UK POPULAR MUSIC INDUSTRY

In this second section of the Chapter, I present the research context, namely the UK popular music industry. The business environment or research context into which I was about to work was, economically speaking, part of the UK popular music industry. In its Creative Industries Economic Estimates Statistical Bulletin last October (2007), the UK Government's Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) estimated that two-thirds of the businesses in the creative industries were in two sectors, namely software and music/visual/performing arts. The UK popular music industry is important for employment and exports. This section outlines some of the key features and current trends.

LABELS AND BANDS

The popular music business is part of the entertainment economy (Wolf, 2000), and the experience economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). The mass marketing of music is similar to the mass marketing of other popular culture products, such as comic books, novels, films, video games and videos. In the classical model, ownership of rights in these products is commonly assigned by their creators to the large corporations with the

financial strength, technology, media connections and distribution networks to deliver the products to consumers and to promote and publicise them through the mass media. The major record labels have smaller labels, rather like publishers have differentiated imprints, basically to handle different categories or genres of music and thereby better align the artistes with targeted consumer segments. There also exist quite a large number of smaller independent record labels and distribution companies which offer an alternative route to market for the 'independent' band.

Figure 1 below is a necessarily simplified diagram of the key categories of player in the music business together with, in some cases, an indication of their roles. This diagram does not do justice to the complexity of the business, but will serve for the purposes of this discussion to highlight the key areas.

Figure 1: Diagram of the Music Industry
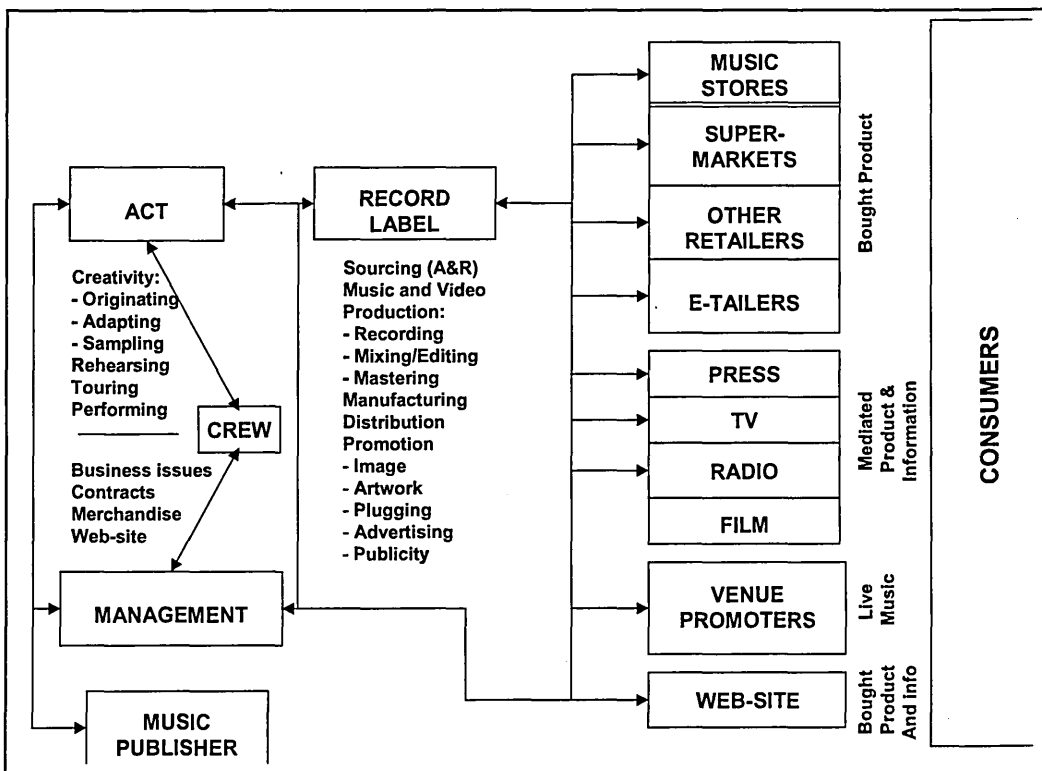
Source: Author

Globally, the industry is dominated by the four 'majors', the four largest record labels: Sony BMG, Warner, EMI and Universal. The majors are undergoing turbulent times as the business models in the industry are forced to change by technological advances (Kretschmer, Klimis and Wallis, 2001; Gosain and Lee, 2001; Jones, 2002; Leyshon, Webb, French, Thrift and Crewe, 2005). In July 2008, for example, in response to a crisis caused by the growth of importance of the internet, EMI appointed a new marketing manager whose previous job had been with Reckitt Benckiser, a subsidiary of Proctor and Gamble, the multinational fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) organisation. It says something about the values of EMI that the new marketing manager's previous experience included managing the Cilit Bang brand of household cleaner. The company's very recent publicity has sought to position itself as an artist-friendly label while announcing an artist cull![5] Artists such as Paul McCartney, the Rolling Stones and Radiohead have already left. The implication of this appointment for practice is that marketing skills are portable, and that someone who markets household cleaner can market popular music. The implication by analogy for theory could be, for example, that the scholar who theorises about services marketing can theorise in the same way about arts marketing because art is a 'service' not a good.

When New Model Army rages against the musical establishment in its Family 'manifesto' (see Chapter 5), it is the major label mindset which attracts its ire. At any one time, the labels will be scouting for new talent, new sounds and looks (basically 'cool hunting', using their A&R[6] people), maximising the take from the rights, managing the back catalogue, timing new releases, and culling unprofitable acts - pure product portfolio management, in fact. It is to the record labels that classical marketing strategy terminology can most easily be seen to apply. Each of them runs a wide portfolio of labels and artistes, with resource allocation decisions to make, trends to spot and

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[5] http://www.brandrepublic.com/News/829496/Reckitt-Benckiser-executive-head-EMI/ accessed 24/7/2008

[6] 'A & R' means 'Artiste and Repertoire', and refers to record label talent scouts.

competitors to beat. The corporate labels are like venture capitalists for creative artists, and, like true venture capitalists, they come with strings attached (Harrison, 2000). The term 'corporate' is of course highly charged in popular music parlance, being associated with the idea of 'suits', soulless business executives who do not understand music and are only interested in the bottom-line. A common arrangement is for a band to have a manager, or management operation, which takes care of the business side of things, allowing the musicians and singers to focus on song-writing, composing, rehearsing and performing. The management typically negotiates a contract with a record label (unless the band sets up its own label). The record labels recruit artistes, arrange and fund production, distribution, market research, and promotional activity. The funding usually involves an advance on royalty earnings, out of which production costs can be clawed back. The band's material is recorded onto the appropriate audio and/or video formats, promoted to and through radio, tv and film and distributed through a variety of retail outlets.

Many bands now have their own web-sites through which products and merchandise can be ordered direct. If the band originates its own material, it will usually sell the publication rights to a music publisher. Through its management side, the band will also need to consider issues such as brand image, sponsorship, how to handle new media issues, such as e-commerce, and touring management as well as copyright protection, moral rights, piracy and royalty collection agencies (Harrison, 2000). Business arrangements between bands and their management and record labels make for an interesting read, for example Lendt's (1997) account of his time helping to look after the business affairs of Kiss is a good example, particularly for the complexity of the business arrangements and description of planning meetings. And of course, a fundamental issue is how, and to what extent, a band can 'manage' its 'relationship' with its fans, whether or not this is mediated by a separate record label and/or complex management organisation.

MEDIA AND THE INTERNET

The music industry is also closely connected with broadcasting. National and local public and private television and radio brands act as outlets for music. Radio stations operate to certain music formats with play-lists specified by station directors/programmers. The days of the BBC television's weekly hits programme Top of the Pops are now over, but television offers recorded or live coverage of concerts, or of festivals, such as Glastonbury. MTV and its competitors offer a range of channels with music, documentary and lifestyle content. Television is also changing the way in which acts are launched, with talent shows such as Pop Idol and X-Factor giving birth to a number of artists and bands, many of them experiencing only short-lived fame, however. In July 2008, Cambridge band Hamfatter successfully pitched their business plan and music to venture capitalists on BBC television[7]. Television also plays a role in the promotion of industry celebrities and sales by broadcasting live transmission of musical awards ceremonies, such as the Brits, Kiss, MOBO and MTV awards. Live music is played in a large number of establishments ranging from pubs to arenas. Quite a large number of specialist and general print media, such as Kerrang!, NME, Q, and Uncut keep fans in touch with the bands. In addition, the culture and leisure sections of national broadsheets carry reviews of recordings, videos and performances, as well as cultural analysis.

The arrival of the internet has had a huge impact on the industry, with significant conflict between the recording industry, bands and fans around the issue of illegal downloading or peer-to-peer (P2P) file-sharing. This kind of consumer activity and the

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[7] http://www.bbc.co.uk/dragonsden/episodes/s6e1hamfatter.shtml - accessed 24/7/2008

resultant loss of revenue led to US rock band Metallica taking action against Napster, the P2P software provider. Recently, the Recording Industry Association in the USA has sued individual consumers, including teenagers, for the same 'crime'. Meanwhile, in China for example, despite the presence of the major labels selling original product, millions are being made and lost through piracy. The internet is forcing radical changes in record label and band business models, for example, making the economics of touring relatively more attractive than recording. It has also enabled individual musicians and bands to become their own 'bedroom producers' and upload material directly onto the web. A number of sites, including YouTube and MySpace, offer users the opportunity to review the work of unsigned bands. Recent award-winners, Sheffield band the Arctic Monkeys are conventionally believed to owe their success to the internet and gig-based circulation of copied CDs - interestingly, they have shown distinct signs of an attitude which is against the mass media. Meanwhile the major record labels have sought to control their property through digital recording management rights and lawsuits. Bands with the resources to do so experiment with direct internet marketing to fans, not just by having their own web-sites but through actions such as *the slip,* Nine Inch Nails' free full-length album download[8], or the advergame associated with their Year Zero album.

Importantly, the internet has also enabled music fans from different parts of the world to come together to form online fan communities around different popular music brands. For a 'niche', 'cult', 'independent' or 'underground' band like NMA without regular mainstream media exposure, the internet has proved to be an invaluable, relatively low-cost way of communicating with and – importantly - listening to its fans. These communities interact on both the official band web-sites as well as official or unofficial fan web-sites. Fans do fandom both online and offline, and, as we shall see in Chapter 5, their discourse can help to shape the meanings of the band-fan interaction.

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[8] See www.nin.com

CELEBRITY AND SPONSORSHIP

A very noticeable feature of the contemporary musical industry is the treatment of popular musicians and singers as celebrities. Popular musicians who have become successful are often asked their opinion on non-musical issues by journalists. They have thus acquired and developed the power to speak out on social and political issues, for example in the Rock Against Racism movement, as well as in charity concerts and recording projects such as Band Aid, Live Aid, and Live 8. U2's lead singer, Bono, along with fellow Irishman Bob Geldof, Midge Ure, and other artistic celebrities (e.g. Damian Hirst) have been closely associated with efforts to alleviate the difficult issues experienced by so-called less developed countries. Their campaigns have ranged across a range of issues from debt relief to AIDS awareness. These events and campaigns depend heavily at times on media exposure. MTV has even become a key tool in the World Health Organisation's (WHO) efforts to raise awareness of AIDS globally, and offers an interesting example of the aestheticisation of public health messages. Bono's tie–up with American Express in the 'Red' campaign[9] is an interesting example of social, or cause-related, marketing involving mainstream commercial corporations and popular music celebrities. In addition to celebrity endorsement, the commercial sponsorship of band tours, music festivals and concerts has also grown. In South-East London, the mobile phone company O2 has now sponsored the Dome, the former Blair Government's Millennium white elephant. The arena stages performances by leading US and UK musical acts, including Elton John. On the darker side of the business, the tradition of celebrity drug excess is currently being maintained by figures such as Pete Doherty and Amy Winehouse.

For an independent band such as NMA (see later in this Chapter), there are risks in this celebrity culture because of its association with the commercial mainstream, and

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[9] http://www.joinred.com/

because it does not sit with alternative or independent ideology. The band has a constant need to position and reposition itself in relation to these kinds of development in order to assert its authentic credentials.

CHANGING TASTE AND HERITAGE

A key business-environmental issue in the popular music business is the frequency of change in fans' musical preferences and tastes - witness the explosion of interest in rap music over the past few years, and the transformation of music store sales categories from being rock- and pop-dominated to R&B. This raises the question for a band with any longevity of how its legacy is to be framed and preserved. The successive change in music fashion creates a growing back catalogue of styles or genres, which become the subject of 'rediscovery' by subsequent generations of fans, or of intensive study by popular music scholars and journalists. The English industry has over the past 50 years developed a keen sense of its own heritage, evidenced currently, for example, in the connection between the Beatles' legacy and Liverpool's status as the European Capital of Culture 2008[10]. Popular music subcultures, such as punk, and individual acts, such as Kylie Minogue, have begun to be recognised in the UK as part of a popular musical 'heritage'. At the same time, the number of bands which have re-formed to tour and/or record again has grown considerably, such as The Who, Pink Floyd, the Spice Girls, Led Zeppelin and Take That. In Chapter 6, I examine how NMA with the aid of its fans makes use of its art and artefacts to construct itself as a band with heritage and how this contributes to the band-fan relationship.

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[10] http://www.liverpool08.com/

CONSUMPTION

The consumption of popular music has also undergone significant changes. Thanks to technological developments such as the internet and the iPod, Apple's distinctive MP3 player, a consumer of popular music may now listen to music at any time or place s/he wishes and on a song-by-song basis. People consume music in lifts, supermarkets, and sports stadia, as well as through the media of film, television, radio and the internet. Extensive back catalogues make it possible for fans to indulge their collecting desires and completist ambitions. Music consumption has also long been associated with subcultural styles, such as goth or punk, and therefore with choices which they make about their everyday presentation of identity. Live music has enjoyed considerable popularity in the UK for many years, including live concerts, the whole rave scene and festivals. In the UK, large music festivals have enjoyed a considerable increase in popularity and attendance since the turn of the century. These events enable fans to hear short live sets of songs from leading bands in a crowded but usually good-humoured atmosphere, while combining these consumption experiences with other leisure activities. Fans talk to each other online about their favourite bands, use low cost air travel to follow bands across continents, download music legally and/or illegally, and basically engage in a range of musical consumption practices and experiences which were not available twenty years ago. Like other bands, NMA needs to find a way of solving the problems which this presents and to take advantage of opportunities which they present.

RESEARCH AIM

This has been a necessarily brief outline of the context in which the case band has been operating for almost thirty years. In the midst of these changes, New Model Army has had to find a way to position itself in order to survive musically and commercially, and I will argue that this has resulted in several interesting attempts to manage the band's identity and the band-fan relationship – see Chapters 5, 6 and 7. The aim of this study is to explore how the issues of meaning and durability are connected with reference to the case band, New Model Army, who will be properly introduced in the next section.

CASE STUDY: NEW MODEL ARMY

In this third and final main section of this Chapter, I introduce the reader to New Model Army and provide an outline discussion of their provenance, values, lyrics, artwork, musical influences and oeuvre, and media relations.

WHY NEW MODEL ARMY?

When I was first introduced to NMA (see Chapter 4 – Research Design), I only vaguely recalled their name. Like many people I've spoken to about them since, they were seen as 'an eighties band', and not around anymore, like a candidate for one of those nostalgic 'Whatever Happened to X?' television programmes. And yet, here they were, many years later, still recording, touring and surviving as a creative force. This was mysterious to me. They did not have a recording contract with a major label. Their name never appeared in the mainstream or arts media, as far as I was aware. Their 'brand recognition' was extremely faint. As I sat around the table with the band and crew eating a delicious home-cooked stew at Rock City, as their invited guest (see Chapter 4), it did not look as if they had a huge marketing budget. I did not see much evidence, nor hear any talk, of a marketing or branding strategy. MMM discourse about segmentation,

targeting, positioning and the marketing mix did not see to me to square with this experience at all. By the laws of mainstream marketing logic, this band should be dead. How could they have survived for so long and be preparing to go out and play to nearly 2,000 people? And yet, here they were, still pursuing their creative musical project with vigour, passion and a lot of laughs.

It seemed to me that NMA would be an excellent case study to test the utility of arts marketing theory, precisely because the band seemed to be succeeding in the field on their own artistic terms without the marketing paraphernalia of major label deals, arena rock, hit singles on rotation and mass media airtime and without any talk of 'marketing' or 'branding'. They seemed to matter to their fans, to <u>mean</u> something to their fans. There seemed to be a connection between what they meant and their durability, and this connection appeared to be connected with the band-fan relationship. If arts marketing theory was to be able to account for the marketing and consumption of music, it would need to be able to account for NMA's survival. In this sense, the choice of NMA was a challenge to conventional theory - and to myself of course. What was the relevance of marketing and branding discourse to an underground band? Marketing has this idea that everybody needs it – from sub-Saharan dwellers to contemporary art museums. But perhaps the arts need 'marketing' like a fish needs a bicycle[11]? NMA was clearly enjoying a kind of fame-in-obscurity. Was marketing up to the task of accounting for the survival of an underground band? How much could it say that was of any help in this regard? What did the band and fans think of marketing and branding practices? What strategies did the band deploy to remedy its marketing deficiencies? How did they sustain their project? After all, they had to deal with market transactions and relationships when it came to ticket and merchandise sales to fans, arranging gigs, and sourcing inputs to the project. It seemed a good idea to take a band such as NMA and ask some of these questions.

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[11] See http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/414150.html for the origin of Irina Dunn's famous phrase about gender relations, here adapted to arts marketing.

AN INDEPENDENT BAND?

NMA is an English rock band which played its first gig at Scamp's Disco in Bradford in 1980, one year after Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. At the time of writing, nearly 30 years on, the band continues to write new songs, record, and tour widely – it toured the USA in March/April 2008. NMA is an enduring 'art firm' (see Chapter 3). Its longevity may, surely, be taken as a sign of a durable and robust business model, an ability to survive in the tough marketplace that is the musical industry. The band is deserving of all the more research interest in this regard because for much of its working life it has not had the benefit of major record label support, nor a positive popular musical press. It therefore offers a striking contrast to bands which survive on the oxygen of extensive media coverage, huge production and touring budgets, and radio play-list rotation. NMA operates its own recording studio in Bradford and its own record label, *Attack Attack*. It is independent in the important economic sense of owning its means of production. It is also independent in its voice and aesthetic: through its lyrics, music, art, artefacts, and interview commentary it has consistently offered an independent way of looking at the world, a critical and reflective voice. This voice is often in opposition to, or even rejecting, those in positions of economic, political or legal power and what they stand for, both within the music industry as well as in wider society. The band also uses its voice to constantly reposition itself in the changing environment. Part of its strategy is to fight genre categorisation. Uncategorisability is a common finding by fans about their favourite bands, but can also be regarded as a marketing strategy employed by bands to pre-empt a narrowing of their significance.

BEGINNINGS

The NMA frontman and sole remaining founding member is Justin Sullivan, who has led the band for nearly thirty years. To NMA fans, Justin is of course a very important figure. However, their respect brings with it certain expectations of how the frontman for an independent band should behave, and I examine in Chapter 7 what happens on a very rare occasion when, in the view of some fans, these are not entirely met. The inspiration to set up the band came from Justin's own experiences of consuming live music. In his accounts of the origins of the band, he mentions one particular incident which was significant in his development as a musician. In the band's song F#NY[12] written by Robert Heaton and Justin Sullivan in 1995, occur the lines:

> *You remember the winter of '79 and going down in the rain to the Royal Standard*
> *to watch the Ruts play?*
>
> F#NY (Heaton/Sullivan) 1995

This refers to the moment when Justin Sullivan's ambition to be in a band was ignited at the age of 23. Interestingly, this moment of conversion occurred during a live consumption experience. In an interview for this project, he explained:

> *There was one gig that changed my life. It was 1979. A club called The Royal*
> *Standard on Manningham Lane in Bradford - 200 people - group called The Ruts.*
> *Greatest group ever, I've ever seen. By far the best concert. It changed my life. I*

---

[12] F Sharp New York

came out of that concert going - that's what I want to do with my life. Their singer died of heroin.

The Ruts (1978-1983) were a 'hard punk outfit … noted for their love of reggae and solid musicianship' (Buckley et al., 1999:846). The comment that 'their singer [Malcolm Owen] died of heroin' (in 1980) sounds a cautionary note amidst the inspirational experience. Drug abuse is an occupational hazard in the rock and pop business. While a drug-related death may help to ensure posthumous fame, Sullivan's awareness of the drug risk may have contributed to the band's strong anti-drugs stance in its early days. In this respect (if not musically) the band might be bracketed with straight-edge punk acts from the same period, such as Minor Threat (Buckley et al., 1999:647).

WHAT'S IN THE NAME?

Back in 1980, a band with a left wing orientation needed to distance itself from the dominant Tory ethos, of course, but also to stake out a position that distinguished it from groups such as skinheads and neo-fascist groups. One way in which to do this was to draw upon a tradition of left wing dissent that had existed in England for hundreds of years, and could claim a legitimate English political heritage as well as a stance of powerful counter-establishment critique. As Sullivan has pointed out, this was the nearest England had ever come to a revolution. The band's choice of name fell upon the 'New Model Army' which was the name of the anti-monarchist army in the English Civil War (Downing and Millman:1991:93; Purkiss, 2007:416). The historical New Model Army was led by Lord Fairfax, and was on the parliamentarian, anti-monarchist or republican side. Its military significance was that it was the first professional army in English history.

NMA's historical connections run deeper than the name. There are considerable similarities between NMA and the C17th Ranters (Davis, 2002), Diggers (Berens, 2007), and Levellers (Brailsford, 1976; Sharp, ed., 1998) with their ideologies of protest and

resistance in times of division and strife (Macaulay and O'Reilly, 2008). In fact, in the early 1980s, Justin Sullivan referred to himself as 'Slade the Leveller'[13]. For quite a large part of their repertoire, NMA come from the same place politically as anarcho-punk group Chumbawamba[14], and The Levellers[15]. It is worth mentioning also NMA's 'cover version' of the English Romantic poet Shelley's poem 'Song to the Men of England' which is also in this vein:

> *Men of England, wherefore plough/For the Lords who laid you low?/*
> *Wherefore weave with toil and care/The rich robes your tyrants wear?*
>   *Song to the Men of England* (Shelley/Sullivan/Heaton, 1818/1995).

Another more recent song, entitled *Rumour and Rhapsody* (1650), points back to an event which took place during the English Civil War. The narrative point of view is that of a foot-soldier in the New Model Army, waiting at Putney while the debate raged between the New Model Army and the Levellers on a new political constitution (Robertson, 2007). According to an interview with Sullivan, this was 'a commissioned song about the period of anarchy immediately after the English Revolution of the 17th century and told from the point of view of a disillusioned soldier'[16]. The song forms part of a musical opera entitled Freeborn John[17], about the life of John Lilburne. The date given is the date of the third English Civil War (1650), and the beginning of the Interregnum.

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[13] I have been unable to find any mention of a 'Slade' in the history books, so presume this to be a personal invention by the lead singer.

[14] www.chumba.com

[15] www.levellers.co.uk

[16] http://atomicned.com/?p=62

[17] "Freeborn John" is a folk-rock opera involving Rev Hammer, Maddy Prior, The Levellers, Justin Sullivan and others – see http://www.revhammer.com/Freeborn%20John.html

In a recent interview, Sullivan asserted that the choice of name was not specifically politically motivated. However, from a branding point of view, the choice of name is a highly significant marketing choice. Firstly, an 'army' suggests militancy, and NMA have certainly been militant over the years, with an anti-government stance clearly reflected in the lyrics, from the 1980s when they stood against the UK government on issues such as the Falklands war:

> *Dead men in the South Atlantic/It's meant to warm our hearts/*
>
> *They think that they died for you and me/Oh God, what a farce, what a farce*
>
> > *Spirit of the Falklands* (Sullivan/Morrow, 1982)

and the 1984 miners' strike:

> *It's cold in the early mornings, standing with your mates*
>
> *Staring at the thick blue line armed and ready at the gates/*
>
> *This ain't some tin-pot story arriving from a distant shore/*
>
> *But our own sweet, green and pleasant land in 1984.*
>
> > *1984* (Sullivan) 1984

and the Newbury by-pass, a mid-1990s road-building and ecology issue:

> *These are the days that we'll recall/when the masks are off the faces/*
>
> *and there's something to fight for/All the lines drawn down in the Soul/*
>
> *You can let your anger burn crazy*
>
> > *Snelsmore Wood* (Sullivan, 1996)

and, more recently, the Iraq war, against the US government this time:

> *Pax Americana reigns and rains/from two miles in the sky …/*
>
> *We've found a thousand ways to lay waste the planet/*
>
> *and we're going to use them all …/*
>
> *A culture in just two dimensions/is all that we require/*
>
> *Because it burns so well, it burns so well/*

So blazing bright in the all-consuming fire

    All Consuming Fire (Sullivan/Nelson/Dean/White/Gill, 2007)

MUSICAL OEUVRE

According to the Rough Guide to Rock (Buckley et al., 1999:683), NMA "enjoyed a string of UK chart singles between 1985 and 1991". In nearly three decades of work, the band has produced a wide range of material, and 176 original songs. Appendix 1 contains a list of New Model Army album output in reverse chronological order. The band has also produced a range of EPs and singles. As can be seen from Appendix 1, NMA were signed to EMI and to Sony Music/Epic at different stages. Some of the extracts from the band web pages in the right hand column carry echoes of the tension between the band and the labels: 'put together by EMI after they had a root around in the back of the cupboard. Nothing new here', or 'A cashing in on the catalogue exercise by EMI when our time with them ended', or 'Just a shame Sony did so little with it'. The negative reaction to corporate labels comes across much more clearly in interview with Sullivan, however:

> *Q: Earlier this year you formed your own record company, Attack Attack Records. How did that come about?*
>
> *A: I was sick of the others and I've got enough money now to form my own ... I was just sick of the corporate bullshit, and I don't need their money anymore.*

LINE-UP

The original line-up was Justin Sullivan (guitar, lead vocals), Robert Heaton (drums) and Stuart Morrow (bass). Currently, the band has five members: Justin Sullivan (guitar, lead vocals), Michael Dean (Drums), Dean White (keyboard, guitar), Marshall Gill (lead guitar), Nelson (bass). The key figure is Justin Sullivan, as he writes most of the songs, and has been fronting the band since its inception. As lead singer and song-writer,

Sullivan's creative output, performing and leadership is a key part of the band's identity and what it is seen to stand for. Apart from the band itself, the NMA organisation includes the manager (Tommy Tee), the crew, tour management, sound and lighting engineers, merchandising people and Joolz Denby, the band's artist (and a key informant on this inquiry – see Chapter 4).

MUSIC

The relationship between a band's music and the meanings which the band and its fans make from their musical practices is a complex one. Since I am neither a musicologist, an ethnomusicologist, nor a musician, this thesis cannot include a technical musical analysis. Instead, it is what Middleton (1990) might call a culturalist analysis. I examine the meaning of the music not through the music itself as coded, performed and decoded aurally, but in the accounts which members give of it and using the cultural categories which they use to talk about it. For example, I have introduced NMA as a 'rock band', but this label is a convenient shorthand, and overly simplistic, both from the point of view of popular music theory as well as from that of the band and fans themselves. NMA's music can best be described as a mixture of punk, rock and folk, although these categories do not fully capture the range of music it produces. The band itself does its best to resist pigeonholing, whether in terms of musical genre or subcultural category, and the fans are also reluctant to offer unequivocal categorisations of the band's music. Here for example is Justin Sullivan talking about this very issue of categorisation:

> *NL : Where does New Model Army fit into the current music scene?*
> *JS : It doesn't. Never has. Probably never will... that isn't to say that we aren't*
> *interested in current music. We all listen to a wide variety of stuff (of course*
> *everyone in the band has completely different taste) and we're influenced by all*
> *sorts of things and take inspiration from all kinds of other artists, many of them*

'current'. There's always good music being made. And there's always lots of crap and copies and soulless rubbish, too. But I do think we're different. I just can't think of any other band that would have Vengeance and Here Comes The War in the same set as Marrakech and Lullaby, that tries for the range of musical and emotional experience that we do at the same time as remaining entirely themselves. We've been labelled us punks, post-punks, goths, metal, folk – the lot, but we've always been beyond those kind of style confines. I think people that try to define us miss the point completely.[18]

Source: band web-site

This last point, that trying to define them "miss[es] the point completely" is a clear and fair warning to any would be researcher who tries to bracket them with a label.

VISUAL AESTHETIC

Any study of the meanings in circulation between a band and its fans needs to take account of the visual dimension of their communications, of the band's visual aesthetic. Many rock bands have incorporated large elements of visual art into their overall offering, including, to name just a few examples, Pink Floyd, Genesis, the Beatles, and Peter Gabriel. Important popular music festivals like Woodstock and Glastonbury have been billed as festivals of music and arts.

NMA has had the same band artist throughout its existence, namely Joolz Denby. Joolz's artwork displays a range of resources and influences (see Chapter 6 on Family Heritage).

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[18] Source: http://www.newmodelarmy.org/talk_5.htm. Justin Sullivan interview with Ned Ludd.

Early NMA artwork was graphically simple, and occasionally the band carries this early visual grammar into its later work – see for example Figure 2 below – which shows 1980 iconography being re-used in 2006.

Figure 2: Classic NMA Graphics

| *Bittersweet* (1980) Single | *BD3* (2006) EP |
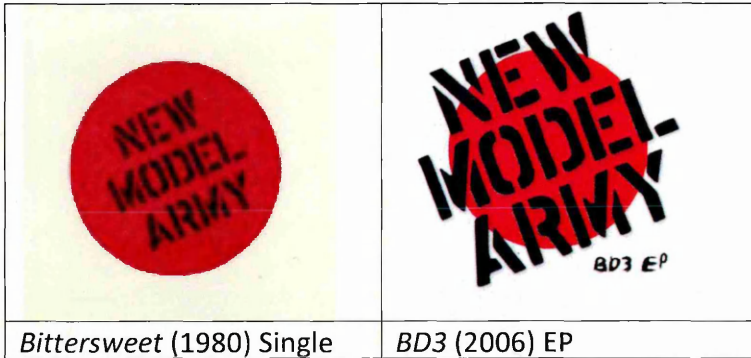
Source: New Model Army

Religiosity is an important dimension in rock visual discourse. Wendy Fonarow, in her recent anthropological monograph on English indie music ideology asserts that the spiritual heritage of indie music is essentially Puritan (2006:77). The word 'Puritan' indexes an alternative view of Christian theology, and this is taken further in Joolz's art, when she mixes elements from different religious traditions. Figure 3 shows some examples of some religious or mythic images carried on NMA cover artwork. NMA's religiosity – as we shall see in Chapter 6 - finds its expression, among other ways, in a suturing by the band of Celticity to the band's identity, through its lyrics, art, artefacts and accounts of Joolz's creative practice.

Figure 3: Religious Imagery in NMA Artwork

| Impurity SL | Better than Them EP | Purity AL |

Source: New Model Army

Figure 4 shows Celtic images used by the band on its *Thunder and Consolation album* (1989), and Celtic visual motifs have been very important for NMA's visual aesthetic.

Figure 4: Celtic Imagery in NMA's Artwork

| *Thunder/Consolation (Album)* | *Green and Grey (Single)* | *Vagabonds (Single)* |

Source: New Model Army

SONG LYRICS

Sullivan has written or co-written almost all of the 176[19] songs on the Lyrics pages of the band's web-site, amounting to around 40,000 words. The lyrics corpus will be analysed in detail in a separate paper. As far as this thesis is concerned, the lyrics are indexed throughout the thesis and the analytical chapters for illustration. Here, I give a brief account of the corpus. In interview, Justin describes his lyrics as 'very strung out between intense sort of grim reality, mixed with this very sort of pastoral romanticism':

> *I mean, I'm very strung out between these two things and the grim reality of the*
> *Bradford streets and the grim reality of the political structure in the late 20th*
> *century, beginning of the 21st century, together with a kind of pastoral*
> *romanticism which I do have. … I grew up in the countryside … on the whole I had a*
> *very happy childhood … A country boy.*

I have given a flavour of some of the more 'political' lyrics above. But the variety of themes and their different emotional resonances and subject positions is considerable. A wide range of moods or feelings are evoked in this large corpus. Owing to limitations of space, I mention just two songs in a little more detail here, *Ballad of Bodmin Pill* (Heaton/Sullivan, 1987) and *Green and Grey* (Heaton/Sullivan, 1987). The first song, *Ballad of Bodmin Pill* deserves mention for its chorus, which seems to say something important about NMA:

> *I want to dance with this fire 'cause it's all that we know/*
> *And as the spotlight turns toward us, we all try our best to show/*
> *We are lost we are freaks, we are crippled, we are weak/*
> We are the heirs, we are the true heirs, to all the world.
>
> Ballad of Bodmin Pill (Heaton/Sullivan, 1987)

---

[19] At the time of writing.

While acknowledging that any song interpretation is only one of many possible readings, I want to make the point that in the NMA musical oeuvre the 'fire' which the lyrics speak about appears to stand for the creative imagination, and the dance with the fire is the life of the artist. Yet, the final line, similar to the New Testament Sermon on the Mount[20], suggests that it is they who will inherit the world, because there is another reality in which their powerlessness is transformed in a turning upside down of the world, a revolution (Hill, 1991). In this way, the song draws on Christian ideas of the overthrow of the 'natural order', or naturalised hegemony, by means of which the mighty oppress the weak.

The second song is *Green and Grey* which has become a fan favourite. The song can be read as a rejection of commerce, a reminder of the need for group solidarity, commitment and honesty, as well as for independence. One hesitates to call it an anthem, because this may conjure up images of e.g. a Queen or Oasis concert. Its status within the band-fan community can better be estimated from the fact that it was played by Sullivan at the funeral of Robert Heaton, the band's drummer and founding member (1961-2004). The song is a kind of lament for those who have gone away – 'And tomorrow brings another train/Another young brave steals away' – those who have left the tribe and the green and grey valleys for the 'land of gold and poison which beckons to us all'. The final chorus reproaches an imagined absentee for failing to retain a connection with his pastoral roots, and for pursuing money over loyalty and emotional connection:

No, not for one second did you look behind you/As you were walking away/
Never once did you wish any of us well/Those who had chosen to stay/

---

[20] Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapters 5-7

And if that's what it takes to make it/In the place that you live today/

Then I guess you'll never read these letters that I send/

From the valleys of the green and the grey.

Green and Grey (Heaton/Sullivan, 1987)

THE FAMILY

The question of loyalty to the tribe raises the issue of the membership of the wider band-fan community. NMA were singing about – and 'doing' – 'Family' and 'Tribe' more than twenty years ago (*Family*, Heaton/Sullivan, 1987), a year before the publication in French of Michel Maffesoli's seminal book 'Le Temps des Tribus' ('The Time of the Tribes'), which, as we shall see in Chapter 3, has not been fully understood in contemporary consumer tribe theory. Community is widely acknowledged as a source of meaning and identity, and is therefore particularly relevant to this inquiry. NMA has developed its own construct for its band-fan community, which it calls 'The Family'. The band opposed the kind of Thatcherite thinking which holds that 'there is no such thing as society' and created its own social ties around its musical project. Joolz links this notion of Family with:

> *a new kind of consciousness derived from archaic tribal roots and the most basic*
> *human need for a sense of belonging, transplanted into the fragmenting twenty-*
> *first century to create stability and a sense of collective power*

Denby (2004) NMA web-site

There are of course a number of competing metaphors for collectivity or 'groupness' in circulation within consumer and popular music studies literature, for example, 'community', 'brand community', 'tribe', 'consumer tribe', 'brand tribe', "cult" and 'subculture'. In Chapter 5, I will examine how the band mobilises and manages the

particular construct of the 'Family' and how the fans respond to this discursive resource and make use of it in their social interaction. At stake for the band and fans is an authentic notion of personhood, of person as citizen, fan and Family member. As Sullivan sings in *Modern Times* (Sullivan/Nelson, 1992), 'It matters what you are'. This is quite a different stance from the kinds of contemporary popular music acts such as Slipknot or Eminem who represent alienation (Arnett, 1993: Halnon, 2005).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has introduced the inquiry, and provided a detailed orientation to the origins, context, and focus of the study. The reader has been introduced to the researcher's professional and institutional starting points, to the research context, and to the case band. In the next chapter, Chapter 2, I review the literature on cultural studies and popular music and identify themes and issues which are relevant to this inquiry. Primarily, however, the purpose of the next chapter is to begin to build a framework for the <u>culturalist</u> analysis of the band-fan relationship.

CHAPTER 2 –CULTURAL AND POPULAR MUSIC STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

This is the first of two literature review chapters which help the theoretical framing of the inquiry. The intention is to examine the band-fan relationship from a range of perspectives. Primacy of importance here is given to issues of meaning and culture, of which commercial meaning is only one aspect. At stake here is the quality of insight into the cultural economy of the band-fan relationship. A 'marketing PhD' would normally begin with a review of relevant positions within the marketing and consumer studies ('MCS') literature; however, this is not 'a marketing PhD' – at least not in the mainstream sense - but a culturalist inquiry into band-fan relationships and practices which happen to include what some scholars call 'marketing' and 'consumption'. Since the study is concerned to examine the inter-relationship between meanings and the durability of the band project, the purpose of this Chapter is to situate the study within a culturalist perspective. This way of seeing foregrounds the 'symbolic', cultural and meaning-related aspects of the field. The chapter is divided into two main sections: the first section contains a consideration of scholarly work within cultural studies ('CS') which helps to develop a conceptual framework for the inquiry; the second part draws upon the culturalist approach to popular music studies ('PMS') in order to ground the inquiry within a scholarly literature directly relevant to the arts sector under scrutiny. Seen from the point of view of mainstream marketing and consumer behaviour studies, the direct move to culture is still relatively unusual. However, it was important to find theoretical resources which helped to frame meaning-related aspects of both sides of the exchange relationship, producers as well as consumers, and within cultural studies it was possible to do this in the form of the 'circuit of culture' construct (Du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay, and Negus, 1997). Recent thinking within arts marketing, a field of work which is dealt with in Chapter 3, is that arts marketing scholars should engage with the

literatures proper to the particular art which they are studying. In other words, scholars of film marketing should engage with film semiotics, theatre marketing academics should understand drama theory, and those who study the marketing and consumption of fine art should be prepared to engage with visual aesthetics. The work of Schroeder (1999, 2005, 2006) is a good example of this more 'rounded' kind of arts marketing scholarship capable of generating new insights and of making a fresh contribution to knowledge across a range of disciplines, including arts marketing, cultural branding and visual consumption.

PURPOSE OF LITERATURE REVIEWS

The review of relevant theoretical perspectives took account of two quite well-known texts on the nature of a literature review. According to Hart (1998:13), a literature review is:

The selection of available documents (both published and unpublished) on the [research] topic, which contain information, ideas, data and evidence written from a particular standpoint to fulfil certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed.

According to Phillips and Pugh (1994), a literature review consists of:

key activities by which you would demonstrate that you had a professional command of the background theory [include] organising the material in an interesting and useful way, evaluating the contributions of others (and justifying

the criticisms, of course), identifying trends in research activity, [and] defining

areas of theoretical and empirical weakness.

According to Hart (1998:27), the purposes of doing a literature review are manifold, including: to separate what has been done from what needs to be done, to pinpoint important variables or constructs, to establish the subject context, to put the research in an historical context, to explain the significance of the research problem, to help the researcher to acquire a useful vocabulary, to relate theory to its applications, to identify the principal research methods used, and to enable new theoretical perspectives to emerge. Creswell (1998) comments that in case studies (the research strategy for this project), literature will be used less to set the stage for the study. He offers three locations for the literature review – in the introduction, in a separate chapter near the beginning (recommended for quantitative studies or ethnographic and critical theory studies), and in the final section of the study where the emerging issues are related back to the literature. I have chosen to place two literature review chapters near the beginning in order to bring into focus different interdisciplinary perspectives on the research topic. However, in line with other qualitative studies of this kind, when the data is being analysed, and when empirical findings and implications are being discussed, additional literature strands may be invoked or the already mentioned areas more deeply mined in order to synthesise or corroborate specific insights.

CULTURE

'Culture' is a signifier which a notoriously wide referential scope. Terry Eagleton, at the beginning of an entire book devoted to the 'idea of culture', remarks that 'culture is said to be one of the two or three most complex words in the English language (2000:1); it is 'not only what we live by. It is also, in great measure, what we live for' (op.cit.:131). Its entry in Bennett, Grossberg and Morris's *New Keywords: A revised vocabulary of culture*

and society[21] runs to 6 pages (2005:63-69). Bennett, the leading cultural studies scholar and author of the relevant entry, writes (p. 63) that 'There is now a good deal of hesitancy over the value of the word culture'. It is customary in defining culture to wring one's hands about the indefinability of culture, and yet to offer a number of examples or approaches to the term, which in turn merely serve to illustrate how difficult it is to define it. Here, I follow this established custom. Definitions of 'culture' taken from relatively recent literature include: a way of life (Bennett, 2005); symbolic and learned aspects of human society, including language and convention, by which humans are distinguished from other primates; a mobile signifier that enables distinct ways of talking about human activity that stress divergent uses and purposes. It is constituted by shared social meanings, that is, the various ways we make sense of the work, and constructed through processes of meaning production designated as signifying practices (Barker, 2002); special activities or cultural artefacts characteristic of particular groups (Spillman, 2002); cultural and artistic products (Abercrombie et al., 2000); symbols exchanged between people in public places (Geertz, 1973); frameworks for action and understanding that enable one to operate in a manner acceptable to other members (Arnould et al., 2002); the mental ordering of personal experiences into templates or schemas that are used to interpret sensory input and generate appropriate behaviours in any given situation (De Munck, 2000); the terrain on which hegemony is struggled for and established, and hence it is the site of 'cultural struggles' and of the social production of sense and consciousness; and, finally, culture can be seen as the social process of meaning-making (Spillman, 2002).

In his well-known book, The Interpretation of Cultures, Geertz (1973), says (p.5) that

> *The concept of culture I espouse, and whose utility the essays below attempt to*
> *demonstrate, is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is*

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[21] The C21st successor to Raymond Williams' famous *Keywords* (1976).

*an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to
be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in
search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. It is explication I am
after, construing social expressions on their surface enigmatical.*

Geertz rejects, for example, the notion that culture is a superordinate reality with a
force of its own, or psychological structures (which he terms the cognitivist fallacy), and
disagrees with the idea that culture be reduced to 'behaviour' alone.

However, rather than foreclosing on certain ideas of culture, it seems sensible, in the
context of an inquiry which strives to be as holistic as possible, to allow the construct
'culture' its polysemic fullness. The relationship between a rock band and its fans
involves all of the things mentioned above, namely social interaction, publicly shared
symbols, social processes of meaning-making, cultural and artistic products, a wide
range of signifying or symbolic practices, sense-making and interpretation about the
relationship itself, as well as frameworks for understanding it, and finally special
activities and cultural artefacts characteristic of a particular group.[22]

CULTURAL STUDIES

One might say that cultural studies is simply the discipline which studies this 'thing'
called 'culture'. Given the slipperiness of the construct 'culture', there are bound to be
difficulties in delineating the boundaries or highlighting the central focus of the study of
'culture'. Barker (2004:42) suggests that:

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[22] Of course, this inquiry may itself be read as a social process of meaning-making, an
effort to write an academic text which belongs within a particular epistemological genre
and attempts to fix temporarily a set of meanings in relation to their intended referent,
namely, a particular band-fan relationship.

The domain of cultural studies can be understood as an interdisciplinary or post-disciplinary field of inquiry that explores the production and inculcation of culture or maps of meaning. However, 'cultural studies' has no referent to which it can point; rather it is constituted by the language-game of cultural studies. That is, the theoretical terms developed and deployed by persons calling their work cultural studies constitutes that which is 'cultural studies' ... The central strand of cultural studies can be understood as an exploration of culture, as constituted by the meanings and representations generated by human signifying practices, and the context in which they occur, with a particular interest in the relations of power and the political consequences that are inherent in such cultural practices.

I like this definition, and argue that marketing, branding, consumer culture theory and interpretive consumer research can also be read as "language games".

THE CIRCUIT OF CULTURE

Given the polysemic character of 'culture' and the fact that the field of inquiry contains many of the different aspects of culture, it was important to find an overarching construct which would help to weld many of these different meanings together and make symbolic production and consumption central. Fortunately, the cultural studies literature offered just such a construct. Not only that, but the location of the construct within a broadly social constructionist framework seemed persuasive to someone whose first degree was in modern languages and literature. In addition, as mentioned in Chapter 1, I am interested in a holistic approach. As Barker (2004:86) suggests: holism is 'a methodological approach that insists on the non-separability of the parts of any domain of analysis from the whole in which it rests'. I would argue that it is also an

ontological approach – life is a whole. And as Kahn-Harris remarks (2007:11): 'Holism provides a perspective that recognizes the interconnection between different elements of social phenomena'. For example, if one is seeking to understand consumer culture, it seems sensible to study the production culture with which that culture is articulated, and vice versa. In this, I follow the culturalist line of argument which sees production and consumption as mutually constitutive. In their monograph case study of the Sony Walkman, Du Gay et al (1997) introduce a new framework for culture (see Figure 5 below) as the production and circulation of meaning. Taylor, Demont-Heinrich, Broadfoot, Dodge and Jian (2002) helpfully trace the development of this idea in earlier writing by Barker (2000: 53-54 365-366), Johnson (1986/7) and Hall (1981). Their paper deals with the application of the model to Napster and file-sharing, and they argue for ongoing adaptation and development of the circuit to different contexts and situations, which this thesis does.

Although this is a framework whose central elements date back to at least the early 1980s (Barker, 2000:28), it has scarcely featured within the marketing literature, the exceptions being a brief mention in a paper by Kates and Shaw-Garlock (1999) on advertising discourse, Curtin and Gaither's papers (2005, 2006) which seek to apply the model to international public relations, and the author's paper in the Journal of Marketing Management on 'Cultural Brands/Branding Cultures' (2005). According to Barker (op. cit., p.78), 'the advantage of the circuit of culture metaphor is that it allows us to analyse the specifics of any given level of a social formation, for example culture'. The Walkman study[23] was the case biography of a cultural artefact in terms of a theoretical framework based on the articulation of a number of distinct processes (1997, p. 3). The five processes of production, consumption, representation, regulation and identity form the circuit of culture. A full cultural analysis of a cultural artefact

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[23] The following presentation depends heavily on Du Gay et al. (1997) for its formulation, and the debt to the authos is gladly acknowledged.

requires attention to be paid to each of these processes. This went beyond earlier attempts of this kind, such as the cultural diamond (Alexander, 2003) by introducing representation, identity and regulation as key components of the framework. The authors point out (p. 10) that meaning is not sent from one stage e.g. production to consumption, as in a transmission model, it is 'more like the model of a dialogue'.

Figure 5: The Circuit of Culture
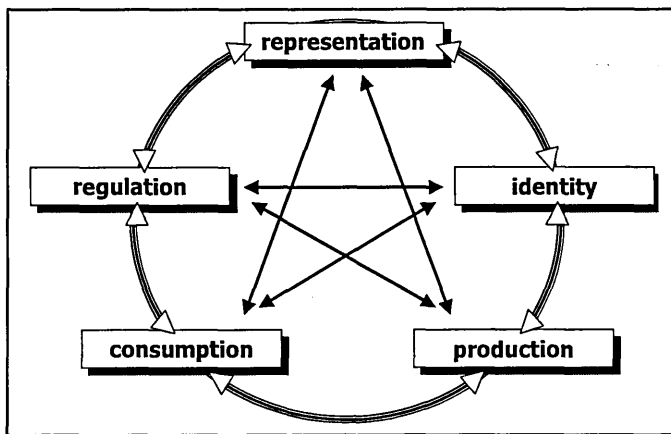
Source: Du Gay et al. (1997)

Note that four of the five elements have to do with processes – production, representation, consumption and regulation – whereas the fifth (identity) denotes a category of cultural meaning rather than a dynamic process. In the folllowing section, the authors' line of thinking about four of the five elements in the framework is discussed and its relevance to this inquiry explained. Regulation is the least effectively developed of these elements. At this stage, the point to be made about this element of the circuit is that regulation can be seen either as a process imposed by a third party such as a government on the producers and consumers of signs, or as a process which is a function of the power balance in the dyadic discourse, or a combination of both of these. Du Gay et al. (1997) see production and consumption not as separate spheres of existence (p. 103) but rather as mutually constitutive. During production, the encoding

of meanings into products takes place, e.g. through product design activities. Every site or organisation engaged in the <u>production of culture</u> has a <u>culture of production</u> which is 'an integral part of the company way of life that informs intra-organizational decisions and activities' (such as staff recruitment policies, departmental organizational arrangements and general management strategies). But it also informs the perceptions of outside observers (p.43). A rock band has its own production culture, its own sense of musicianship and 'bandhood'. It is also engaged in the production of culture when it designs and produces sounds, images, lyrics and performances.

<u>Consumption</u> is where meanings are made in actual social usage. The authors trace different approaches to consumption. Firstly, the Frankfurt School 's 'production of consumption' approach sees consumption as being determined by production; there is no agency on the demand side; mass consumption is the pursuit of cultural dupes. Baudrillard (1998) on the other hand argued that consumption has identity value as well as use or exchange value – p. 91. Consumption can be used as a marker of social and cultural difference. This goes back to Veblen's theory of the leisure class (1899). It is also an idea promoted by Bourdieu, who held that taste for cultural goods functions as a marker for social class (p. 97). Finally, there are those who see consumption in term of appropriation and resistance. Subcultural analysts like Hebdige (1967) saw consumers as using commodities to signify an identity for themselves which was in opposition to the perceived dominant culture. From this perspective, consumption is an active process, and consumers can put producers' signifiers to other uses as they are polysemic. Again, De Certeau argued that meaning is produced by consumers through the use to which they put objects in their everyday lives. Cultural studies gives us a theory of active consumers. I relate this to Elliott and Wattanasuwan's idea (1998) that consumers use brands as resources to construct identities (see Chapter 3). This view sees social subjects as active agents who play a crucial role in creating their own identities through consumption.

Fans of NMA have a stake in the band's durability, because part of their identity is wrapped up in its image, reputation and continuity. This however does not deal with the question of where the sources of power lie in cultural exchanges and who owns them. Arguably, for both band and fans, there is a lot of cultural, personal and business risk involved in the musical project. Rock fans or consumers of rock music, as we shall see, engage in practices of interpretation, sense-making and symbolic consumption in these ways. A danger of misuse in the circuit of culture model is that in the circuit the actual producers of goods risk always being seen as producers of symbols and consumer of goods are seen as always consumers of symbols. The roles of goods/service producer and signifier producer need to be separated, as do those of goods/service consumer and signifier consumer. In this sense, symbolic consumption (see Chapter 3), i.e. the signification involved in consumption practices, may be recast as symbolic production.

Representation is the practice of constructing meaning through the use of signs and language (op. cit., p. 24). Language has always been central to culture. It is the medium through which we make and share meanings, and 'has always been regarded as the key repository of cultural values and meanings'. Language operates as a representational system. Meaning is constantly being produced and exchanged in every personal and social interaction in which we take part. Since the cultural turn in human and social sciences, meaning is thought to be *produced* – constructed – rather than simply 'found' – p. 5. There are two main approaches to signifying practice, namely the semiological and the discursive (see Chapter 4 on semiotics). The semiological approach is more concerned with how language produces meaning, its 'poetics' and the discursive approach is more concerned with effects and consequences of representation, its 'politics'. Within cultural studies, Stuart Hall (ed., 1997) asserts that there are three 'approaches to explaining how representation of meaning through language works': reflective: in which language is thought to 'reflect true meaning as it already exists in

the world'; intentional: in which it is held that 'words mean what the author intends they should mean'; and, finally, constructionist/constructivist, in which it is held that things don't mean, nor do the authors or speakers fix meaning but 'we construct meaning, using representational systems – concepts and signs ... According to this approach, we must not confuse the <u>material</u> world, where things and people exist, and the <u>symbolic</u> practices and processes through which representation, meaning and language operate'. They also say, 'In the constructionist approach to representation, which we favour here, representation makes meanings by forging links between three different orders of things (p. 61): the world of things, people, events and experiences, the mental concepts we have about them, and the signs which communicate these concepts'. This inquiry takes the last of these three approaches to explaining how language works, the constructivist, or constructionist. From this perspective, a rock band can be seen, in its sounds, images, lyrics, performances and media interviews, as representing or constructing representations of the world around it – including politics, social issues, the music industry, everyday life, and of course images of the band itself, the fans and the band-fan relationship.

As far as *identity* is concerned, Du Gay et al. (1997) see marketers, designers, and advertising executives as persons of symbolic expertise used to articulate, i.e. link, production and consumption through signifiying practices such as constructing ideal identities or subject positions for consumers or prospects to occupy or negotiate. A band will, through its identity work, project its own identity for consumption by fans. A rock band's songs may offer fans the opportunity to experience certain emotional subject positions through singing along at a performance, for example. Within cultural studies, the notion of identity has been heavily problematised. As Hall (1997) points out, there has been a 'veritable discursive explosion in recent years around the concept of identity'. Psychologists of various denominations, sociologists, social psychologists, anthropologists, cultural studies specialists, feminists, Marxists and many other '-ists'

have all expressed a point of view on what identity means. For Stuart Hall, (op. cit., p.176), the cumulative effect of Marxism, psychoanalysis, feminism, theories of language and the work of Foucault is to deconstruct the essentialist notion of the unified agent who possesses a fixed identity as a referent for the pronoun 'I'. Instead, anti-essentialist conceptions of identity within cultural studies stress the decentred subject, the self as made up of multiple and changeable identities. Barker (2008:) says that according to the anti-essentialist way of thinking: "Cultural identity is not an essence but a continually shifting set of subject positions."

Whilst remaining for a little longer within the exposition of the 'circuit of culture' construct, I think it important to point out here that, in addition to this notion of identity, I wish to retain also an idea of subjectivity, both in the sense of the subjectedness of the individual's psyche in the context of social and ideological forces, as well as in the sense of self-consciousness as 'I', the thinking, feeling, agent ... giving expression to its emotions and fulfilment to its talents and energies (Mansfield, 2000:171-2). These constructions of identity may also imply constructions of agency. A rock band may see itself - and therefore cause some of its fans to see itself as well as themselves - as a free creative agent; it may also, equally, see itself as being subjected to hegemonic forces which seek to discipline and structure its sense of itself. Within cultural studies, 'Consumers are now seen as active creators of meaning bringing previously acquired cultural competence to bear on texts' Barker and Galasinski (2001:7). And yet, there are others who will emphasise the fact that consumers, fans, may also be read as being subjected to more powerful forces (Adorno, 2001).

There are a number of ways in which I think it appropriate to adapt the circuit of culture model. Firstly, it places a heavy emphasis on identity, partly because of the intense discussion of the politics of identity at the time it was introduced. This is consistent with cultural studies' preoccupation with this topic throughout the 1990s (Barker, 2004). Yet,

arguably, identity is simply one 'kind' or case of meaning. Since I am interested in looking at meaning within band-fan relationships, it seems sensible not to limit meaning to identity only. For example, I may construct my own or another's identity as a kind of figure (in a Gestalt sense), but to lend it colour, 'richer' meaning, I need to give it ground, context, or background. Again, there is a risk that 'identity' may be seen as something synchronic, static, unchanging. I choose to see it, however, as something constructed dynamically in social discourse. Identities have diachronic histories, stories. Given the need for identity to be situated in context and story, it seems sensible to broaden the scope of the framework to replace the notion of 'identity' with 'meaning'. Again, since the meaning of a live popular music concert may be experiential, and may not be (to judge by the author's own consumption experiences) always and only related back to the consumer's identity, a conceptual framework needs to leave space for this wider aspect of meaning. There can be many identities, many dimensions of identity (e.g. race, creed, gender, sexual orientation, political beliefs, colour), many dimensions of meaning, (e.g. hedonic, spiritual, social, and economic), many ways of telling meaning (story, script, narrative), in short, many texts of identity. Secondly, the term "representation" carries the metaphorical notion of making something present again. I propose to replace this term with 'signification', which does not carry this notion, but simply refers to a process of signifying. According to standard semiotic theory, depending on the relationship between the signifier and the referent, the thing about which the signifier is made, signification can be either symbolic, indexical or iconic. Thirdly, there is one important element missing from the circuit, that is the stage of mobilization. This is when the producer of a text makes a paradigmatic selection of discursive resources prior to their syntagmatic combination during the production phase. These discursive resources may be an image, a sound, a concept, or a code by which these elements are encoded in the text. Adding these further elements would, I submit, lend greater refinement to the model by making more salient the roles of signification and discursive resources in cultural circuits. This is illustrated in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: Adapted Circuit of Culture Framework
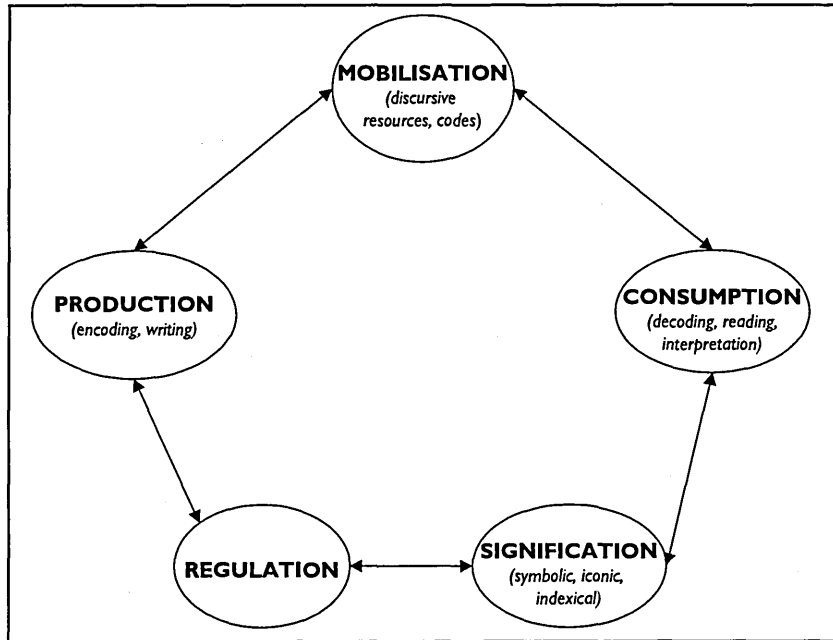
Source: Author

CULTURAL CIRCUIT AND CULTURAL ECONOMY

The circuit of culture metaphor constructs culture as something which moves in or on a circuit. This could invoke a range of associations in the mind of a reader. The category of 'things which move in/on a circuit' could include things as diverse as electrical current, motor-racing cars, or professional tennis players. Du Gay (ed., 1997) states that the metaphor suggests 'that, in fact, meanings are produced at several different sites and circulated through several different processes and practices (the cultural circuit)'. The notion of 'circuit' is helpful in the sense of creating a notion of movement along a pathway which involves some changes in direction, but less helpful in so far as it also connotes ideas of circularity. Circuits are usually closed; they end back at the beginning. They may be interrupted by a switch, or a tap, or a start/finish line, but they are 'circ-les'

of sorts, like closed systems. When talking about representational or language circuits, there is a considerable risk in the idea of closed symbolic systems, because of the idea of intertextuality, where 'all meanings depend on other meanings generated and/or deployed in alternative contexts' (Barker, 2004:101). In that sense, any sign economy or cultural economy is a system open to an infinite range of other cultural resonances. Finally, the cultural circuit must be capable of handling meaning-flow in multiple directions, and not just from the producers to the consumers. As intimated above, the way the Walkman case study is written tends to assume that the producer of culture is synonymous with the producer of the product. This tends to conceal the idea that consumers, rock fans, may also be producers. We are all producers in so far as our talk and behaviour is communicative. Therefore we need to detach the processes of production from any tied relationship to cultural producers and consumers respectively. A rock band plays a song and thereby produces cultural signifiers; a fan sings along and does something very similar. It is necessary to see the circuit of culture as reversible. To put it in marketing channel terms, the flow of signifiers may go 'upstream' (from the consumer of the offering to its producer) as well as 'downstream' (from producer to consumer).

A more important, and superordinate metaphor, however, is contained in the idea that signifiers are 'produced' and 'consumed'. This clearly applies an <u>economic</u> metaphor to culture, so that we can speak of the 'cultural economy' (note that Bourdieu's notion of cultural "capital" also assumes a cultural economy). This term, in Du Gay's usage, has a number of different meanings. Firstly, it is a term intended to signify that 'the economic is the crucial domain of existence in modern societies and it too is thoroughly saturated with culture' (op.cit.:4-5). '[E]conomic processes and practices' are 'cultural phenomena' and 'economics can be seen to be a cultural phenomenon because it works through language and representation'. He adds that the key point about 'cultural economy' as a term is 'the crucial importance it allots to language, representation and

meaning – to 'culture' – for understanding the conduct of economic life and the construction of economic identities'. There is a second sense in which Du Gay talks about 'cultural economy' and one which he says 'refers to the increasing importance of 'culture' to doing business in the contemporary world. He instances the growth in importance of cultural industries, the 'aestheticisation of seemingly banal products'. He also points to the 'increased influence of what are often termed the cultural intermediary occupations of advertising, design and marketing' who 'are concerned to create an identification between producers and consumers through their expertise in certain signifying practices'. Finally, the increase in the deliberate design of organisational culture is seen as evidence of this second sense of 'cultural economy'. I agree with these formulations, and find them highly relevant to this inquiry, but argue that there is a third sense of cultural economy which is being missed here. The circuit of culture offers another image, namely that of an economy of signs, a sign economy, with its own manufacturers (producers), users (consumers) and symbolic order (regulation). This metaphor may be understood in a macro sense, as the totality of meanings in a particular culture, but I propose to apply it also in a micro sense as a trope with which to signify the cultural aspects of a band-fan relationship. Of course, the cultural economy is closely tied to the materials and services economy, but for analytical purposes we may conceive of it as separate. From this line of thinking, it is possible to talk about a 'cultural micro-economy of the relationship between New Model Army and its fans'.

REPRESENTATION AND TEXT

In this section, a connection is made between a key element of the circuit of culture framework, namely 'representation', and another key construct within cultural and popular music studies, namely 'text'. The possibility of this connection was not seized and made explicit in the original framework. Representation is the practice of constructing meaning through the use of signs and language (Hall: 1997:24). Language

has always been central to culture. It is the medium through which we make and share meanings. Language operates as a representational system. The construct which enables us to analyse the representational moment of the circuit of culture is the notion of text. Threadgold comments (2005:345) that 'since the mC20 ['text'] has become a highly technical and fertile concept in academic cultural theory'. He adds that it has 'developed into a pan-disciplinary concept that encompassed any cultural object of investigation'. He asserts that the concepts of text and textuality 'have provided powerful arguments for an understanding of texts as forms of representation which actively construct and do not reflect reality'. A corollary of this line of thinking is that any reading involves a 'recontextualisation'. Barker (2004:199) suggests that a text is 'anything that generates meaning through signifying practices' and 'a metaphor that invokes the constitution of meaning through the organization of signs into representation', and 'meaning is a product of textual arrangements' which is 'produced in the interplay between text and reader, that is, the hermeneutic circle'. Titon (2003:80) cites Geertz as likening culture to 'an assemblage of texts' [1973:448]. These propositions apply not just to rock music fans interpreting popular music but also to the researcher's readings of the band-fan relationship (see Chapter 4).

The idea that everything can be read as 'text' is found in cultural studies, communications studies, folklore studies, literature studies, popular music studies, performance studies and other disciplines. It is a key heuristic trope across a wide range of disciplines. Apart from the original, literary, meaning of the word 'text', there is also a more technical meaning within linguistics, i.e. a text is a system of signifiers. It is a metaphor which enables us to talk about the meaning-related aspects of phenomena. Many scholars, from different constituencies, in line with the language turn in the humanities and social science, define the term widely. I quote from a number of authors here, because I agree with their formulations and find them highly relevant to this inquiry. For example, Barker (2000), a leading culturalist, says:

Since images, sounds, objects and practices are sign systems, which signify with the same mechanism as a language, we may refer to them as cultural texts.

Titon (2003:76), a folklorist, says:

> *In this enlarged sense, a text is any humanly constructed object It need not be words: it may be an artefact such as a painting or a building or a pot, or it may be an action or event such as a ritual, or it may even be a person or a group of people. Text in this view becomes a key metaphor for any humanly constructed sign system, and we inhabit a semiotic world of signifiers that are not limited to words but include the entire human universe ... we overlook the relations between individual people and the texts that they (we) generate, we will never understand texts – or people.*

Shuker, a popular music specialist, (2001:14) places the notion of text firmly into a social context:

> *The 'meaning' of any engagement between a text and its consumers cannot be assumed, or 'read off' from textual characteristics alone. The text's historical conditions of production and consumption are important as is the nature of its audience, and the various ways in which they mediate their encounter with the text.*

All texts are constructed and construed in a specific historical context; all texts are performed, just as all performance is (i.e. can be read as) text[24]. All band-fan interactions, then, can be read as texts, i.e. structured and performed sets of signifiers, from which meanings may be read off. The possible meanings of each text are understood to be limited by the shaping of the text by its author or originator, but open to variation depending on the pre-judgements of the reader (researcher). This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, which looks at the research design.

WRITING AND READING TEXTS

Extending the textual metaphor, we may speak of the symbol producer as a writer of text, and the symbol consumer or interpreter as a reader of text. In this section, I set out my perspective on the writing and reading of texts. In my opinion, the author is not 'dead' (*pace* Barthes, 1993). Authors have a key role in shaping texts. When producing their texts, authors have intentions and motivations, conscious or unconscious, and a study of this aspect of textual production can be helpful to those interested in understanding where their texts are 'coming from'. Of course, 'intentions' are also constructed and occasioned. Writing a text involves the selection of (discursive) resources and their arrangement according to certain conventions or codes, depending on the kind of text and the social context. Each text has certain referents, those things which it wishes to speak about or refer to. The meanings of a text <u>may</u> be constrained by the features of the text. The meanings of a given text are read off from it by its readers. Texts are polysemic, that, is the same text may be read in different ways by one or more readers. Readers are agentic, and reflexive, making their own meanings from

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[24] As we shall see later (Chapter 4), marketing and consumer researchers have also adopted the text trope. Apart from characterising products as texts for analysis, scholars of the interpretive or postmodern persuasion have characterised consumption itself as a text or indeed see the entire field of research as a text – see e.g. Hirschman and Holbrook (1992).

readings of texts. The utterance of a text is itself an act which may have a social meaning separate from the intended meaning ('content') of the text.

Popular music texts are produced, circulated and consumed within the circuit of the band-fan cultural economy. The connection between texts and popular music is dealt with below, but first of all it is necessary to be introduced to the field of popular music studies. In the next section, I consider the social functions of music and its relationship with identity.

POPULAR MUSIC STUDIES

Music has a wide range of social functions (Gregory, 1997; Crozier, 1997), including healing, dancing, the creation of a group or ethnic identity (see Chapter 3 on consumer tribes), the relieving of work through the use of rhythmic singing, the oral traditions of storytelling, religious worship (Rouget, 1985), salesmanship, the entertainment of oneself and others, and the communication and arousing of emotions. According to Gregory (1997), the roles of music in society are manifold. The following table lists the key roles which he mentions:

Table 1: The Social Roles of Music

Role	Function
Lullaby	Calm infants
Game	Play, mirror adult life, prepare for adult life
Work	Maintain rhythm, relieve monotony
Dancing	Part of ceremonies, for its own enjoyment
Storytelling	Maintenance of oral tradition. Praise-singing,
Battle	Inspiration, intimidation, signal to troops
Communication	Bush telegraph
Personal symbol	Individual has own special song in some cultures

	(signature tune)
Ethnic or group identity	Creation of a sense of belonging Distinctive geographical 'sound'
Salesmanship	Attract custom
Healing	Heal individual and society by communicating with ancestors, or at the physical by stabilising/soothing person/patient
Trance	A special state of consciousness in a religious context. Ceremonial function. C.f. Rouget mentioned in Gregory. Linked to possession (involuntary, passive, being taken over))and shamanism (voluntary journey with spirit to upper or lower world) . Music can be one trigger of trance. 'The shaman is in every case the musical performer for his own entry into trance'. 'It is the cultural significance of the music rather than its intrinsic properties which are important for inducing trance.' 135
Personal enjoyment	Self-entertainment and other entertainment

Source: Assembled/adapted from Gregory (1997)

The performance of music is essentially a social experience (Crozier, 1997; Frith, 1998; Hargreaves and North, 1997). From a social-psychological viewpoint, Hargreaves and North (op. cit.) argue that, for the individual consumer, the social functions of music create a context in which three issues are key: the management of self-identity, of interpersonal relationships and of mood. They find that musical preference acts as a mark of identity during adolescence in particular.

> For the purposes of this inquiry, the term 'popular music' is intended to cover musical genres such as chart pop, rock, rap, hip hop, soul, R & B, dance, metal, punk, reggae, indie, garage, blues, and so on. In other words, the focus is on the kind of music that people currently listen to in the home, car, bus, train or plane, or while out jogging; the music that's played at festivals like Glastonbury or

Lollapalooza; the music that we see and/or hear on rotation on MTV or radio, and the music played at live concert or club venues. Of course, much classical music is popular in similar ways! – a fact which Shuker points to as complicating the process of finding a definition (1998).

But what 'is' popular music? Shuker (1998) says the term 'defies precise, straightforward definition', and characterises it as commercially made, mass distributed music which is popular with many people, and as a product with political or ideological meaning. He says (2001:3) states that that popular music as an academic discipline:

Embraces the economic base and associated social relations within which the music is produced and consumed, textual analysis, auteur study and the nature of the audience.

And comments:

... all popular music consists of a hybrid of musical traditions, styles and influences, and is also an economic product which is invested with ideological significance by many of its consumers.

Key themes amongst popular music scholars include: musical practices and identities (Hargreaves and North, 1997), subcultures (Hebdige, 1979; Gelder and Thornton, 1997), individual and social identity (Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1995; Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998; Bennett, 2001) the link between music and youth (Bennett, 2000) or society generally (Longhurst, 1995), fandom (Harris and Alexander, 1998), cultural

intermediation by the record industry (Negus, 1999) and the analysis and characterisation of different popular musical genres.

A leading popular music scholar, Middleton (1990), identifies three different approaches to the study of popular music, The <u>first</u> of these is the structuralist approach, which examines how meaning is generated in musical texts, how the structure of the text produces meanings, how the audience member is constructed and positioned, and also covers musicological and semiotic perspectives on the subject. The <u>second</u> approach, the culturalist one, is about constructing consumption of popular music as an active rather than a passive process, oppositional politics in popular music, tensions and contradictions in popular music, music and youth subcultures, the individual as determiner of cultural meaning, creative consumption, and consumer autonomy. And the <u>final</u> approach, the politico-economical one, engages with issues such as the corporate power of the capitalistic music industry and its role in determining the tastes of a passive audience. While for the purposes of this study I favour a culturalist approach, I see this as including both producers and consumers, and see both parties as engaged in the co-constructing of the meanings of their socio-musico-cultural interaction. In a band-fan relationship, of course all three elements are present. Broadly speaking, the political-economic approach is about the power of the supply-side, and the culturalist approach is about power on the consumer side. A band is offering a cultural product for sale, and in that very act lies a tension between commerciality and art, business and music. Note: if a band is operating independently, i.e., like New Model Army, producing and distributing its own music outside the mainstream musical industry, then it is not supported by the power of a record label and its connections with the media and venue promoters, nor by its financial strength; this arguably re-balances the power more in the favour of the fans.

POPULAR MUSIC, CULTURE AND TEXTS

One of the leading authorities on popular music and culture is Roy Shuker, whose book on popular music culture is now in its third edition (2008). He locates the study of popular music culture firmly within cultural studies, and sees popular music culture as made up of three dimensions (a) the 'social being of those who consume popular cultures'; (b) the 'texts that are consumed within the lived culture', and (c) 'the economic institutions and technological processes which create the texts'. Note the emphasis on the consumer in the first two dimensions. However, I wish to retain a focus on the producer of texts also. After all, if the circuit of culture includes the possibility of production cultures, then popular music culture should include this dimension. See also Negus' powerful empirical analysis of the relationship between corporate culture and musical genre (1999). Shuker's book covers a wide range of cultural issues, including, for example, music and technology, music as a cultural industry, auteurs and stars, musical texts, genre, subcultures, the music press, moral panic, social change and audiences. Of particular interest for the purposes of this literature review, however, with its focus on the more micro-economic relationships between band and fans, is the question of texts. Shuker states (2008:93) that:

Popular music texts are quite diverse, and include recordings, record sleeve covers, and music videos. The most prominent are sound recordings, in various formats, and their packaging (record covers, box sets, etc.). In addition, there are several other important forms of popular music texts: music magazines, posters, T-shirts, tour brochures, and fan club merchandise. Musical performances, especially converts, and DJ discourse, have also been analysed as forms of musical text.

Very surprisingly for such a recent book, although he acknowledges (p. 22) that 'there are significant cultural issues associated with popular music on the Net', he has

relatively little to say about cyberculture (e.g. Ayers, ed. 2006) , and does not mention web-based discourse in his list of texts. In the context of the band-fan sign-economy, the band web-site is a major cultural site where band and fans can generate and scrutinize texts with an enormously wide range of referents, including of course the identity/image, music, heritage, and values of the band and the prevailing socio-cultural context.

In the interests of greater holism, it seems to me that any study of a text should take account of its production and consumption as well as its form or structure. Furthermore, the variety of popular music texts is considerable. One can regard band-fan relationships as being rich in textual generation and interpretation, as well as being of course located in a range of different discursive con-texts – e.g. political, social, economic, cultural, global, local. While the treatment of all communicative interaction between and amongst band members and fans as textual 'buys' the researcher a 'common factor' which has to do with their readability and signification potential, it also raises a challenge. A researcher interested in a holistic approach needs to find a way of dealing with all of the different forms of text when it comes to fieldwork. A live concert, though theoretically (on this reading) the same as a T-shirt in so far as it is a 'text', is clearly a quite different entity. A T-shirt is a material artefact, a live concert is a cultural ritual and a performance (Weinstein, 2000:205-212; Kruse, 2003:119-120; Fonarow, 2006:80-81). Different approaches will be needed in the collection and analysis of these different texts, and this is discussed at greater length in Chapter 4 – Research Design.

ROCK MUSIC

New Model Army's music is regarded as uncategorisable by the band and its fans. However, for the purposes of this literature review, it is safe enough to treat it as broadly speaking a rock band - although it also shows strong signs of punk and folk – and therefore to examine what rock music studies can add to our understanding of the

band-fan relationship. Rock music is one of an increasingly wide number of popular music genres in cultural circulation. Shuker sees 'rock' as 'the broad label for the huge range of styles that have evolved out of rock 'n' roll' (1998:263). He adds that 'rock is often considered to carry more weight than pop, with connotations of greater integrity, sincerity and authenticity'. Grossberg (1992:62) urges caution in the use of 'authenticity' to characterise rock music. In opposition to co-opted, commercialised rock music. He sees 'three versions of this ideological distinction'. The first:

> *assumes that authentic rock depends on its ability to articulate private but common desires, feelings and experiences into a shared public language. The consumption of rock constructs or expresses a 'community'.*

The second 'locates authenticity in the construction of a rhythmic and sexual body'. And the third 'is built on the explicit recognition ... that the difference that rock constructs ... is always artificially constructed'. Fornäs, writing in the academic journal *Popular Music* (1995) states that:

> *Like all other genre concepts, rock is very hard to define. A genre is a set of rules for generating musical works.' Using such conventional sets of rules in producing or interpreting musical pieces can give rise to classificatory systems, but actual musics do not in themselves fall unambiguously into any simple classes. It all depends on which rules are used, and this choice is situationally bound. Genres are, however, more intersubjective than subjective phenomena. In each temporal and spatial context, there are certain genre definitions that are relevant and used by the most important groups of actors in the musical field: musicians, producers, marketers and audiences.*

He sees 'rock/pop as one single, continuous genre field rather than as distinct categories. This field contains a wide and open range of subgenres, moving within certain similar economical and social frames and circuits', and adds that as long as the definitional struggle is going on within the business and fans it seems reasonable to 'treat rock as an open and unfinished category'. This rather casual approach to the signifier-phenomenon relationship does not go down well with certain kinds of scholars in management schools who need the psychological security of 'clear definitions' as a starting point for any contribution. However, the fact remains that a leading popular music scholar is not frightened to say that certain genres are, to a degree, indefinable. The genre(s) of music which a band plays is/are an important part of how it is perceived and of the account which it gives of itself, and can therefore be seen as one component of a band's or fan's identity. To the extent that genre needs to be considered here, the focus in this study is more about how a rock band or its fans might make use of genre discourse to signify or make sense of their band-fan relationships. In other words, a construct such as 'rock' can be read as a mobile signifier which is contextually and strategically mobilised to achieve certain discursive outcomes or positionings. For example, an important aspect of the rock artiste's identity is the notion of rebel. Featherstone (2007: 25) notes that the idea of the artist 'as an expressive rebel and stylistic hero has been a strong theme' in popular music, and that various forms of music, including rock, were 'presented as direct forms of emotional expression … [and] more pleasurable, involved and authentic by predominantly young audiences'.

INDEPENDENCE IN ROCK MUSIC PRODUCTION

Within the rock music business (and indeed in other parts of the wider cultural industries), the term 'independent' is heavily loaded with connotations of a stance which is apart from, and, by implication, artistically uncompromised by, the commercial mainstream. Being seen as independent and 'authentic' matters to a band's perception

amongst fans. The term 'independent' has become shortened to 'indie' in media and popular parlance, and has come to denote or connote quite a wide range of meanings. The result is that bands (or indeed fans, for that matter) which might regard themselves as independent might not necessarily agree that they were 'indie'. The resonances of 'indie' may not always sit quite so easily with stricter notions of economic and artistic independence. However, since indie discourse is, as we shall see, highly relevant to the inquiry, it is important to begin to draw upon the relevant literature. In her monograph on the 'aesthetics and rituals of British indie music', a recent and important book, Fonarow (2006:25ff.) discusses what is at stake in the label 'indie'. Fonarow points to the difficulty that 'indie' community members have in defining what 'indie' means. She considers 'indie' to be a discourse, specifically:

the indie community's arguments over ... the nature of the ownership of musical recordings and their mode of distribution to a larger public, the nature of musical production practices and their relationship to musical forms and, and the relationship between audience members and the music.

Fonarow, an anthropologist, suggests that 'the common goal set forth for music listeners within indie cosmology is to have a communion with the sacred quintessence of music' (op. cit.:28). Interestingly, and of relevance to the case which is the focus of this inquiry, she argues that 'indie's core values promote and replicate the core doctrine of a particular brand of Protestant religiosity: Puritanism.' She argues that within indie are two parallel strands. The first is the Puritan strand with its emphasis on distrust of authority ... simplicity in musical form, production and style, a promotion of high moral standards regarding issues of sexuality and conduct ... and an underlying theme of austerity and abstinence (p. 28). The second of the twin strands identified by Fonarow is 'Romanticism, with its characteristic cultivation of emotion, passion, and the sprit ... its respect for local identities and the working class, and its distaste for middle-class society

while being itself middle-class'. As far as indie as a genre is concerned, showboating is not a favoured performance option: 'simplicity is a dominant motif permeating indie musical practices ... much of indie has a raw, underproduced quality... while the guitar is the most highly valued instrument in indie, there is a pride in the avoidance of the guitar solo, or any solo, for that matter' (pp. 41-42).

below contrasts the key values of indie and mainstream popular music which Fonarow identified in her book.

Table 2: Indie versus Mainstream Values

Indie	Mainstream
Independent labels	Major corporations
Gigs	Stadiums
Local	Global
Intimate	Distant
Personal	Impersonal
Simple production	Elaborate production
No guitar solos	Guitar solos
Modest	Self-indulgent
Live	Pre-fabricated
Self-made	Other-made
Authentic	Phony
Original	Generic
Specific	General
Lean	Fat
Transit vans	Tour buses
Unprofessional	Muso
Raw	Slick
Austere	Lavish
Intelligent	Insipid
Substantive	Empty
Art	Commerce

Source: Assembled from Fonarow, 2006

Apart from the benefits of independence – the band's increased authenticity and credibility in the eyes of fans, and a greater measure of artistic control than it enjoyed when signed to a major label, NMA also has to suffer the costs of autonomy. Its anti-establishment stance could have derailed its musical project, but has not done so. From a marketing point of view, there is surely something to learn from the example of a band which has been quite consistently anti-mainstream in its stance and yet is able to survive in the marketplace for so long. How do they do this? How does the band manage its 'marketing'? How can its independent or alternative positioning be reconciled with the demands of the marketplace? What work does the band have to do in its relationships with its fans to handle the possible tensions which may arise between creativity and authenticity on the one hand and business and commerce on the other? And what role do the fans play in the survival of the band? Is its durability to be found in their engagement, and if so to what degree?

FAN CULTURE

Hills remarks (2002:183) that 'the battle to place fandom (the preferred term for fan culture) on the cultural studies agenda has long been won'. Earlier on, however, like popular music studies (and marketing), fandom studies had to struggle to be taken seriously. Fandom was seen as the fevered subjectivity of teenagers, and not something worthy of study. There is space here for only a brief treatment of a subject that has developed an extensive body of literature, particularly within media and communications studies. Consequently, the discussion is limited to highlighting some of the key issues which come up in the studies of fans and fan communities and which are pertinent to this inquiry. Fans are characterised in the fan literature (Harris, and Alexander, 1998:4) as 'specialised audiences with very intensified relationships to content' who are fanatically devoted to a star. Music fandom literature tends to get caught up in studies of youth culture, or subculture. Shuker (2008:182) characterises

fandom practices in music as 'concert going, record collecting, putting together scrapbooks, filling bedroom walls with posters, and discussing stars with other fans'. Harris (1998) studied television fandom and concluded that the more fans became involved in fan practices, the more they felt they have influence or control, or power, over the object and practice of fandom. He asserts that fandom is 'best regarded as an active process … related to the formation of social identities', and sees it as offering fans 'membership of a community not defined in terms of traditional status'. 'True' fans are often seen as 'completists', obsessives who collect everything which the object of their fandom produces and as many media and other texts about them.

Jenkins (2007:357) attempts to map the future of fandom. He points out that contemporary media 'commentators on the new [digital] economy are using the terms 'fan', 'fandom' or 'fan culture'. Yet he says that today 'the ideal consumer talks up the program and spreads word about the brand'. In other words, fandom is a useful resource for providers of goods and other offerings. Fans may be regarded as resources for the construction of band identity (c.f. Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998). Fans can be put to work for the brand, be it a football team, or a rock band. Fans are central to the way that the cultural industries operate (op.cit.:362). According to Jenkins, 'the old categories of cooptation and resistance seem quaint compared to the complex and uncharted terrain that we are now exploring'. Interestingly, he refers to a leading scholar in consumer studies (Kozinets, 1999) to support his point that fan communities are a new kind of cultural power, which can rally support for a brand or turn against it.

I would like to end this short consideration of fandom by mentioning the work of Larry Grossberg (in Lewis (ed.), 1992:63), who asserted that 'It is in consumer culture … that we seek actively to construct our own identities' and that:

Fans' investment in certain practices and texts provides them with strategies which

enable them to gain a certain amount of control over their affective life, which

further enables them to invest in new forms of meaning, pleasure and identity in

order to cope with new forms of pain, pessimism, frustration, alienation, terror and

boredom ...

This is echoed by Lewis (1992:3) who sees fandom as 'potentially, a source of

empowerment in struggles against oppressive ideologies and the unsatisfactory

circumstances of everyday life'. The affective states which Grossberg mentions above

are, as will become clear in subsequent chapters, important aspects of the production

and consumption of New Model Army's offering and their fans' consumption of it.

MUSICAL CULTURE AND SUBCULTURE

An enduring construct within the fields of cultural studies and popular music studies is

the notion of 'subculture'[25]. As far as a more collective than individual dimension of

consumption is concerned, there has been an extensive literature on subcultures

(usually traced back to Hebdige, 1967), but for some time the value of subculture as an

analytical construct has been challenged, and the notion of social identity is coming

more to the fore (Bennett, 2001). The link between group identity and music is

commented on by Russell as follows:

Perhaps the most marked example of the role of music in group identification and

cohesion concerns young people. The distinctive musical tastes of the young serve

to separate them from their parents and older people generally ... and also act as a

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[25] This notion has also had considerable usage in consumer studies.

framework for a set of socially shared meanings and common states of awareness

through which individuals identity with others in their peer group.

There is a considerable amount of academic writing on popular music subcultures, for example punk, goth (Hodkinson, 2002), extreme metal (Kahn-Harris, 2007), and heavy metal (Walser, 1993). In their critical reassessment of the notion of subculture, Bennett and Kahn-Harris (2004) state that this concept has 'dominated the study of youth, style, music, and leisure in the related fields of sociology and cultural studies since the 1970s'. According to the authors (p.11) there is now a move towards 'post-subcultural' theory. According to Weinzierl and Muggleton (2003:4), 'the era seems long gone of working class youth subcultures 'heroically' resisting subordination through 'semiotic guerrilla warfare''. They argue that:

certain contemporary 'subcultural' movements can still express a political

orientation, the potential for style itself to resist appears largely lost, with any

'intrinsically' subversive quality to subcultures exposed as an illusion.

They name Pierre Bourdieu, Judith Butler and Michael Maffesoli as key thinkers whose work can be drawn on to shape post-subcultural studies. Maffesoli is of particular interest to this inquiry, because, as is demonstrated in Chapter 3, writers in marketing and consumer studies draw on his work on neo-tribes. Maffesoli's importance to the post-subcultural studies project is his emphasis on the fluidity and mobility of subcultures (Weinzierl and Muggleton, 2003:11), although - importantly in the context of a study of a 'political band' like NMA – they note his lack of a political dimension. In any case, in a move which appears to have escaped the notice of marketing and consumer studies scholars, popular musical sociological and cultural theorists have been developing a new construct, namely 'scene', to talk about related issues. Kahn-Harris

suggests (2007:15) that the use of 'scene' frequently 'takes as its starting point a rejection of the competing concept of subculture – see also Kruse (2003:145). As it would not be appropriate to talk about a single band-fan relationship as a 'scene', or indeed a subculture, these constructs are not explored further here. Of course, a band or fans may wish to categorise themselves as members of a particular subculture - or perhaps more likely not. Consequently, 'subculture' is treated in the context of this inquiry as a resource which bands or fans may mobilise in discursive interaction in order to locate themselves strategically on the musical and/or cultural landscape.

THE CIRCUIT OF POPULAR MUSIC CULTURE

By combining the 'circuit of culture' and 'text' constructs and applying them to the field of popular music, we can build a simple framework for analysis of the band-fan relationship. This framework can be used to capture a holistic understanding of the range of texts which occur in the band-fan relationship. It maps the band-fan micro-sign-economy, and aids in the understanding of where meaning is produced and consumed in the interaction between a band and its fans. In the first instance, Figure 7 below presents a model of band-fan interaction. Moment no. 1 is intended to cover all of those discursive practices by means of which the band communicates with itself, its internal communications and production culture. These practices include writing songs, rehearsing, recording, and touring. Moment no. 2 contains those texts which the band produces primarily in order to communicate with the fans. These are the primary cultural texts by means of which production and consumption are articulated, and they include songs, lyrics, artwork, merchandise, web-site postings, media interviews, music videos, concert videos, sound recordings, live performance and even casual conversations. Moment no. 3 covers fan-to-fan discourse, or fan culture, and this includes the conversations which fans have amongst themselves online and offline,

including at pre-gig pub meets, fan get-togethers or gigs themselves. Here we are talking about cultures of consumption, and the discursive elaboration of what it means to be an NMA fan (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998).

Figure 7: Moments of Band-Fan Interaction
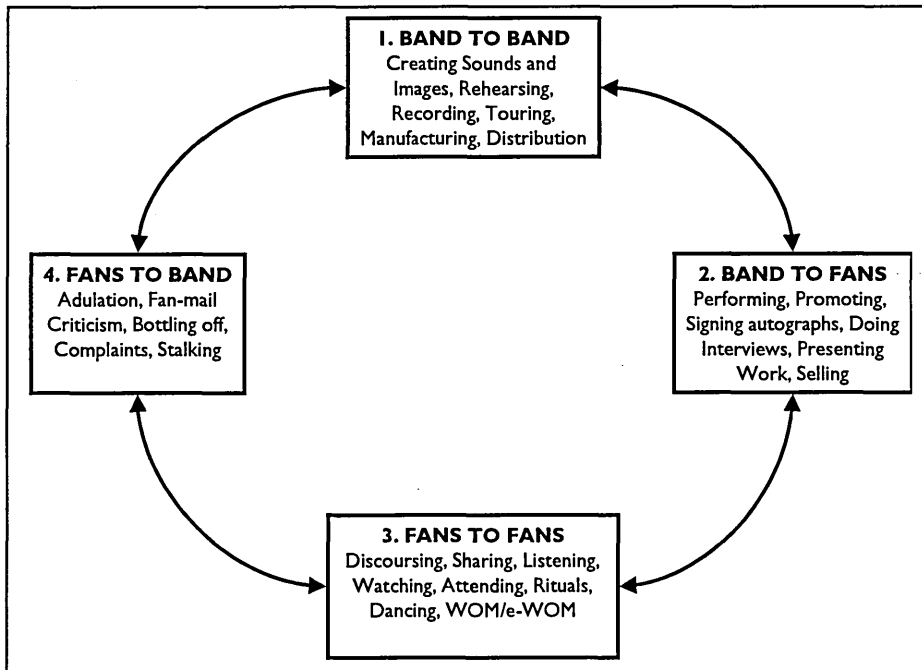
Source: Author

Moment no 4 includes those texts or utterances which the fans originate and direct to or at the band, whether these be postings on the web-site noticeboard, e-mails, fan letters, or behaviour at a gig. The band-fan interaction is dialogic, meaning that fan culture is shaped by the texts which the band puts into circulation, and by how these are 'discursively elaborated' (Elliot and Wattanasuwan, 1998) amongst the fan group, and the band's production can be seen as (potentially at least) responsive to the fans' culture and responses. As Figure 8 below illustrates, the first moment equates to the band's culture of production or production culture, the 4th moment to the fans'

consumption culture or culture of consumption, and moments 2 and 4 together make up what can be called the moments of articulation, when production and consumption come together in cultural spaces such as the band web-site (see Chapter 5), or cultural rituals, such as a live concert (see chapter 7, Family Gatherings). The moments of cultural articulation of production and consumption fit well with the idea of the band-fan exchange relationship. It is important to bear in mind that on occasion all of these 'moments' may occur in the same time and place (e.g. at a gig).

Figure 8: Cultures of Production, Consumption and Articulation
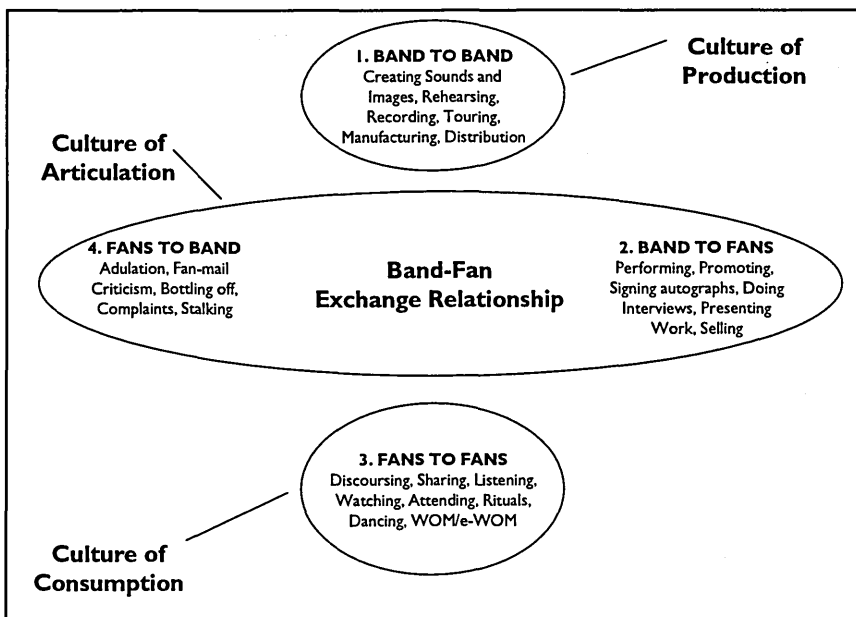
Source: Author

At the same time, it is necessary to adapt the circuit of culture model in line with the comments above – see Figure 9 below. This Figure explicitly constructs a relationship between texts, discursive resources, references and meanings, something which the *circuit of culture model does not do.* It seeks to highlight the idea that texts are composed or produced by the mobilisation of discursive resources and in accordance with certain conventions or codes. These texts have certain referents, and are interpreted by band and fans as having certain meanings. To give a simple example, an

NMA concert performance is a text put together by the band from the range of 176 songs available in the band's repertoire. The set list or sequence of songs builds in two conventional breaks near the end – 'encores' - which signal that the gig is gradually drawing to a close. The songs performed by the band address certain topics, people, feelings and ideas (the referents). The meanings which the songs and the overall performance have for the band and fans are a matter for their individual interpretation and discursive elaboration (e.g. in the pub, fast-food outlet, car or someone's house afterwards or on the web-site noticeboard).

Figure 9: Textual Production and Consumption
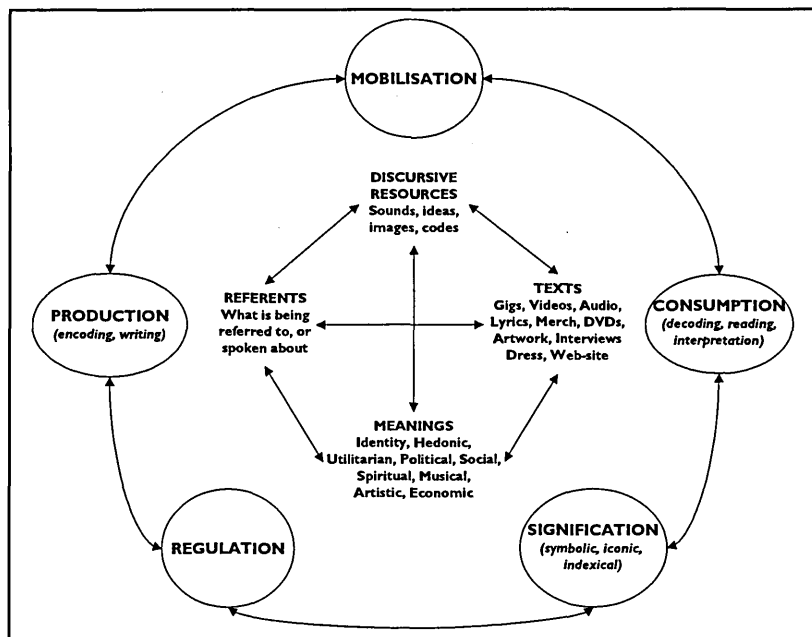
Source: Author

Putting together the above two figures produces the Circuit of Popular Music Culture A - see Figure 10. Note the key elements in this framework, as follows: (1) it retains the notion of a circuit of culture; (2) it replaces 'representation' with a more fine-grained look at the use of discursive resources to build texts which have signify referents and meanings. Irrespective of which kinds of texts are under discussion, this framework reminds the researcher that the text must be related to its producer and its consumer,

whether band-fan or fan-fan. It also guides the analyst to examine which discursive resources are being mobilised by whom to talk about what and what meanings might be taken from the discourse/text by its readers. By making explicit these aspects of discursive band-fan interaction the framework promotes reflexivity about language and discourse, which is one of the guiding values of this thesis. Another way of looking at this framework is to consider it as a map of the discursive economy of the band-fan relationship. I argue that this framework already represents an original contribution to theory in this area. Of course the proof of the pudding is in the eating. It must first of all be used as a conceptual guide to the investigation and discussion of text-data on NMA and its fans (see the research design Chapter (4) and empirical chapters (5-7) respectively).

Figure 10: The Circuit of Popular Music Culture - A
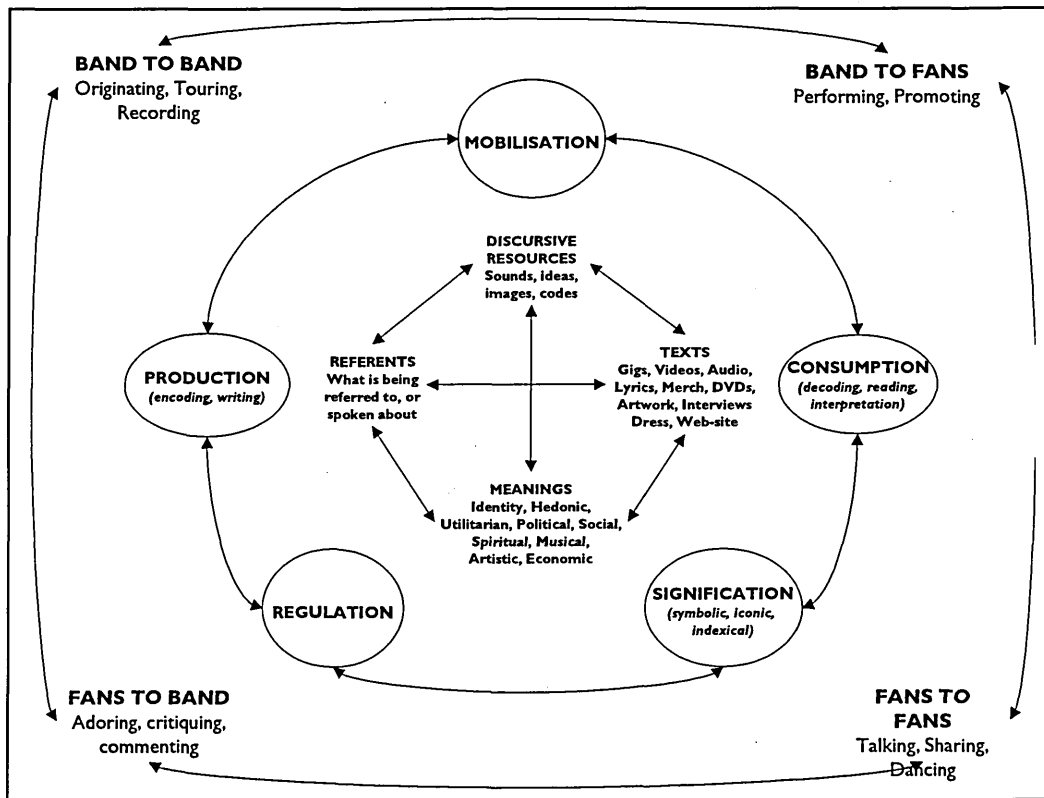
Source: Author

It is now time to begin to turn our attention to the second chapter of the literature review, namely the consideration of marketing and consumer studies issues.

WHAT'S MISSING?

While cultural studies and popular music studies have many useful insights to offer into band-fan relationships, they tend to shy clear of engaging directly with marketing's take on the economic exchange relationships that underpin the music industry. Of course, there are significant exceptions to this generalisation – in particular the work of Keith Negus, which is very illuminating about record label practices (1992, 1999). One of the potential contributions of this inquiry is to make a bridge between cultural studies and popular music studies on one side and marketing/consumer studies on the other – as well as putting both marketing and consumption aspects of the exchange relationship under the microscope. Therefore, the next Chapter deals with marketing and consumer studies approaches. However, any insights gained therefrom are selected in order to augment the work which has already been done in this chapter on developing the circuit of popular music culture above and to retain the focus on culture.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have been concerned to examine what theoretical resources cultural studies and popular music studies can make available in order to frame this inquiry into the meanings and durability of a band-fan relationship. Two key constructs have been selected, namely the 'circuit of culture' and 'text' in order to build an adapted theoretical framework. In the next chapter, Chapter 3, I will examine the literature in marketing and consumer studies with a focus on relevant strands, including arts marketing, branding, and consumer groups to see how these may lend added insight to the design of the research fieldwork.

CHAPTER 3 – MUSIC, MARKETING AND CONSUMPTION

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter was devoted to a discussion of cultural studies and popular music perspectives on how cultural meaning is produced and consumed, both in general as well as in the particular case of popular music. Using the key notions of the 'circuit of culture' and 'text', a framework entitled the 'Popular Music Circuit of Culture' was developed to guide the investigation. This chapter contains a review of relevant literature from the marketing and consumer studies literatures which complements the work already done in Chapter 2. I begin by situating this project briefly within the critical strand of marketing theory. I then go on to consider literature concerning arts marketing, and offer a way of thinking about art, the artist and the art firm which is consonant with the theoretical position already developed. I then consider the issue of arts consumption, before looking at the marketing and consumption of music in particular. In the later part of the chapter, the discussion turns to a critique of branding literature and a review of the notion of 'art brands'. The Chapter concludes with a review of consumer culture, and of the literature on brand communities and tribes.

RETHINKING MARKETING

Mainstream managerial marketing enables a number of insights to be gleaned about band-fan relationships, but privileges the managerial perspective, and does not account sufficiently well for symbolic dimensions for the purposes of this inquiry, which is about meaning and durability. For example, Mick, as early as 1986, critiques a number of the assumptions of modernism, namely the ideas that: inquiry is value free; the knower and known are independent of each other; time- and context-free generalisations (nomothetic statements) are possible; reality is single, tangible and fragmentable;

prediction (and control) is the goal of science; objectivity is to be treasured; "when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meagre and unsatisfactory kind". Mick came from the viewpoint that objective enquiry is not possible, as theory precedes facts and interpretation precedes perception, and reality is socially constructed. Since the 1940s and before, there has been a strand of thinking which is critical of marketing (Tadajewski and Brownlie, 2007). This movement received a major impetus in the early 1990s when a group of scholars gathered at Warwick University for a seminar entitled 'Rethinking Marketing' (Brownlie, Saren, Wensley and Whittington (ed.), 1999). This seminal event raised a large number of issues which it is not possible to cover here. I wish to focus in particular on a passage from Brownlie et al. (1999:8), because it broaches issues also being addressed within cultural studies, and because it is a well-put account of the more 'critical' way some academics are thinking in marketing. Furthermore, and more specifically, it indexes the kinds of issues which this research project needs to address. Brownlie et al. argue against the kind of non-critical marketing' which would 'side-step the issue of how objects are made meaningful in the process and practices of their consumption' and would 'be silent on the idea that consumption not only marks social difference, but represents an important means through which we relate to each other' and 'blind to the different ways in which material possessions, as signs and symbols, are used to create and sustain social bonds or distinctions' and 'blind to the notion that consumption can be seen as an active process involving signifying practices.' These meaning-related aspects of exchange relationships are important to this inquiry, which seeks to eschew such a 'non-critical' approach.

While the term 'Critical Marketing' clearly has some currency – see the very recent books with those words in the title (Saren, Maclaran, Goulding and Elliott, 2007; Tadajewski and Brownlie (ed.), 2008) - the phrase itself seems to contain a certain tension. Critical marketing is a broad church, containing interpretive consumer

researchers, as well as mainstream managerial marketers who apply conventional marketing wisdom to social marketing (Tadajewski and Brownlie, 2008:7). Arguably, 'critical marketing' is a contradiction in terms. Certainly, it seems at best difficult to be a 'marketer' and also a critic. Those contradictory identities are likely to prevent any radical interrogation of the institutional structures and forces which shape marketing's formulation. A critical marketing more worthy of the name would (a) attend to the political power issues which shape economic, social and cultural relations, (b) be reflexive about the Academy's and its own assumptions, practices, and power relations, and (c) critically examine, in particular, the truth claims in the discourse of commercial organisations. A better term for 'critical marketing' might actually be 'critical exchange studies', a broadly rooted interdisciplinary and critical set of perspectives on market exchanges, or on social exchanges which have been implicated in markets. Its remit would be to critically interrogate power structures underlying or immanent in the production, exchange and consumption of products, services, ideas, identities, ideologies and any other consumables. Identity and meaning would be key topics in this area, because cultural identity categories are highly important to the meaning-value of social/economic exchange. Bradshaw and Firat (2007) do, it should be said, call:

> *… for an undiluted critical theory approach to critically understand marketing, which would explore marketing's history, its role in a certain social order, its practices and theories based in ideologies that emanate from a specific class structure enabling the political and economic necessities of a market system that has commodification as one of its core phenomena.*

The point here is that there are alternatives opening up within marketing for more critical voices to be heard, and this inquiry seeks to position itself within this broader critical marketing 'tradition'.

ARTS MARKETING

Interest in the arts has increased in recent years among both academics and policy makers. In many countries, cultural policy has moved from viewing the arts in terms of the funding and administration of certain kinds of artistic and heritage culture to viewing them as a tool for social inclusion, community development and urban regeneration. At the same time, corporations have moved to take advantage of different kinds of corporate social opportunities offered by the arts. Furthermore, the boundaries between different art and heritage forms are becoming blurred; and the boundaries between what is and is not considered art are being pushed and interrogated both by artists themselves and commentators on the arts. Amidst all of these developments, marketing has been both criticised and praised for its increasing importance in arts and cultural organizations. Government (DCMS) and academic discourse (Hirsch, 2000; Jeffcutt, 2000; Hesmondhalgh, 2007) has redefined the field of arts marketing and management using the relatively new appellation of 'creative and cultural industries'. There is a small number of textbooks in this area (Hill, Hill and O'Sullivan 200; Colbert, 2000; Kolb, 2000) with books on museum marketing by Maclean (1997), Kotler and Kotler (1998) and Rentschler and Hede (2007). The term 'culture' for the purposes of this discussion …

> *includes, but is not limited to, music (instrumental and vocal), dance, drama, folk*
> *art, creative writing, architecture and allied fields, painting, sculpture,*
> *photography, graphic and craft arts, industrial design, costume and fashion design,*
> *motion pictures, television, radio, tape and sound recording, the arts related to the*
> *presentation, performance, execution and exhibition of such major arts forms, and*
> *the study and application of the arts to the human environment.*
>
> 89th US Congress

Broadly speaking, these books contain a conventional approach to arts/heritage marketing, namely the application of MMM notions of marketing planning, strategy and tactics to the arts or heritage context. The discussion of cultural consumption is limited and scarcely takes account of interpretive consumer research tradition or consumer culture theory (Arnould and Thompson, 2005, 2007). Furthermore, as arts/heritage marketing is an applied subject, one criterion of whether the authors succeed or not must be the depth of understanding they show of the specific subsections within arts and heritage. However, the textbooks, on the whole, do not go in detail into the different art forms. Colbert defines arts marketing as:

> *The art of reaching those market segments likely to be interested in the product while adjusting to the product the commercial variables – price, place and promotion – to put the product in contact with a sufficient number of consumers and to reach the objectives consistent with the mission of the cultural enterprise.*

An arts product should be (under orthodox marketing principles) developed from market research. However, Butler (2000) points out that a cultural product is more likely to be made by an artist whose primary concern is not customer satisfaction, but his or her own artistic expression, articulation or self-actualisation.

Much arts marketing literature has to do with marketing management issues, and audience development. From a sociological point of view, however, arts marketing falls within the sociology of culture, and its offshoot the sociology of the arts (Alexander, 2003; Tanner (ed.) 2003; Wolff, 1993). A key thinker in this area is Bourdieu (e.g. 1993), whose work has to do, among other things, with the production, circulation and consumption of symbolic goods. According to Bourdieu, agents in the cultural field are endowed with a certain habitus, a 'feel for the game'. Each of them, producer and

consumer, has a strategy, conscious or unconscious, to accumulate cultural and symbolic capital as a source of power. Art and cultural consumption are used in this way to legitimate social differences. Bourdieu's work is influential, but its research approach and adherence to the notion of class have been increasingly criticised. Cultural sociology's definition (e.g. Spillman (ed.), 2002) of culture, on the other hand, sees culture as a set of social meaning-making processes. There are three key analytical focuses in this discipline: the idea that social actors use cultural repertoires to construct strategies of action; culture as a social product situated within producer networks; and the removal of cultural repertoires, texts and objects from their context for separate analysis. This approach to sociology offers arts marketing scholars a range of appropriate directions for enquiry. It also challenges the narrow focus of arts marketing on the promotion of cultural offerings. What makes arts marketing different is the special nature of the arts experience.

Arts marketing textbook theory has been associated for too long with the simple promotion of high culture, and driven mainly by mainstream managerial marketing. Butler comments (2000) that 'Traditional texts on arts marketing emphasise a marketing mix approach that is of limited value to experienced marketers.' It has been, until recently, marginalised in the academy, conceptually isolated and overly reliant on tired positivist ontology and limited inquiry methods. At the same time, growth areas in marketing threaten to pass it by – e.g. critical marketing, social marketing, branding, consumer culture theory, corporate social responsibility, the experience economy, - not to mention areas 'outside' marketing such as politics and ideology, cultural studies, cultural economy, popular culture, tourism studies, leisure studies, and media studies as well as theory development in the individual arts, including film, sculpture, music,

dance, theatre, fine art, and so on. But the landscape is changing in this sub-discipline, partly through the recent UK ESRC seminar series entitled 'Rethinking Arts Marketing'[26].

Venkatesh and Meamber (2006) offer a recent helpful categorisation of the arts marketing field into four main areas:

(1) managerial, where 'Marketing principles are applied to advance arts consumption (e.g. segmentation)';

(2) arts consumption, where arts consumption is seen as including 'experiential, symbolic, and hedonic components';

(3) the 'everyday-life orientation', where 'Arts/aesthetic consumption occurs in everyday life situations'; and, finally,

(4) the cultural product orientation whereby 'Cultural products (e.g. film plots, artworks, literary texts, advertising) provide insights into consumer culture (e.g. materialism, nostalgia, cultural myths)'.

The authors assert that 'The decision to create a cultural product is ultimately a decision based on the market', a proposition which overlooks the whole discourse of art for art's sake! However, I would agree with their assertion that, 'The process of cultural production in the cultural industries involves the ways in which cultural producers, cultural intermediaries, and consumers of culture interact and collaborate toward the end of producing symbolic meaning.' The approach in this thesis is broadly consonant with this formulation by two leading cultural marketing theorists, though I hesitate to give the marketing apparatus the primacy of importance which they accord to it.

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[26] The author was principal organiser of this series (2005-7); the other members of the bid team were Dr Ian Fillis (University of Stirling), Dr Peter Fraser (University of Hertfordshire), Debi Hayes (University of the Arts), Dr Finola Kerrigan (King's College, London), Dr Gretchen Larsen (University of Bradford), Dr Terry O'Sullivan (Open University), Prof Simon Roodhouse (University of the Arts), Alix Slater (University of the Arts) and Dr Dirk Vom Lehn (King's College, London).

ART, ARTIST, ART FIRM

The most telling criticism one could make of arts marketing is that it has no theory of art - telling because theorising about marketing a product without understanding it seems a poor show; but unfair because arts marketing as a sub-discipline arguably has enough to do without trying to figure out the meaning of art when this is the job of aestheticians. Nevertheless, it seems important to explain how art is conceived for the purposes of this thesis, so a definition is provided here which is consonant with the general theoretical approach. 'Art' is conceived herein as a construct which is contextually and strategically mobilised by individuals and social institutions to discuss a human signifying practice, whereby a historically situated artist, working from his/her lived inner and outer experiences, and from his/her creative imagination, selects and assembles material and symbolic resources in accordance with certain art-generic conventions, and arranges them in an expressive 'text' which refers to different dimensions of human experience. Art discourse is, like marketing, branding and cultural studies, a language 'game'. The meanings of a work of art are construed by its interpreters within the broad constraints of the cultural codes which apply contextually, of the signifiers encoded in the work of art, and of the socio-economico-political positions of the interpreter-stakeholders. An 'artist' is anyone, including a rock band, who produces 'art'. An 'art firm' is defined in the next paragraph.

Pierre Guillet de Monthoux's book 'The Art Firm' (2004) has aroused considerable interest since its publication, both within arts management as well as in the wider management field. Fundamentally, this is an attempt to mine aesthetics or the philosophy of art for insights into management. Throughout the book, the author uses a simple framework, which he calls the 'art firm', to illustrate the insights offered by

various philosophies into management issues. The diagram below (Figure 11) is one of

the variants on the same graphical theme which occur in the book:

Figure 11: The Art Firm
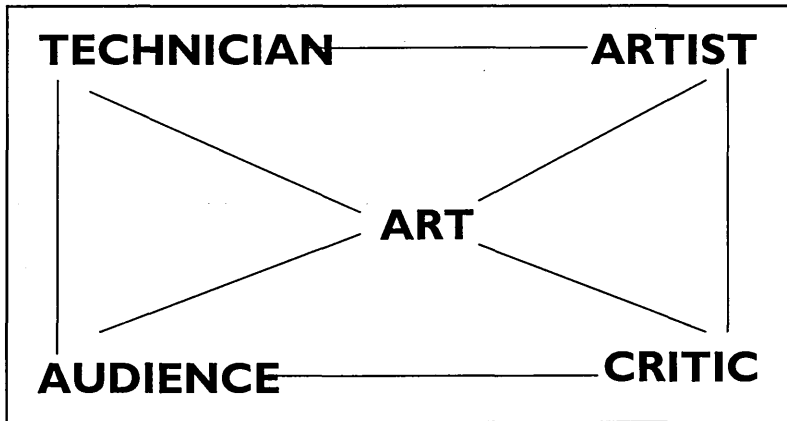
Source: Guillet de Monthoux (2004)

Guillet de Monthoux describes the art firm as "a theater of aesthetics, where four

players interact to make art work in the centre". The model is helpful in so far as it

shows that there are specialists on either side of the exchange relationship, namely

technicians on the supply side and critics on the demand side. In popular music, the art

is the music and related offerings; the artist is the band; the term 'technician' covers all

of the cultural intermediaries involved in producing recorded and live performances; the

audience is the fans; and the critic is the music press. The interesting thing about De

Monthoux's argument is that he sees art at the centre and the appears to see the artist

and consumer as part of the same 'firm'.

There are a number of surprising omissions in this model of the firm, however, if one is

to consider the matter more widely. For example, there is no investor, nor is there any

business intermediary, such as a manager or agent. The model as framed is concerned

only with the artistic and not the commercial or economic dimensions of the firm. If adapting this framework for use in building a more holistic picture of popular music industry operations, it is necessary to include these other functions or roles. Rock bands have managers who represent them in dealings with record labels. It is conventionally the record labels who are thought of as investors in the production and promotion of recordings and in tour support. However, fans may also be seen as economic investors in the band when they pay money for a CD, a download, some merchandise or a live concert. In addition, there needs to be a reference to policy and policy intermediaries, as well as capital owners. This extended notion of the art firm produces the following roles (as distinct from individuals): Producer, consumer, critic, investor, regulator, cultural intermediary, business intermediary, policy intermediary, owner, and beneficiary. This provides an adapted version of the art firm, see Figure 12 below.

Figure 12 – The Extended Art Firm
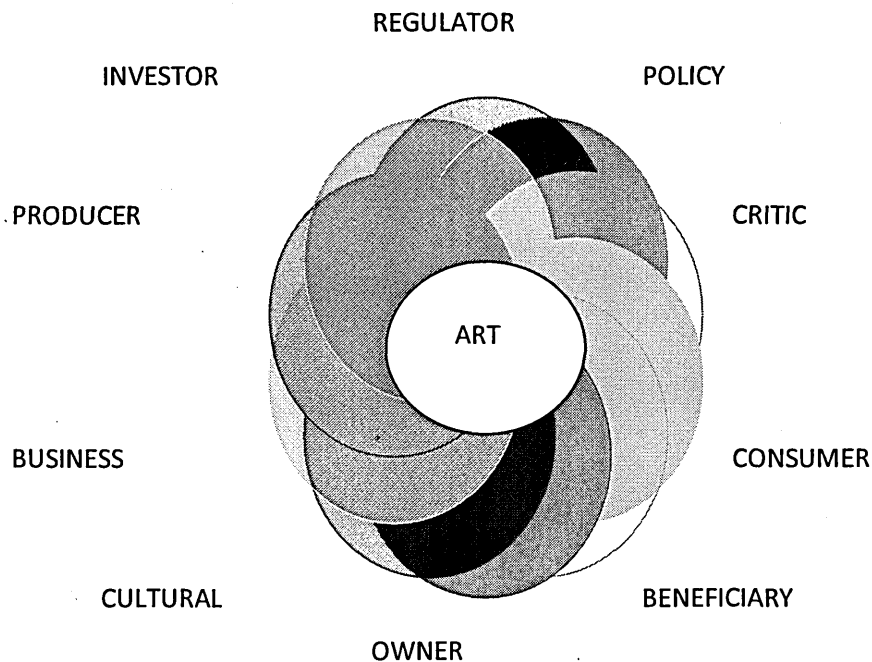
Source: Author, developed from Guillet de Monthoux (2004)

ARTS CONSUMPTION

There is <u>relatively</u> little written about arts consumption <u>as such</u> within the arts marketing community specifically (although there has been work on music consumption, as we shall see below). Beyond the issue of audience development (e.g. Hayes and Slater, 2002; Barlow and Shibli, 2007), there has been, for example, work on art collection (Chen, 2006), sense-making and the consumption of performing arts (Caldwell, 2001), consumption of representation (Schroeder, 1999, 2005) or perceptions of arts-promotional offers (D'Astous, Legoux and Colbert, 2004). The body of work does not come anywhere near the volume of empirical research being carried out in interpretive marketing or consumer research generally. This lack appears at policy level also. Within the UK, the recent McMaster report 'Supporting Excellence in the Arts – From Measurement to Judgement' (2008) noted 'that too many organisations are trying to second-guess what their audiences want and are therefore cheating them out of the deepest and most meaningful experiences'. It is as partly in order to remedy this lack of non-survey research on arts consumption that the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) has recently approved a joint academic/practitioner workshop series, to be run by the University of Sheffield and Audiences Yorkshire, entitled 'Qualitative Methods of Enquiry into the Arts Consumption Experience and its Impact'[27], on which the author is a co-investigator. The theorisation of the consumption of live arts performance and consumption, in particular, is very underdeveloped within marketing and consumption studies, although a considerable amount of work has of course been done on consumer experiences and experiential marketing (e.g. Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Schmitt, 2000; Kozinets, 2002). An interesting and helpful paper by Joy, Sherry, Mick and Arnould (2003) on multi-sensory embodied arts consumption experiences, is, the authors argue, 'a corrective to the producer's perspective of consumption that dominates the discourse of experience'. Through a detailed engagement with consumer

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[27] AH/G001146/1 AHRC Research Workshops - Impact of Arts & Humanities Research Scheme.

accounts of museum and gallery visits, they illustrate the wealth of insight that can come from emic accounts. My conclusion is that there are not many resources that may be drawn upon from this more general area of arts consumption to help with this inquiry. The 'narrower' area of music consumption is dealt with below.

MARKETING AND CONSUMPTION OF MUSIC

It is ironic that a considerable amount of work has been done on music as an affective resource for marketing communications. This is more about muzak than music, and illustrates something about the values of mainstream marketing scholars. There is not so much scholarly work, however, on the marketing and consumption of music as a 'product'. The work which is more relevant to this thesis, mainly in the interpretive tradition, includes Lacher's conceptualisation of music as a 'product' (1989); Lacher and Mizerski's study of the consumer purchasing of rock music (1994); Shankar's introspective study of music consumption (2000); Goulding, Shankar and Elliott's analysis of emerging communities and identity in the rave scene (2002); O'Reilly and Doherty's study of a band-fan community (2006, see Chapter 5 of this thesis), and Schau and Muñiz's analysis of a musical 'brand community' (2007, see below).

Of more relevance to this study, as already signalled in Chapter 1, is the tension between art and commerce in music. Hyde (1988) put this tension very starkly:

> *A work of art is a gift, not a commodity ... Every modern artist who has chosen to labour with a gift must sooner or later wonder how he or she is to survive in a society dominated by market exchange.*

Kubacki and Croft (2004) interviewed contemporary working musicians and found 'an emphatic divide between those who blamed marketing for undermining the artistic integrity of musicians and those who felt that marketing was already contributing to the well-being of music and needed to be better understood'. Bradshaw, McDonagh, Marshall and Bradshaw (2005) discuss artists' resistance to marketing. They characterise the 'narrative of the alienated artist' as 'by now an all-too familiar cliché', and make a connection to Romantic ideology as follows:

> *conventional musician ideology inherited from Romanticism insists that artists must live antagonistically towards commercial culture, instead nobly and single-mindedly dedicating themselves to the production of profound aesthetic experiences.*

As we have seen earlier, this fits well with Fonarow's thesis of the importance of Romanticism in indie music. Interesting, the authors found that 'the discourse of musician alienation remains relevant in the political economy of artistic production' but that 'the musicians demonstrated agency, taking control of the administrative aspects of their career'. Their practice was a 'complex balancing act' between this sense of control and the discourse of alienation. This area was further explored in an exchange between Holbrook (2005, 2006) and Bradshaw, McDonagh and Marshall (2006) in the Journal of Macro-Marketing. Holbrook (2005) sees jazz music as having changed from a popular to an elitist form, and reflects on the 'societal costs manifest in conflicts between commercial and artistic interests and pressures'. Bradshaw et al. (2006) argue, however, that both commercial and artistic discourses co-exist and are an example within jazz of a situation where 'apparently conflicting orientations serve to integrate discrete patterns of marketplace ideology into a larger and fundamentally balanced system'. They also call for empirical research into working musicians, and, in so far as this study focuses on the production side of the exchange relationship, it responds to that call. Bradshaw et al.'s

stance sits well with the discursive-analytical approach in this study, because it effectively regards the Romantic, Bohemian, alienated discourse as an interpretive resource with a long heritage which is easily available to musicians and which they can draw upon, contextually and strategically, to position themselves in relation to the market in a manner which fans will easily relate to and understand.

BRANDING

The strand within marketing which deals with the symbolic dimension of exchange relationships is branding. Consequently, it is important to examine how current thinking within branding may be of assistance in this inquiry. In a review of a co-authored paper on film branding recently submitted by the author to the UK Academy of Marketing Annual Conference 2008 (Kerrigan and O'Reilly, 2008), one reviewer stated: 'It appears that the author does not know what a brand is' (emphasis added), and advised that the authors consider 'the basics' (e.g. Keller, 2008). This assertion is quite representative of a certain way of thinking in mainstream branding discourse, a way of seeing things which is based upon epistemological and ontological 'certainties', on knowing what things are, of being sure what a brand is. This kind of assertion makes no attempt whatsoever to reflect on its own use of language. A constructionist would say that it is not so much a matter of knowledge, but rather of people agreeing what 'brand' means. The reviewer pointed us in the direction of a number of recent references, one of which was an editorial by Veloutsou in the Journal of Product and Brand Management (2008). Ironically, this editorial was entitled: 'The Changing Concept of the Brand', a title which suggests that 'brand' is a dynamic, socially constructed concept!

The American Marketing Association's definition of 'brand' is a "name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services

on one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition." This is a rather limited definition. The important point here is that, in characterising a brand as a 'sign', the AMA is signalling that a brand is a cultural artefact, object, or entity. From a social constructionist point if view, a brand is therefore a socially constructed sign.

More mainstream or conventional definitions of brands are of course available. De Chernatony and Macdonald (1998:36), for example, see a brand variously as a sign of ownership, a differentiating device, a functional device which communicates capability, a symbolic device which enables consumers to express something about themselves, a risk reducer enabling customers to rely on the products carrying the brand, a shorthand device which summarises many things about an offering for the consumer, a legal device, and an intangible strategic asset. All of these are communicative in some way, which returns us to the domain of communication and culture.

Historically, the right to brand in a physical sense was derived from political or religious authority, or from social or commercial power. The practice of branding has been applied, for example, by governments to individuals to signify a change in their status. Contemporary use of branding in a commercial context tends to ascribe the power to brand to corporations, providers of commercial offerings. However, in its wider sense as a signifying practice, branding or marking is by no means a practice whose use is restricted to enterprises. Consumers – people - mark or brand themselves in certain ways. From a culturalist point of view, everyone is a sign-maker. The commercial practice of branding is simply a special case of a wider human signifying practice.

I argue here that the symbolic dimension of brands is antecedent to their construction as e.g. a sign of ownership. A brand may be read as the sum total of the meanings of a

product. Brands are carriers of ideology in the ways in which they mark or brand people. It is not simply that people are marked, or enabled to mark themselves, by, for example, brand-symbolic resources as outward signifiers of identity, but that corporations use brand meanings to structure citizens' ideas, feelings, desires, and experiences in attempts to subject and dominate them for capitalistic purposes. Although this marking may be positioned as a sign of love, a 'love mark' (Roberts, 2004), it is the mark of money. It is, after all, people's need for economic survival, among other things, which makes them vulnerable to these branding effects.   To say that brands are managerially constructed, built by managers only, is to deny consumers a role in the making of their meanings. Signification can be performed by consumers just as well as by producers and providers. The long-standing tradition of tattooing which has now become a mainstream practice is a clear example of consumer-to-consumer signification. While it is the case that brands offer symbolic resources for the construction of identity, people may draw upon a much wider range of visual discursive resources to make these signs, only some of which may be placed into circulation by the Interbrand top 100, or Fortune 500 commercial organisations. To say that brands are managerially constructed is to disagree with the proposition that production and consumption are, culturally speaking, mutually constitutive; to exscribe consumers from brand histories; to silence their voices; and to ascribe sole 'brand-building' rights to corporate and ad agency executives already privileged by their access to commercial, technological and media power. In a holistic account, it is important always to keep in mind the dialogic character of branded communications. Brands are socially constructed by a dialogue between producers and consumers.

Brand discourse is heavily metaphorical. Marketing is replete with metaphors masquerading as sound analytical constructs. Davies and Chun (2003), for example, identify three 'root metaphors' in branding discourse: 'brand as differentiating mark, brand as person and brand as asset'. This line of thinking can be taken much further.

Consider the number of hybrid metaphors which branding uses: brand ... heritage, experience, loyalty, asset, equity, identity, image, personality, magic, power, leverage, spirit, story, essence, value, icon, culture, symbol, values, culture, passion, advocate, and so on. Placing the word 'brand' before any of these words adds little to the meaning of the term. In this sense branding discourse is a kind of para-discourse which selects accommodating signifiers in order to legitimate itself within language. It thereby acquires a portfolio of terminology which enables it to draw on and address an extremely wide range of referents. In this way, it also offers a kind of 'thrilling new language' for management talk (Parker, 2002). In this sense, Arvidsson (2006) is right when he says that "Brand management is a matter of putting to work the capacity of consumers (and increasingly other kinds of actors) to produce a common social world through autonomous processes of communication and social interaction." Brandspeak has entered common parlance (O'Reilly, 2006), so that it is pointless to maintain a Canute-like resistance to this commercial saturation of everyday language. Yet, I wish to retain a sense that there is a difference between a b®and and a brand. The former is a word with a commercial referent being used in a commercial context; the latter has simply become a synonym for sign. This distinction between commercial and non-commercial parlance matters to the members of the independent music community which I am researching, and to me as an aspiring scholar.

Branding discourse has been heavily inflected by finance and engineering terminology, as well as by several other streams. There are different sub-discourses within the branding literature. For example, there is a financial discourse about brand equity, assets and value; a religious discourse about brand soul, essence, spirit and alchemy; a cultural discourse about brand identity, culture, and values; a literary discourse about story, character and text, and an engineering discourse about brand leverage, brands as tools, and so on. In this sense, rather like Barker's definition (2004) of cultural studies, branding is a language game. Certain branding academics seek to connect these

metaphors empirically through kinds of positivistic inquiry, as if these metaphors had an objective correlative which was measurable. I agree with Morgan (1986) who pointed to the prevalence of a metaphorical kind of thinking about organisations, as well as to the limitations of each metaphorical domain.

Branding can be seen as the principal cultural practice of the marketing imagination. Branding puts the 'mark' into mark-eting. From a culturalist, symbolic point of view, brands can be read as cultural texts (another metaphor) which are culturally produced and consumed, and as symbolic articulators of production and consumption. This is a relatively new line of thinking in branding, though it has begun to enter branding discourse (O'Reilly, 2005; Hatch and Rubin, 2006). Hatch and Rubin go so far as to say that they 'regard brands to be one of the most text-like artifacts of contemporary business culture and therefore appropriate for a demonstration of the potential contribution of hermeneutics', and hermeneutics forms part of the research design for this thesis. These texts represent or construct identities for their referents, be these organisations, people, places, or products. Brands are socially constructed texts which mediate meanings between and amongst consumers and producers. Brand-texts aim to mark the difference between their owners' and others' commercial identities. It matters, for example, to Sony that a consumer can favourably differentiate its brand from others; otherwise, its return on capital is threatened. All brand texts are performative, be they salesperson's representations, staff behaviour in a service encounter, an interview with the company president, or a marketing communications campaign. In these ways, all brands are cultural brands.

Brands may also be considered as ideological resources in the service of capital. Branding discourse represents marketing's attempt to co-opt language and signification for capital, and is a key discursive element in marketing ideology. It is in effect capital's semantic project. Branding makes salient certain features of social reality and obscures

others. Branding as a signifying, managerial practice has to do with the engineering of hedonic, sacred, secular, utilitarian, economic, political and social meanings for consumption. B®ands are meanings staged, enacted, performed, or danced to the music of the cash register.

The more postmodern understanding of identity adopted in this thesis, and one which is consistent with a culturalist understanding of meaning production and consumption (see Chapter 2 passim), rejects the underlying assumption in mainstream social science that identity is something stable, consistent and internally owned, and replaces it with a conceptualisation of identity as dynamically altering. Identity is understood as a flexible accomplishment, the sense of which is actively renewed by self and others in the context of consumption activities and offline and online social interaction. Identity is not something that you "are," something tangible; it is a process, something that you "do" (Sacks 1984). This orientation points to an analysis of the ways in which different identities are made visible within an interaction and the consequences of categorising self and others in one way rather than another. It sees identity as discursively, contextually and strategically constructed. A discursive approach to identity, including therefore b®and 'identity', sees it not as something ideally fixed with a permanent core and a changeable periphery but as being regularly constructed and re-constructed in social interactions with stakeholders. These interactions are contextual/situational, occasioned and strategic. The identity (or, to put this more widely, the meaning) of a brand is negotiated and constructed in its interactions with its stakeholders. Brand identity is therefore potentially a very fragile 'commodity' which is at risk in every interaction between the organisation and its publics, with consequences for the business's durability. Brand image is the identity of the brand as perceived by relevant stakeholders. Brand equity is a combination of brand 'assets', such as loyalty, awareness, perceived quality, brand associations and other proprietary assets (Keller, 2007:670; Elliott and Percy, 2007). Brand value can be read as the value which flows

from trading operations to the owners of a brand, and/or the value to be gained by a consumer from consuming the brand. Brand values are the ethical and/or moral basis on which a brand does business.

ART BRANDS

Arts marketing has a rather conventional approach to branding, to the extent that it has considered the matter much at all. Over the past few years, the International Journal of Arts Management does not appear to have had any articles with the word 'brand' in the title/abstract citations. Brands and branding rate a few mentions amongst, for example, Björkegren (1996), Colbert (2000), Kolb 2000), Caves (2000), Heilbrun and Gray (2001), Throsby (2001), Hesmondhalgh (2002), Hill, Hill and O'Sullivan (2003), and Guillet de Monthoux (2004). An exception to this is Schroeder (2006), who discusses branding in the context of the production and consumption of artistic images and offers an artist case study to explore the relationship between branding, consumption and art. The more general silence on branding and art, however, is surprising. I have been unable to identify and scholarly work of a text-/discursive-analytical kind in the area of music branding. In a chapter on the marketing of popular music in Kerrigan, Fraser and Özbilgin (2004), the author offered some basic ideas about music brands (O'Reilly, 2004) – see Appendix J. Several different types of brands can be identified in the popular music sector, as indicated in the following table:

Table 3: Different Types of Popular Music Brands

Type of Brand	Example
Performer/artiste brands	The Ramones, Madonna, Metallica, Foo Fighters, Red Hot Chilli Peppers, NWA
Content provider/media brands	Record labels, radio and tv stations, including of course MTV
Cultural intermediary brands	Record producers, such as William Orbit, Brian Eno
Event brands	Music festivals, e.g. Glastonbury, SXSW, Reading
Venue brands	Brixton Academy, Rock City, The O2, The Fillmore
Character brands	Artists' personae, e.g.: Bowie's 'Aladdin Sane'; Madonna's 'Material Girl'

Source: Author

A musical brand's identity can be modelled using the music brand web (O'Reilly, 2004) see Figure 13:

Figure 13: The Music Brand Web
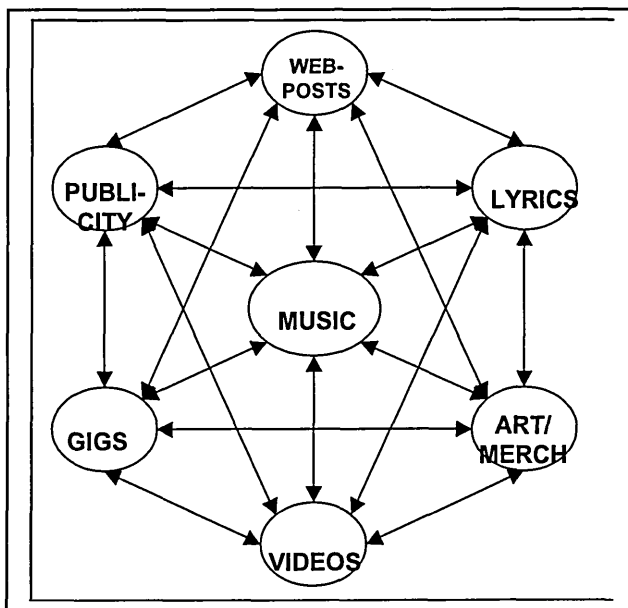
Source: O'Reilly (2004)

For popular music acts, external brand identity has a number of key dimensions. A popular music act's identity is above all a musical one, usually characterised by a genre, or mix of genres. Another key aspect of brand identity is commercial identity. As Shuker says (2001: 34):

> *Also central to left analyses emphasising the economic, is the conception of 'authenticity', which is imbued with considerable symbolic value. Authenticity is underpinned by a series of oppositions: mainstream versus independent; pop versus rock; and commercialism versus creativity. Inherent in this polarisation is a cyclical theory of musical innovation as a form of street creativity versus business and market domination and the co-option of rock.*

Issues of commercial identity are very important in fan and academic discourse. There are major cultural distinctions made by fans between authentic acts and 'sell-outs'. This is often a distinction made between rock and pop. It is also tied into anti-capitalist sentiment and rhetoric, as well as the separation between musical talent and corporate control. Being 'tainted' by commerciality can be a bad thing. Another important aspect of popular music brand identity is the subcultural aspect. In the past five decades, there has been a significant number of sub-cultural identities such as goth (Hodkinson, 2002), punk (Colegrave and Sullivan, 2001), crustie, mod, and so on. Some bands become closely associated with a particular subculture. This can be a threat to band longevity if the subculture becomes unfashionable. Geographic identity, another important aspect of popular music brand identity, is often associated with a particular sound, such as rap with the LA ghetto, or the Beatles with Liverpool. An act's national and political identity can be linked closely or widely differentiated. Coming from a particular country can authenticate the sound. Increasingly, as part of their political identity, it is common for bands to get involved with cause-related marketing, e.g. U2 and Amnesty. There is also

the issue of the balance between an act's collective and individual identities. Take for example, Kiss, the seventies US rock band (Lendt, 1997), where each of the four members had his own Kabuki-style makeup and was a character with a name and identity of its own. The band members' removal of this make-up and revelation of band members' identities became a media event in itself. More recently, in the UK, the Spice Girls was a group of female artistes each with her own individual band identity. These identities have now been spun off into their own celebrity orbits, with varying degrees of success. Perhaps more common in the rock scene are acts with one or two band members who are more prominent. Within each group act, there will be roles which people can make their own – drummer, bassist, in terms of either musicianship or song writing or performing. There is also the question of the identity life cycle. Like human beings and products, popular music acts have life cycles. Some can be fads, some fashions, some slow burners, some with staying power. Some popular music brands have considerable talent at changing and thereby prolonging their brand identity. A key brand manager in this sense of her own brand is Madonna (Taraborrelli, 2002), or consider David Bowie (Sandford, 1997) or Kylie (Scatena, 1997) Other artists use shock to gain and maintain impact, such as Marilyn Manson (Baddeley, 2000), or Jim Morrison (Hopkins and Sugerman, 1980). Other brands maintain longevity through a combination of talent, honesty and the richness of their overall contribution, e.g. Bob Marley (White, 2000).

CULTURAL BRANDING

In so far as brands have been defined as socially constructed, therefore as part of culture, the notion of 'cultural brands' is at risk of appearing tautological, because by that definition all brands are cultural. There are a number of specific ways in which we may conceive of 'cultural branding'. We may take it as (1) the idea that in order to understand branding we need to understanding its cultural dimensions; (2) the idea that

corporations 'brand' people through their labour practices, the creation of production 'cultures' and so on; (3) the idea the corporations create culture when they make products (iPod), encode messages (advertising), or dress people (uniforms) – i.e. they make their mark upon culture; (4) the practices of appropriating, co-opting or commodifying culture by means of capitalistic interventions (such as sponsorship); (5) the practices whereby arts/heritage organisations use branding theory to promote their cultural offerings. In his book on cultural branding, Holt develops the idea of 'how brands become icons'. He uses a number of case studies to argue that certain products acquire an identity value which makes them iconic (Apple, Coke, Harley, Bud). According to this line of thinking, iconic brands address acute contradictions in society and perform identity myths that address these desires and anxieties. These identity myths reside in the brand, which consumers experience and share via ritual action, and are set in populist worlds. They perform as activists leading culture, rely on breakthrough performances, rather than consistent communications and they enjoy a cultural halo effect. These iconic brands make their mark on culture in the sense of (3)above. This is also the sense in which Klein (2000) says that brands_are_ the culture.

In the introduction to their edited book entitled 'Brand Culture' (2005:1), co-editors Schroeder and Salzer-Morling introduce this notion. Their first definition or version of brand culture chimes with Holt's notion of iconic brands; the second is an interesting claim to the theoretical importance of the notion of brand culture as a context for brand identity and image, a 'third leg' for branding theory. This is an approach which I would support. However, culture has more than a contextualizing, historicising value; it is inseparable from the doing of band-fan relationships and their meanings. But more of this in Chapter 5.

CONSUMER CULTURE

In his well-known book on 'Consumer Culture and Postmodernism' (2007), Featherstone argues (p.12 ff.) for a focus on the 'growing prominence of the <u>culture</u> of consumption' (emphasis in original). He identifies three ways of looking at consumer culture: (a) pleasures, dreams and desires associated with consumption; (b) a sociological view on the 'ways in which people use goods in order to create social bonds or distinctions'; and (c) the idea that capitalist production drives consumption and ideologically seduces consumers. He sees consumer culture (op. cit.:27) as using 'images, signs and symbolic goods which summon up dreams, desires and fantasies' And these 'suggest romantic authenticity and emotional fulfilment'. Consumer behaviour is defined by Arnould, Price and Zinkhan (2002:5) as: 'Individuals or groups acquiring, using and disposing of products, services, ideas or experiences'. In older consumer behaviour textbooks, the individual consumer is treated as a rational economic individual. The thrust of the applied research is the description and analysis of consumers and potential customers in terms of their behaviour and attitudes. There is a heavy emphasis on cognitive psychology, as well as borrowings from sociological theory. Consumers are analysed for choice criteria, buying process, buying involvement, influences from peers on the buying decision, and the roles occupied by people in the buying centre. In general, marketers understand the benefit of getting people together in groups as both a recruitment and retention strategy. It enables resources (marketing spend) to be focused economically and relationships to be 'managed'. However, in their monograph entitled The Unmanageable Consumer, Gabriel and Lang (2006) explore characterisations of the consumer in different literatures, as chooser, communicator, explorer, identity seeker, hedonist, artist, victim, rebel, activist, citizen. Their conclusion is that in the 'twilight of consumerism':

the fragmentation of images of consumption is itself a symptom of the malaise of

contemporary consumerism … The same fragmentation of the consumer may keep

academics busy, since each tradition can claim the consumer for itself,

exaggerating those features which fit its arguments, while blatantly disregarding

the rest. and later (p. 189) and in a world where everyone claims the consumer

for her- or himself, the consumer must now be deemed unmanageable, claimed by

many, but controlled by few, least of all by consumers themselves (p. 190).

In their still relatively recent research commentary in the Journal of Consumer Research (JCR) on what they call 'Consumer Culture Theory' (CCT), Arnould and Thompson (2005) offer a 'synthesizing overview of the past 20 years of consumer research'. This review gained popularity quite quickly, but has several flaws. Firstly, its scope is confined to papers which appeared in the JCR. Secondly, they offer a definition of consumer culture as follows:

consumer culture denotes a social arrangement in which the relations between

lived culture and social resources, and between meaningful ways of life and the

symbolic and material resources on which they depend, are mediated through

markets.

This definition, however, offers nothing new as it follows Slater's much earlier definition very closely (1997:8). Thirdly, the authors side-swipe previous names applied to this 'research tradition', dismissing terms such as 'postpositivist', and 'postmodern', and offer CCT as a 'more appropriate and compelling brand'. The effort to 'brand' CCT (using a definition very similar to Slater's) is cast in an ironic light by Slater's introduction to his own book, where he comments that consumer culture 'has been redesigned, repackaged and relaunched as a new academic … product every generation since the sixteenth century'. Finally, Arnould and Thompson's review is not referenced (for

example) in very recent books by Featherstone (2007) or Sassatelli (2007), which suggests that the branding of CCT has not penetrated the wider academic 'market'.

Having said that, the CCT review does offer at least some attempt to make sense of what has been going in the field. The authors see four research programmes in this general area: (1) the ways in which consumers use marketing materials to construct their own identity; (2) consumers as cultural producers, including Maffesoli's ideas on neo-tribalism (1996); (3) the institutional and social structures that influence consumption; and (4) market ideologies and their impact on consumers. This thesis contains elements of some of these strands in consumer culture thinking. For example, we shall see how NMA fans make use of NMA offerings to construct part of their own identities, how the band and fans discursively construct a 'tribe', and how certain ideologies are claimed and other are resisted by the tribe. However, it is important to bear in mind that consumer culture does not exist in isolation from its context, and particularly from the producer culture with which it is connected through marketing activities.

An important stand of thinking in consumption studies is that consumers no longer consumer products simply for their functional value, but also for their symbolic value, for what they mean to themselves and to others. As Elliott puts it (Rethinking Marketing, 1999:112): "Central to postmodern theory is the proposition that consumers no longer consume products for their material utilities but consume the symbolic meaning of those products as portrayed in their images: products in fact become commodity signs." The culturalist approach to popular music identified by Middleton (1990) constructs the consumption of popular music brand texts as an active rather than passive process. Consumption is conceived as a process of meaning making and the notion of "active" or "creative" consumption recognizes that consumers are reflexive about their consumption activities, actively interpreting or judging, appropriating or

resisting the texts offered for consumption. De Certeau, Giard & Mayol (2002) argue

that meaning is produced by consumers as they use and experience consumption

offerings in the context of their everyday lives. Earlier interpretive consumer research

work by Hirschman (1983) envisaged consumers as having 'intelligence, creativity, and

consciousness'. In an important paper on consumer subjectivity, Schau (2000) proposes

that 'imagination provides a critical link between identity and consumption, and that

through their imaginations consumers 'make sense of sensation … construct and express

individual and group identities and realities by manipulating signs, accumulating

possessions and developing consumption practices'. Beck (1992), Rose (1996), Giddens

(1991, 1998) and Fairclough (2000) argue that there has been a fundamental shift in

Western society toward neo-liberal rationalities which encourage people to fulfil

themselves as free individuals and be linked to society through their consumer choices.

Musical preferences offer rich opportunities for individuals to forge social identities and

experience the solidarity, security and sense of belonging attached to identification with

like-minded peers (see e.g. Larson 1995).

One of the concerns in this study is with the ways in which consumers make meaning

and how this might fit with the b(r)and-fan relationship. Elliott and Wattanasuwan

(1998) suggest that in conditions of postmodernism the self is 'something which the

person actively creates, partially through consumption'. They quote Thompson (1995)

who describes the self as a symbolic project, which the individual must actively

construct out of the available symbolic materials, materials which 'the individual weaves

into a coherent account of who he or she is, a narrative of self-identity'. They note that

the relationship between individual self-identity and collective is one of tension. The

authors offer a visual model of their perception of the processes at work here (Fig.14):

Figure 14: Consumption and the symbolic project of the self
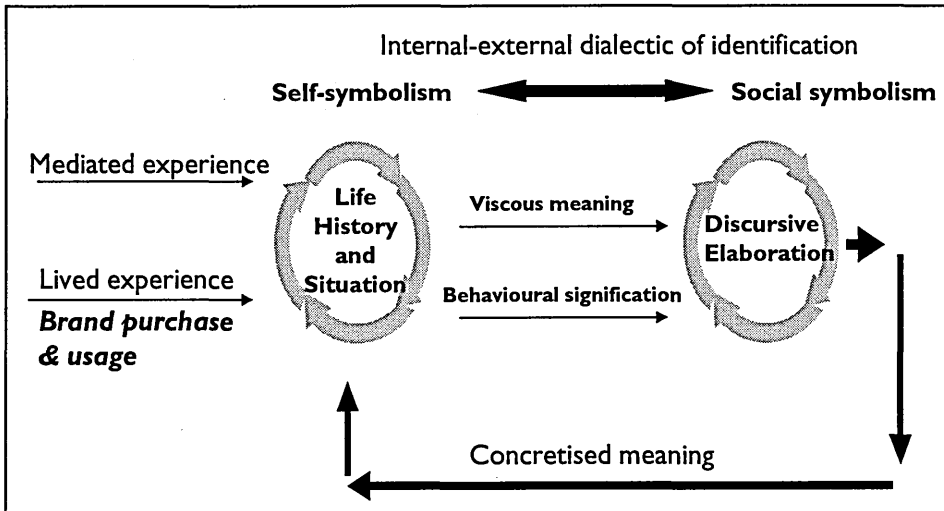
Source: Eliott and Wattanasuwan (1998)

They suggest that consumers will consume things with particular meanings and for what these things may enable them to say about themselves. The lived and mediated experiences (actual or communicated) serve as symbolic resources for self-construction. Consumers construct 'internally their self concept' and 'externally their social world'. Lived experience has stronger value for the consumer than mediated experience. Applying this framework, we might then say that a fan experiences a band at a gig (lived experience) and through the media (mediated experience). S/he then relates these experiences of the band to his/her own life history and situation, and discursively elaborates their meanings in social interaction with others. This e-labor-ation is important work in the figuring out of the fan's own subject positions and meanings of him-/herself; in other words, it is identity work.

In Chapter 2, it was pointed out that, in terms of cultural production and consumption, consumers may be cultural producers, and producers can also be cultural consumers. An

interesting paper by Meamber (2000) speaks of the artist as both producer and consumer, for example. Therefore, in addition to saying that brands are symbolic resources for the construction of consumer identity, we may also (a) say that bands are symbolic resources for the construction of fan identity, and (b) reverse the polarity in the framework and say that fans may equally be symbolic resources for the construction of a band's identity. Bands consume fans through lived experience (at gigs or in personal interactions), or through mediated experience of them (e.g. by reading their comments about the band on the web-site). The band members make sense of these encounters with fans in certain ways, and this enables them to make construct their own identity by using statements such as 'we are a cult band', or 'we are a Family', or 'we have a passionately loyal following'. In any case, there is a need to acknowledge in the Circuit of Popular Music Culture (COPMC) the dimensions which Elliott and Wattanasuwan (op. cit.) have pointed out. This is done in Figure 15 below.

Figure 15: The Circuit of Popular Music Culture – B
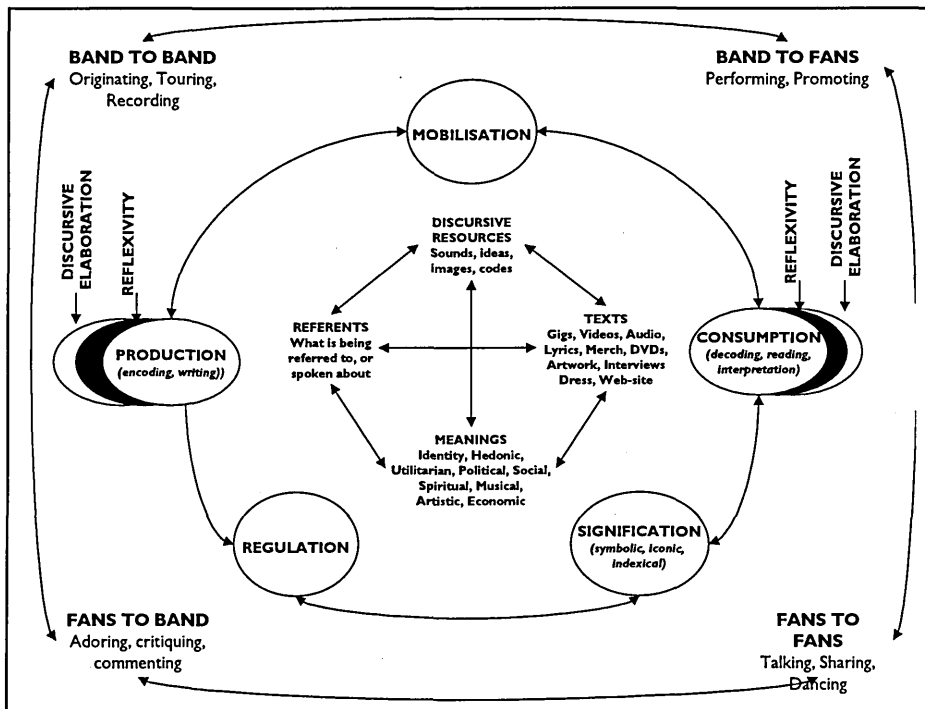
Source: Author

Reflexivity and discursive elaboration have been added to the production and consumption roles in the diagram. They could equally be added to regulation, but for the of avoidance of undue complexity this is not shown graphically.

BRAND COMMUNITIES AND CONSUMER 'TRIBES'

Since the late 1990s, there has been a considerable growth in the body of theory which deals with collective consumption, or consumer groups. A wide range of terms has emerged to talk about consumer 'groupness', including neighbourhood, user group, brand culture, tribe, neo-tribe, brand tribe, user community, brand community, cult, scene, microculture, subculture and so on. Examples of the kinds of group concerned include musical subcultures such as goths; punks and metalheads; skydivers; bikers; gay and lesbian subcultures, skateboarders; fantasy and science fiction fans; and yuppies. For those seeking conceptual clarity in this field, the proliferation of academic constructs does not help matters. However, these groups have certain issues in common, for example, their boundaries with the outside, membership criteria and assessment, group composition, intra-group hierarchies, group values; group identity; the tension and/or fit between group and individual identities; spirituality/religiosity and heritage. The key paper in the branding literature is Muniz and O'Guinn's work on brand community (2001). This constructs a brand community as 'a form of human association situated within a consumption context', separate from geographical proximity, in which 'Members share a social bond around a branded, mass-produced commodity, and believe it is reasonable to do so'. These 'brand communities' have three key characteristics: a consciousness of kin, rituals and a sense of moral responsibility. Members have 'a shared knowing of belonging' and 'construct themselves as different or special in some way from others and similar to each other'.

They exhibit signs of 'oppositional brand loyalty', in other words they seek to differentiate themselves by comparing other groups unfavourably to themselves on certain key values. As far as community rituals are concerned, members of the community adhere to conventions that set up 'visible public definitions between themselves and other groups', e.g. waving or flashing lights to drivers of the same make of car (SAAB). They celebrate brand heritage and tell stories about their experiences of consuming the brand. Members show a desire to ensure community survival by integrating and retaining members. They also assist each other by providing advice, assistance, and information. Key themes in the brand community literature include religiosity (Muniz and Schau, 2005, 2007), the role of the brand in relation to the wider community, the instrumental imperative to build stronger brands and successful brand communities (McWilliam, 2000; McAlexander, Schouten and Koening, 2002; McAlexander, Kim and Roberts, 2003), the dangers of brand communities which become too powerful (Ahonen and Moore, 2005), online brand communities (Kim, 2006) and community typologies (Devasagayam and Buff, 2008).

The brand community literature is helpful in pointing to the sociality of brands, to the peer-to-peer axis of social interaction which had hitherto largely been ignored in the focus on the brand-customer dyad. It also reminds us that the customer base or fan base when framed as a social entity, can also be used as a source of identity.

Muniz and O'Guinn assert that the brand is the social 'tie that binds', yet are careful to say that the 'felt sense of duty' of the brand community members to each other goes only so far. This seems to me to be a rather ambiguous position. To put it bluntly, because one consumes a bottle of Coke, does this make one a member of the Coca-Cola brand community? What does it mean to be a member of a 'community' along with a multi-billion dollar corporation? How much would a Coke drinker do for another Coke drinker because they consume the same sugared water? Again, as a reflexive consumer

of the SAAB brand, I note that I never signal to other SAAB drivers as such, and avoid the

SAAB dealership at all costs in order to save on maintenance. I do know one SAAB

owner who spends his annual holidays attending the annual rallies around Europe, but

he is what might be called a genuine enthusiast. This 'sample of one' anecdote raises a

basic question about the degree of brand identification within the brand community

and the strength of the 'tie that binds'.

RELIGIOSITY AND NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

As far as religiosity is concerned, Muniz and Schau (2005, 2007) have pointed to what

they see as the presence of religiosity in brand communities. In their account of the

Apple Newton community (2005), they show how religiosity is a feature of the tales told

to each other by member of the community whose band was abandoned by its creator,

Apple Inc.. The work on religiosity is helpful in indexing religiosity or spirituality as a

dimension of meaning in social groups. However, in their account of a popular music

'brand community', namely Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers (TPATH), they claim that

this is evidence that religiosity is a feature of a mainstream brand also (TPATH being

considered 'mainstream'). This sequence of papers appears to be part of a campaign to

get religiosity accepted as a part of brand community. It is interesting to see a band and

its fans being labelled as a 'brand community' without the members being consulted as

to whether they would agree to this commercial labelling. After all, as we have seen

from Chapter 2 and the discussion of indie ideology, there is potentially a lot of cultural

capital (credibility, authenticity) at risk when a band gets too close to commerciality.

More importantly, however, from a culturalist point of view, religious discursive

resources are always already available to consumers and citizens whatever their culture.

It is therefore not a question of religiosity being an attribute of a reified brand

community but of religious discursive resources being contextually and strategically

mobilised in consumer accounts of people's experiences in relation to certain offerings.

A connection between branding and religiosity is also made by Klein (2002) when she talks about commercial brands building 'spiritual mythologies', or Atkin (2005) when he discusses the 'culting' of brands. . In Chapter 6, which deals with the NMA art and artefacts exhibition, I show how a particular discursive resource is mobilised by NMA, how this is constructed as sacred in order to signify something about the tribe, and how this relates to the Maffesolian notion of the tribe (rather than to its more recent adaptations).

CONSUMER TRIBES

In contrast to the brand community literature there is another line of thinking about consumer 'groupness', namely the idea of consumer tribes. This is associated perhaps most readily with the work of Bernard Cova (Cova and Cova, 2001, 2002; Cova, Kozinets and Shankar, 2007). He argues that what binds a consumer group is not so much the brand but the emotional tie or shared passion of group members about the consumption activity and not necessarily any set of shared or common attributes. This switches the attention of the marketer from the brand-to-consumer relationship more towards the consumer-to-consumer relationship. Cova and Cova are interested in the gatherings, places and institutions of tribes. Their paper on inline roller skaters (2001), however, illustrates a phenomenon where tens of thousands of people take part in events, not the same as the focus here, which is on the relationship between one supplier organisation and its customers.

Tribal marketing proponents, and other commentators, like to quote Michael Maffesoli, the French postmodern sociologist in support of their notion of tribe. For example, Maffesoli (1996:76) states 'in contrast to the stability induced by classical tribalism, neo-tribalism is characterised by fluidity, occasional gatherings and dispersal'. It has to be

asked whether and how durable businesses can be built on such fluidity. Maffesoli describes tribes in different ways, such as 'networks of solidarity (p.72), a 'communion of saints (p.73)', 'electronic mail, sexual networks, various solidarities including sporting and musical gatherings' (p.73), 'youth groups, affinity associations, small-scale industrial enterprises' (p.75), and 'small community group[s]' (p.94). It is interesting in the context of this study that tribes are not necessarily made up of consumers only. The willingness to include enterprises suggest that Maffesoli saw producers also as having a tribal role. In a band-fan relationship or community, then, we might regard both the band members and the fans as part of a single tribe, though separated by their roles of performer/audience, artist/art-lover or musician/fan.

Maffesoli's book The Time of the Tribes (1988/1996) is quite frequently referenced by a range of scholars interested in communities and consumption[28]. However, meost of these references are name-checks; never is a page reference given. To the extent that the authors mention Maffesoli's book, it is either to associate it with the concept of 'neo-tribes', or to emphasise the ephemeral nature of consumer groups. For example, Arnould and Thompson (2005) speak about 'ephemeral collective identifications'. Bauman (1990) links Maffesoli with Hobsbawn's notion of invented tradition (Hobsbawm and Ranger (ed.), 1992) and Benedict Anderson's 'imagined community' (2006). Kozinets, 2002 says that 'it remains to be explored whether marketers can engineer experiences that offer and deliver a sense of instant, caring, and judged-to-be-authentic community'. It seems from the present inquiry that NMA fans do believe that

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[28] For example: Cova, 1996; Fox and Roberts, 1999; Meamber and Venkatesh, 1999; Ostergaard, Fitchett and Jantzen, 1999; Ruggiero, 2000; Gould, 2001; Kjeldgaard, and Askegaard, 2001; Richardson and Turley, 2001; Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2002; Holt, 2002; Kozinets, 2002; Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Geisler and Venkatesh 2005; Kelemen and Peltonene, 2005; Sutton-Brady, 2005; Wattanasuwan, 2005; Bagozzi, 2006; Hewer and Brownlie, 2006; Johnson and Ambrose, 2006; Kjeldgaard and Askegaard, 2006; Prykop and Heitmann, 2006; Varley, 2006; Zwick and Dholakia, 2006.

the community is authentic, but they also see themselves as having an important role in this, and are encouraged to do so by NMA.

There is a question, however, about whether Maffesoli's work on tribes has been taken up and applied to an area, namely consumption, which was not intended, and in a manner which does not reflect what he actually wrote. I argue that Maffesoli's work is not read across into marketing and consumer studies in any great detail, with the result that his name is just a shorthand for the notion of neo-tribes which are ephemeral gatherings of consumers. In this sense it becomes a kind of idée reçue[29], as Flaubert might have called it (1994). In fact, I argue that the non-reading of Maffesoli has resulted in a lot of idées perdues[30], and it is important to recover these ideas if we are to have a fuller understanding of what he appeared to be saying in 1988/1996. By contrast, as mentioned in Chapter 2, during the review of popular music studies literature, importantly in the context of a study of a 'political band', Maffesoli's lack of a political dimension is noted (Weinzierl and Muggleton, 2003:11). It is important to remember that Maffesoli does not bring forward any empirical research to support his notion of a neo-tribe. Instead, his book offers a kind of sociological rêverie, presumably reflecting on what he himself had observed happening in France and elsewhere in the mid-to-late eighties, i.e. more than twenty years ago. There is a general tendency to assume that the time of the tribes is the late C20th and early C21st, whereas Maffesoli himself clearly states that this tribal time has <u>always</u> been there. Again, the word 'ephemeral' suggest a kind of May-fly existence, whereas Maffesoli says on p. 140 – 'The tribes [have] varied lifespans according to the degree of investment of the protagonists'.

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[29] Received idea.

[30] Lost ideas.

Maffesoli's book expounds at some considerable length five key themes which he identifies in tribalism as he sees it: the affectual nebula; undirected being-together; the religious model; elective sociality and the law of secrecy. As far as the affectual nebula is concerned, he sees experiencing the other as the basis of community, and it is (p. 36) 'the feeling or passion which, contrary to conventional wisdom, constitutes the essential ingredient of all social aggregations'. He believes that the undirected being-together was 'a basic given of tribes' and that 'Before any other determination or qualification, there is this vital spontaneity that guarantees a culture its own *puissance* and solidity'. This notion of *puissance* is important. It is usually translated as 'power'. According to a translator's note (p.1), the term *puissance* in French conveys the idea of the inherent energy and vital force of the people, as opposed to the institutions of 'power' ('pouvoir'). The 'religious model' is a key point in his argument. On p. 82, he says that 'The use of the religious metaphor can then be compared to a laser beam allowing the <u>most complete reading</u> of the very heart of a given structure' (emphasis added). In this regard, he explicitly states (p. 21) that he is 'adopting the perspective of Durkheim and his followers, who always placed the greatest weight on the sacredness of social relationships'. He argued that religiosity should be seen in the most elemental light, that of reliance (p. 77), and that (p. 78) – there is a link between the emotional and religiosity. He also invoked the notion of the Social Divine (p. 38) –the aggregate force which is the basis of any society or association, and of (p. 41) – demotheism – the people as god. He also makes the point that 'There has always been a heavy religious dimensions to revolutionary phenomena'. By elective sociality he meant to refer to something which he saw as always having existed, namely, the choice to be with other people. Finally, by the law of secrecy, he meant a 'protective mechanism with respect to the outside world' (p. 90), a secrecy which allows for resistance (p. 92). This '[secret] behaviour ... was the basis of social perdurability ... allows us to measure the vitality of a social group'. The secret society was always found on the margins.

These important ideas of Maffesoli, which are absolutely central to his thinking at the time, have not been explicitly worked into tribal marketing and consumer studies discourse - at least as far as I have been able to establish. If I am correct, this raises a serious question about the idea which appears to have gained implicit currency that Maffesoli is some kind of genealogical father to the idea of consumer tribes. It is not clear that it was ever his intention that his tribal thinking would be adapted to talk about consumption.

In an invited research commentary in Marketing Theory (O'Reilly, 2006), on a paper by Gilles Marion (2006), I argued that brand community was a construct designed to recover community for capital. But the idea that 'brand community' is ideologically freighted does not seem to be widely acknowledged. The imperative 'physician heal thyself' requires, of course, a reflexive take on my own ideological position, and I seek in the course of this thesis to give such an account. It would be wrong of course to think that the NMA band-fan community is pure and free of any ideological taint simply because it is artistic. In order to contest what some would call the dominant neo-liberal market ideology of contemporary society, NMA has had to mobilise its own ideological resources. NMA's 'Family' is also an ideologically shaped and ideologically shaping community. Incidentally, at least in the context of this thesis, and perhaps more generally, I have to disagree with Sitz's assertion (2008) – see Chapter 4– that 'the central question in understanding consumers' experiences is not what (lexical analysis) or why (ideological analysis), but how consumers relate these experiences'. This seems to be to be throwing the baby out with the bath water. Ideology is part of art, and it matters that researchers should be aware of this. The extent to which NMA shares or does not share 'indie' ideology (Fonarow, 2006) is dealt with in the Discussion in Chapter 8.

NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS (NRMS) AND SECTS

Given the presence of references to religiosity in the brand community literature, and Maffesoli's invocation of Durkheimian notions of demotheism in relation to tribes (even though this is not carried across into the consumer tribes literature), it seemed sensible to look deeper into the question of religiosity and new religious movements. The problem is that there are no references to NRMs or sects in the entire *Advances in Consumer Research* proceedings (search dated 13 October 2008). On the entire EBSCO database, there were a number of references to NRMs, but none of these related to popular music, marketing or consumer behaviour. Instead they dealt with issues of religious freedom (Dojcar, 2001; Denaux, 2002) or the problem of extremism (Kravchouk, 2004). Similarly, apart from Beckford's thirty-year-old paper (1978), there is little on EBSCO in relation to sects. Beckford was concerned to critique sociologists' views of sects as being bound up with some elements of "folklore". It was necessary to turn, therefore ,to writers on the sociology of religion for further insight.

According to Aldridge (2000:55), "no final definition of religion is possible". A religion may conventionally be understood to have "consecrated buildings, collective worship of a deity, an ethical code, a set of divine commandments, or a formal theology with dogmas and creeds" (op. cit.: 50). People tend to be born into religions. Sects, on the other hand, are "voluntary associations, funded through the subscriptions of their members". A sect is a "gathered community of people typically describing themselves with such exclusive terms as 'the saints' or 'the elect'." (op. cit. 34). They have "strict criteria of entrance ...a strong sense of their own identity and of the distinctiveness of their mission. They are protest movements." Aldridge also reproduces Wallis's typology of religious collectivities, see Figure 16 below, in which the different kinds of religious groupings are differentiated on two axes, namely respectability versus deviance, and whether or not a grouping sees itself as the sole authority or not.

Figure 16: Wallis's Typology of Religious Collectivities

	Respectable	*Deviant*
Uniquely legitimate	**CHURCH**	**SECT**
Pluralistically legitimate	**DENOMINATION**	**CULT**
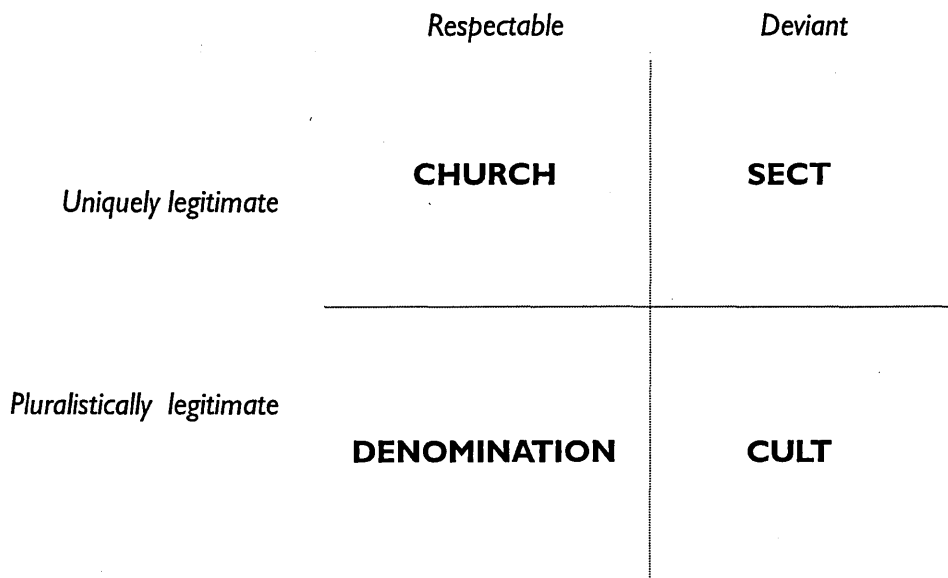
Source: Wallis, Roy (1976) The Road to Total Freedom: A sociological analysis of Scientology (p. 13), cited in Aldridge (2000:40).

A church is therefore a mainstream body which sees itself as uniquely legitimate, in contrast to a sect, which is regarded as deviant from the mainstream, but also sees itself as having sole legitimacy. Denominations accept that they may not be the solely legitimate grouping, but are seen as "respectable", whereas cults are both deviant and pluralistic. Cults are widely denigrated in the popular media owing to stories of brainwashing and tax fraud. Within the popular music business, the term "cult",

however, is routinely used – usually positively - in a metaphorical sense to indicate a band's closely attached musical following.

There are many New Religious Movements (NRMs) in contemporary society, including the Moonies, Hare Krishna, Transcendental Meditation, Scientology, est, and the Human Potential Movement (Aldridge (2000:46 et seq.). These can be divided in world-rejecting, world-affirming and world accommodating movements. According to Barker (1995:25-31), cited in Aldridge (2000:166), they offer six kinds of claimed benefits to their recruits: (1) success in careers; (2) improved health and longevity; (3) community; (4) kingdom-building; (5) self-development; and (6) religious experiences. According to Davis and Yip (2004), Lambert (1999) identified a number of common characteristics of contemporary NRMs, which they summarise, namely: (1) This-worldliness; (2) The spirituality within the individual; (3) Informality and direct, personal intimacy with the divine; (4) Freedom to choose one's church, and (5) Ritualism and symbolism transformed, meaning the "shift from mystery to performance".

I propose to take forward these classifications and ideas to a consideration of NMA and any evidence of religiosity which it may manifest. However, consistent with the theoretical perspective, it will be important to retain a construction of religiosity as one of the many dimensions of meaning which are produced and consumed in band-fan interaction. What is to be considered sacred or profane will be socially constructed and negotiated.

SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

Neither brand community theory nor consumer tribal theory draw explicitly upon social identity theory (SIT). This theory has some useful things to say about social groups and their identity. Since the case in question involves groups, whether of fans only or of band-plus-fans, there are some constructs within SIT which may be of service in this inquiry. According to Hedy Brown (1996), SIT was developed by Tajfel and Turner in the 1970s and 1980s, and it argues that "people's psychological processes are qualitatively transformed in group settings" (Brown, 1996:33), that "personal identity gives way to social identity" and "we can perceive ourselves as a member of a social group and as someone with the characteristics of that group". Tajfel (1972) defined social identity as "the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership" (cited in Hogg, 2001). Jenkins (2008:112-113) summarises social identity theory along the following lines. Social identity is the "internalisation of … collective identifications". The fact that people belong to groups gives them social identities and enables them to assess themselves. Social group members will tend to favour in-group members and discriminate against out-group members. Group members are also invested in the maintenance of positive distinctiveness for their in-group. Groups are concerned to differentiate themselves from other groups. "Self-categorisation as a group member … generates a sense of similarity with other group members, and attractiveness or self-esteem" (op. cit.:113). Group membership therefore matters to the individual, both in terms of how he may seek to warrant and maintain his membership and at the same time keep others out.

Tekman and Hortaçsu (2002) examine musical stylistic identification and social identity, and Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995) discuss SIT in relation to youth subcultures. Within marketing and consumer studies, SIT has been used in research papers on country of

origin effects in consumer behaviour (Verlegh, 1999), and within management Hogg (2001) has used it to discuss leadership. It is fair to say, however, that SIT is not widely used within marketing, consumer studies or popular music studies. At a basic level, it offers a way of thinking about the importance of social identity, identification with social groups, group membership, self-esteem, and positive distinctiveness or differentiation. To this extent, it offers potential explanatory power in relation to groups such as 'brand communities' and 'consumer tribes'. In Chapter 5, we will see how membership of the NMA Family is contested by different NMA fans.

A problem with SIT is that it can be seen to have a rather 'static' view of social identity. A more social constructionist view of social identity would see it as an ongoing accomplishment, with identity requiring regular 'maintenance'. I return to this point in the Discussion in Chapter 8.

SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEWS

In this section, I summarise those strands of the literature which are to be taken forward into the fieldwork design and execution. In this Chapter and the foregoing, a wide range of literature has been considered in an effort to shed a more holistic light on the band-fan relationship than might have been gained by a simple marketing or popular music review. The literature review began by foregrounding the notion of 'culture' and examining how cultural studies might help to frame the inquiry. Two constructs in particular, namely the circuit of culture and the notion of 'text' are very important to the study, since they place the band-fan relationship within a dynamic and mutually constitutive interaction between production and consumption. They foreground symbolic aspects of the interaction, and therefore help to retain the focus on the creation and dissemination of meaning. This enables us to approach the cultural

dimension of the band-fan interaction as a kind of micro-sign-economy, or circuit of popular music culture (COPMC). This fusion of two key discursive resources within cultural studies also helps to shape the research design. The application of the COPMC means that any utterance by band or fans may be seen as being produced and consumed within the circuit. Both band and fans mobilise discursive resources contextually and strategically when they interact. The data which emerges in this interaction may be treated as text which is produced and consumed – or written and read - within the circuit. This approach entrains theories of analysis and interpretation which address textual writing and reading, discursive production and consumption. As we shall see, in Chapter 4, the research design chapter, this involves recourse to hermeneutics, semiotics and discourse analysis. Rather than seeing texts as being simply 'produced' and 'consumed', it is important to separate texts from the discursive resources from and by means of which they are constructed, from the 'things' to which they refer, their referents, and from the meanings which they may lead to in the minds of their audiences or consumers.

Another important idea to be taken forward from the literature review in Chapter 2 is the notion of independence, or 'indie'. At stake here is the perceived credibility and authenticity of the band as an independent band, standing in opposition to the mainstream, and living by its ideology. Of particular interest here is any connection which may emerge between NMA's independence and what Fonarow (2006) asserts to be indie's "core values" which "promote and replicate the core doctrine of a particular brand of Protestant religiosity: Puritanism". We shall see how NMA's religiosity is constructed.

From Chapter 3, the second literature review Chapter, the main construct to be taken forward is the idea of the brand. The reason for its importance is that the brand is the principal construct used in marketing discourse to discuss symbolic or cultural aspects of business. At times it can be read as denoting a kind of commercially saturated entity and

its offering; at other times, the word is used almost interchangeably with sign or signifier. Brands may be regarded as meanings derived from the texts which are produced in band-fan interaction. Two other important, and currently fashionable, notions are "brand community" and "consumer tribe", and part of the analytical task will be to establish the degree to which these help to account for the band-fan group, or fan group. Social identity theory will be helpful in analysing the band-fan group(s), their membership, the policing of membership, and the positive distinctiveness of the group(s) in relation to others and how that is maintained, and what it gives to the members. Given the importance of religiosity in the brand community literature, particular attention will be paid to this aspect, in relation both to how NMA religiosity appears, as well as to the question as to whether NMA might be seen as a kind of sect, or new religious movement.

CONCLUSION

In this Chapter, I have been concerned to mobilise constructs from within the marketing, branding and consumption literatures which may be of assistance in the inquiry into rock band-fan relationships. The primary function of the Chapter has been to find a way of combining cultural and popular music studies insights with cultural dimensions of marketing and consumer studies. The purpose of this fusion is to devise a interdisciplinary, and therefore arguably richer, theoretical framework to guide the fieldwork. I have offered an extended model of the art firm, the music brand web, and an enhanced version of the Circuit of Popular Music Culture. Chapter 4, which follows next, offers an account of the ontological and epistemological perspectives which shaped the inquiry, and outlines the methods of data collection and analysis which were used.

CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH DESIGN

… nothing in show business is ever what it seems This is a world of illusions and deceptive half truths, founded upon sleights of hand and puzzles without solutions. It's a world that depends on flexibility, profound use of physical and mental energy, desperate improvisations and tricks of light. We have, like all tribes, our own hierarchy, our own argot, our own allegiances, both obvious and subtle.

Joolz Denby, band web-site

INTRODUCTION

The literature reviews in two preceding Chapters have helped to theoretical frame the study. I now consider how the theoretical framework translates into an analytic orientation. This chapter deals with the research strategy which was designed to gather and analyse data relevant to the research inquiry in a manner consistent with the theoretical orientation. It positions the research project as an ethnographic study of a particular tribe, and the researcher as a reflexive bricoleur who immerses himself in the tribal culture in pursuit of answers to the questions originally posed. Theoretically, meaning is seen as produced and consumed in a cultural circuit. A key source of these meanings are the cultural texts which are in circulation. The research objective is to identify these texts and to collect and analyse them. The data is treated as textual. The methodological approach used is hermeneutic and semiotic, complemented by a view of the need to treat texts or discourse for analytical purposes as occasioned (context-dependent) and strategic (rhetorical). This latter component prescribes a discourse-analytical approach. The data which is collected and analysed is textual data, in the narrow sense of the written word, and in the wider sense of performed practices which communicate possible readings. This research account is that it is a one-off 'fixing' of meaning in relation to NMA and its fans. It does not purport to be 'the truth' about

NMA. It is an account, using specialised language, of other people's accounts of their (subjective) relationship with NMA and an analysis of how NMA and its fans articulate their identity in different texts and contexts. My interest is in exploring an insider's perspective on life as an NMA band-fan community member in order to gain some insight into what it is that pulls the fans to the band (and its wider community), and what keeps them there. I am operating broadly within an interpretive framework, concerned with *accounts* of objects and events rather than with trying to offer an 'objective' statement or positivistic account of what interests me, and a treatment of individuals as conscious, reflective agents. I see the researcher as a self-reflexive *bricoleur*. The fieldwork undertaken is summarised, the nature of the texts explained and relevant methods literature considered. I discuss the different methods of data collection and analysis used in the inquiry as a whole, and how this is designed to answer the original and elaborated research questions posed.

REVISITING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The general research question is how the NMA project has managed to sustain itself in the marketplace. More specific questions are: What, and what kind of, identities occur in the field defined by the case study? How and in what contexts are these identities and relationships constructed and communicated, and with what consequences? How is the relationship between band and fans 'managed'? Can we talk of a NMA 'marketing strategy' or brand'?

THE GUIDING FRAMEWORK

The search for data is framed by the COPMC (see Figure 17 below).

Figure 17: The Circuit of Popular Music Culture C
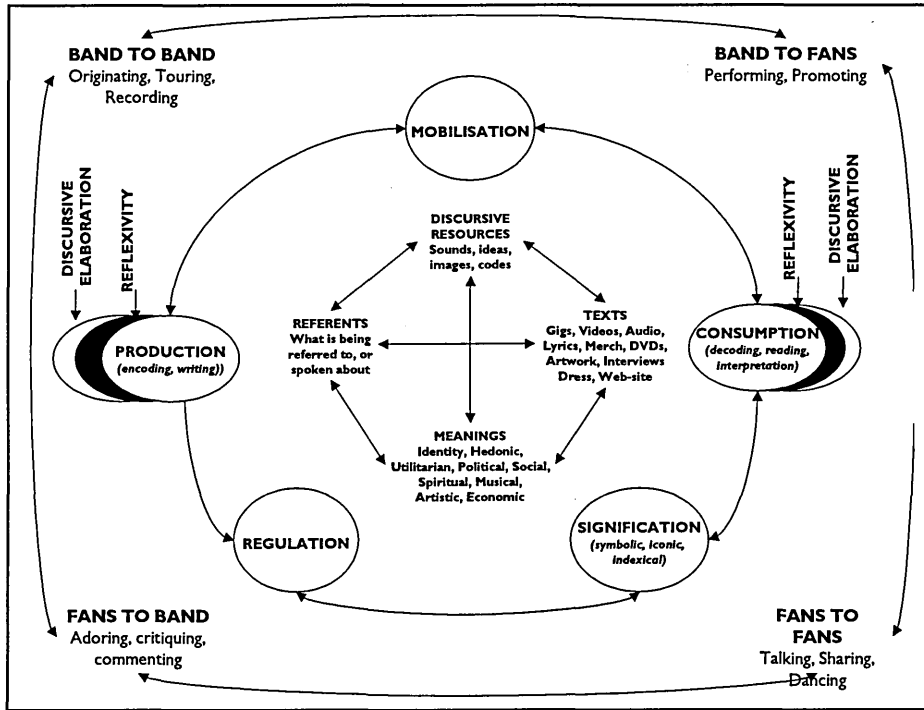
Source: Author

Each text which is mobilised in the social interaction between and amongst the band and fans mobilises a set of interpretative repertoires or discursive resources to refer to something and signify meaning in a certain way. Every text is produced and consumed, and may be subject to cultural regulation. The production and consumption of texts may involve reflexivity on the part of producer and consumer, and producers and consumer may discursively elaborate amongst themselves the meanings of texts. In this way, it is

possible to retain a sense of who is using what to communicate what to whom in what way and how are the meanings of that utterance construed.

THEORY BUILDING

The academic research objective is to make a contribution to the theory concerning the marketing and consumption of popular music from a culturalist perspective. The purpose of the research is to 'probe, expand and complexify our understanding' (Hall, 1997:8), rather than to simplify it in a reductionist way. The theory building is done by using qualitative research. We need to relate the terms of our theoretical constructs to the research site. It will make for stronger, more robust theory if a variety of data sources are used and their findings converge. There is also a concern to achieve a balance between theory and practice, and between etic and emic perspectives (Morris et al., 1999). It is, therefore, a question of listening to the voices of the band members and fans as they tell us how they construe and construct their own social realities.

The general approach is that of a reflexive bricolage. According to Alasuutari (1995), the 'real gist of cultural studies' is to utilize:

all useful theories and methods in order to gain insights about the phenomena one studies … [it] starts from the idea that theories and methods should become not blinders but additional viewpoints on reality.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1998:4), a bricoleur is:

adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks, ranging from interviewing to observing, to interpreting personal and historical documents, to intensive self-reflection and introspection ... The researcher-as-bricoleur-theorist works between competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms.

This project therefore offers a 'bricolage' of meanings about NMA and its fans. It is an examination of other people's accounts of their (subjective) relationship with NMA, an analysis of how and with what possible consequences NMA fans articulate their identities and relationships in different contexts, and of how this meaning-making may be related to the durability of the NMA project. According to Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000), a reflexive approach means that:

due attention is paid to the interpretive, political and rhetorical nature of empirical research ... Reflection (reflexivity) is thus above all a question of recognising fully the notoriously ambivalent relation of a researcher's text to the realities studied.

In practice in this case, this means immersion in the field as a participant observer, and a continuing attempt to interpret the different texts and practices involved in band-fan social interaction.

ETHNOGRAPHY

Perhaps the most suitable description of the approach taken in this study is 'ethnographic'. The traditional ethnographic study undertaken by early European anthropologists, such as Bronislaw Malinowski and others, involved lengthy periods in the field studying exotic tribes in far-flung places. Of course, this study did not involve

the 'total' immersion of the early anthropologists. It has been more like the social-anthropological kind of study envisaged by Van Maanen (1988), in which the researcher, working in communities closer to, or indeed in, his/her own culture, 'commutes' to the research site, and spends different amounts of time in the field at different stages. 'Commuting' was certainly a feature of this project, as a considerable amount of time was spent travelling by car to and from Bradford and Leeds (where I worked at different times), Manchester, Nottingham, Bristol, Wolverhampton, Holmfirth and Dublin. The study is ethnographic in that it is a study of a group of people which calls itself a 'tribe' (among other things), and in that it uses purposeful conversations with group members, the examination of documents and artefacts, photographic records, participant observation and a key informant as the key components of its research strategy.

Within the marketing and consumer literature, a number of scholars have adopted ethnographic approaches to inquiry. Elliot and Jankel-Elliott (2003) apply the principles of ethnography to what they characterise as 'strategic consumer research' They see ethnography as 'the study of behaviour in natural settings', and requiring an understanding of how the people being studied understand the world, immersion in the field, and participation in the cultural life being studied. Arnould and Price (2006), citing Coupland (2005), argue for an understanding of what they call 'meso-level ethnography' as a means of understanding how customers 'use resources provided by firms in the culturally, socially situated practices of their everyday lives".

INTERPRETIVE CONSUMER AND MARKETING RESEARCH

Because the present inquiry is interested in a broad view of the dyadic relationship, not producers or consumers alone, it is necessary to find a perspective amongst the rich resources offered by interpretive consumer research (ICR) and interpretive marketing

research (IMR) which lends itself to interpretation of the textual data. There are two principal strands of explicitly interpretive work going on in marketing and consumer studies, namely ICR and IMR. ICR is a vast literature which has some overlap with Consumer Culture Theory and includes writing by Beckmann and Elliott (ed.) (2000), Elliott and Ritson (1997), Goulding (1998, 1999), Gummesson (2003),Hirschman and Holbrook (1992), Holbrook and O'Shaughnessy (1988), Levy. (2005), Shankar and Goulding (2001), Shankar and Patterson (2001), and Tadajewski (2006). A recent summarising editorial on ICR by Cova and Elliott (2008) in Qualitative Marketing Research talks of the need to find new ways of 'understanding not how a product is purchased or used but the whole of the consumption experience, notably including its major subjective components as well as the hedonic aspect of searching for pleasure and enjoyment through consumption'. ICR tends to have a social constructionist perspective (Brown, 1995) and be interested in deploying qualitative research to elicit the emic accounts of members of their own consumption experiences (Tadajewski, 2006).

IMR, on the other hand, refers primarily to the Routledge series of texts of the same name, currently edited by Professors Stephen Brown and Barbara Stern, which seeks to give expression to the interpretive turn in marketing and consumer research. Work in this series includes books on consumer motivation (Ratneshwar, Mick and Huffman (ed.), (2003), art and aesthetics (Brown and Patterson (ed.) (2007), social construction (Hackley, 2001), visual consumption (Schroeder, 2005), literature (Brown (ed.), 2006) and critical marketing (Skålén, Fellesson and Fougère, 2007). As well as being interpretive, books in this series also draw upon postmodern and critical perspectives. It is not the case that, in a neat division of labour, IMR deals only with the production side of the exchange relationship, while ICR deals only with consumption issues. Rather, ICR and IMR scholars share a willingness to engage with phenomena from a range of interpretive perspectives.

Three of these perspectives, namely hermeneutics, semiotics and discourse analysis, are pertinent to this project and are discussed below in relation to the research design. Within marketing and consumer studies, Holbrook and O'Shaughnessy's journal article (1988) dealing explicitly with the 'linguistic turn in marketing research' identifies two stands, hermeneutics and semiotics. Hermeneutics is the study of interpretation; semiotics is the study of signs. Note that the focus in each case it somewhat different: in hermeneutics, the focus is on interpretation and understanding; in semiotics, the focus is on the signs (symbols, texts as sign-systems). Semioticians, however, will also look at wider meanings/connotations of a work and this inevitably raises the issue of understanding. According to Holbrook and O'Shaughnessy (1988):

Loosely defined, the more qualitative, interpretive side of semiotics or semiology[31] has joined with hermeneutics to focus on the symbolic meanings that consumers derive from their consumption experiences.

HERMENEUTICS

The branch of hermeneutics which felt most appropriate for my purpose was philosophical hermeneutics, whose leading exponent is Hans-Georg Gadamer. His approach to hermeneutics is set out primarily in his *Truth and Method* (1989), as well as in *Philosophical Hermeneutics* (1976).

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[31] Semiotics is the term used for American sign study, semiology for European.

Gadamer's analysis of aesthetic and historical consciousness led him to develop a number of key concepts. One of these is Vorurteil, or pre-understanding. He acknowledged that individuals are historically situated and that their way of seeing things is influenced by what they have learned. Hermeneutics must start from the position that a person seeking to understand something has a bond to the subject matter that comes into language through the tradition from which the text speaks. On the other hand, hermeneutical consciousness is aware that its bond to this subject matter does not consist in some self-evident, unquestioned unanimity (Gadamer, 1989: 295). The researcher's Vorurteile can be either correct or incorrect (Schmidt, 1987:33):

We inherit our Vorurteile in our acculturation. They are not just my pre-judgements, which I form, rather they form me or my thought to a significant extent. I enter into their life and they form my historical being.' (p.34).

The Vorurteile determine the horizon, the level of understanding which the researcher has attained before his encounter with the text. As Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) assert, 'Interpretation does not take place in a neutral, apolitical, value-free space. Nor is an autonomous value-free researcher responsible for it.' Every researcher has a horizon, which bounds what s/he can see. Inquiry involves moving within the other's horizon and of achieving a fusion of horizons, an understanding. This thesis, therefore, is in one sense a report on this process of fusion of horizons.

Coming from a management research background, Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) devote a full chapter to a consideration of hermeneutics. Both emphasise the importance of intuition in interpretation. According to Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000), the hermeneutic circle means that the meaning of part of a text can only be understood if it is related to the whole. They assert that there are two hermeneutical circles, those

between part-whole relationships, and between pre-understanding and understanding. In the dialogic approach which they advocate, hermeneutic interpreters are not passive receptors of the text; they ask questions of it and listen to it; questions are directed at the whole and the parts; the research problem transforms during the process; this transformation affects the interpretation.

Arnold and Fischer (1994) discuss the application of hermeneutic philosophy to consumer research. In this paper, they explain the key concepts of pre-understanding, the hermeneutic circle, the dialogic community, and linguisticality of understanding. They then consider the implications of hermeneutic philosophy for consumer research and include some critical comment. Papers by Thompson, Pollio and Locander (1994) and Thompson (1997) then further developed the application of hermeneutics in relation to understanding consumer accounts.

While these lines of thinking about hermeneutics are helpful in theorising the role of the researcher as interpreter, there are other aspects of texts and discourse which is was important to capture in this inquiry, and particularly semiotics and discourse analysis.

SEMIOTICS

According to Silverman (1983), De Saussure (1998) established a science of signs as part of social psychology. Two key points of this science were that the sign was theorised as composed of two parts, signifier and signified and that the relationship between the signifier and signified was arbitrary. Semiotics was concerned with relations between (1) signifier and signified; (2) the sign and all other elements of its own system; (3) the sign and surrounding elements in a concrete signifying instance. Later, Pierce, the US

semiologist, (Colapietro, 1988) introduced a different model of sign, interpretant and object. He argued that people have direct experience but only indirect knowledge of reality mediated through signifiers/signifieds. Later still, Barthes (1993) developed the notions of connotation (second order meanings) and cultural codes. Derrida's contribution was the radical critique of the privileging of speech over writing, and an insistence on the endless circularity of meaning. Finally Benveniste (1971) held that the individual finds his or her cultural identity only within discourse. He regarded discourse as a signifying transaction between two persons, one of which addresses the other, and in the process defines himself or herself. The subject was not in control of his or her own subjectivity but was constrained by language conventions, and by cultural codes. The subject was split by conscious and unconscious level of discourse.

In 1986, David Glen Mick's seminal paper on consumer research and semiotics appeared in the Journal of Consumer Research. Mick traced the origins and evolution of semiotics, reviewed the use of semiotics in consumer research (in the areas of advertising and marketing communications), and called for consumer researchers to exploit the potential of semiotics. In 1993, Morris Holbrook and Elizabeth Hirschman published a scholarly monograph entitled "The Semiotics of Consumption: Interpreting symbolic consumer behaviour in popular culture and works of art". The authors examined consumption symbolism and marketing imagery in works of art and entertainment (tv soaps, films and literature). They took an interpretive semiotic view which they characterised as follows: its aim was to focus on communication via symbols organised into languages and codes (e.g. food clothing , furniture, High Art, pop culture, myths, rituals. The fundamental concept was that of a dyadic relation between a signifier (form, expression) and a signified. They promoted a postpositivistic bias toward interpretation which emphasised the semantic and syntactic aspects of multiple levels of meaning.

In this study, the texts under examination are of widely differing kinds. They include social rituals like live concerts, material objects like paintings and photographs, written words, gestures, images and so on. Semiotics offers a general theory of signs and the relationship between signifiers and signifieds and referents. This provides the researcher with a language with which to analyse any texts on generic principles. Using a semiotic approach, for example, one can treat social practices as signifying practices, so that, the gig can be conceived of as a cultural and/or theatrical ritual in which the participants communicate with each other and with observers by means of a wide array of signifiers, a performed text which can be read as a sign-system (Aston and Savona, 1991; Fortier, 2002). In the next section, I consider the use of discourse analysis which is not equipped to deal with this full range of texts but has particular strengths in other areas.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In the past twenty years or so, a relatively small group of marketing scholars has engaged with different forms of text, textual analysis and textual representation. Their inquiries have been largely influenced by literary studies, and focus on a wide range of 'texts', including advertisements (Stern 1989, 1990, 1991, 1993a, 1993b, 1995, 1996), popular novels (Brown 1995, 2001, 2002, 2006), culinary texts (Brownlie 2005), management texts (O'Reilly 2000, Hackley, 2003), marketing-theory texts (Brown 2004, 2005), films (Hirschman and Stern 1994), television programmes (Hirschman 1998, 1999) and representations of consumers (Stern ed., 1998). A variety of constructs has been deployed in the conduct of their analyses, for example, persona (Stern 1993), and point of view (Stern 1991); and a range of analytical strategies has been attempted, including, for example, structural-syntactical (Hirschman 1988), deconstruction (Stern 1996) and rhetoric (Brown 2004).

While textual analysis is, therefore, quite well established within marketing and consumer studies, the area of discourse analysis is less well developed. In a recent paper, Sitz (2008) argues for the need for consumer researchers to go 'beyond hermeneutics and semiotics' and to embrace discourse analysis (DA). His paper traces a wide range of references from the DA literature, but omits any reference to several scholars working in this area within marketing and consumer studies, including Hackley (2000, 2001, 2003, 2007), Ellis, Jack and Higgins (2005), Hopkinson (2003), Moufahim, Humphreys, Mitussis and Fitchett (2007) and De Cock, Fitchett and Volkmann (2005). As Ellis et al. puts it (2005), the social constructionist worldview view 'emphasises the way in which the social world is continually reinvented (produced) by individuals, rather than as something which simply confronts them'. Sitz argues (2008) that discourse analysis 'challenges the taken-for-granted nature of language', and that 'analysts should be sensitive to the social constructive nature of discourse'. This approach has been used in popular music by Antaki and Widdecombe (1998), for example, to study the construction of identity in the punk community. There are many variants of discourse analysis (DA) – see Parker (1999) and Wood and Kroeger (2000), with different variants of DA being used for different purposes.

The theoretical approach to the study, as framed in the circuit of popular music culture, contained a particular take on cultural production and consumption, and therefore on discourse. It provided for production, consumption, regulation, mobilisation of discursive resources, and signification, as well as including texts and their referents and meanings. Discourse analysis is used to look at discourse in social interaction. Consonant with this theoretical, culturalist orientation, it was necessary to locate a variant of DA which also acknowledged the notion of discursive resources. In this case, in a spirit of bricolage, a discursive-psychological approach to discourse analysis (DPDA) was utilised (Wetherell 1998; Potter & Wetherell 1995, 1987) in the analysis of texts. DPDA offered the construct of 'interpretative repertoires' as being used by discourse participants for

sense-making and text-encoding purposes. This construct seemed to have a close enough fit to the more general term of 'discursive resources' to enable it to be of assistance.

The DPDA approach to analysis is influenced by social constructionist theory, which argues that descriptions of events, people, groups, institutions and psychological phenomena are only ever one version of reality and should be treated as open-ended and flexible. Analysis thus involves a search for actual or potential variability in constructions and asks, why this formulation at this point in the strip of text? This constructive work is linked to the accomplishment of social actions. As Parker (1997) argues, "When we seem to be merely describing a state of affairs, our commentary always has other effects; it plays a part it legitimizing or challenging, supporting or ironizing, endorsing or subverting what it describes" (p. 290). Analytically, a focus on social action involves interpreting the interactional pragmatics and the ideological work that is accomplished by constructing one particular version rather than another. Discourse analysts are also sensitive to the rhetorical organization of arguments and opinions and the discursive strategies used to make an argument seem factual or persuasive, including attention to the speaker's construction of their credentials as a "qualified," "neutral" or "sympathetic" observer.

DPDA also examines the interpretive resources that are mobilised in the text (Potter & Wetherell 1995; Wetherell 1998). In the DP literature, systems of content, coherent ways of talking about objects, subjects and events in the world are referred to as "interpretative repertoires" (Potter & Wetherell 1987; Wetherell & Potter 1988; Edley 2000). These are conceived as the "building blocks" of sense making, the range of interpretative resources (cultural themes, arguments and assumptions) that can be utilised in the course of social interaction and which form the "common sense" basis for shared understanding. The cultural position of the researcher enables this reading. An

interpretative repertoire is constituted from a limited range of lexical items, stylistic constructions and the use of a range of metaphors (Potter & Reicher 1987).

Selections can be made from available repertoires to suit the occasion and function to which the discourse is put (Potter, Wetherell, Gill and Edwards 1990) and are in use when constructing descriptions of people, groups, objects, institutions and events and when offering opinions, evaluations and explanations. Analysis involves clarifying and discussing the interpretative resources that members draw on and the development of a critical commentary on the cultural significance of the discursive patterns and resources in play. The aim is to trace the links between culture and social interaction.

This study, therefore, makes use of hermeneutics, semiotics and discourse analysis. A hermeneutical perspective positions the researcher as a culturally-situated reader of texts; a semiotician's perspective focuses attention on the different kinds of texts and signs, not just written, but also artwork and sounds, and of their relationship with each other and with their referents; a DPDA perspective focuses on some of those texts as themselves constructed from interpretative resources, occasioned, and strategic. For this study, all three perspectives have something to offer. Rather than seeking, as Sitz (2008) suggests, to go 'beyond' hermeneutics and semiotics to DA, I argue that, in this case at least, and in a spirit of bricolage, it can make sense to make use of all three.

CASE STUDY

A case study design is preferred when seeking answers to 'how?' or 'why?' questions, when multiple sources of evidence are desirable, and when it is desirable to generate knowledge of the particular, (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a, pp:194-5) all of which reasons

are relevant here. Case-oriented analysis is 'good at finding specific, concrete, historically grounded patterns' (op. cit.). There are conflicting opinions on generalisability of case studies. Easton (2003), for example, feels that the adoption of a critical realist perspective means that generalisations may safely be made from a single case. Yin (1994:50) contrasts statistical generalisation with analytic generalization: 'in analytic generalisation, a previously developed theory is used as a template against which to compare the empirical results of the case study'; and (p. 79) generalisation of the results from case study design is made to theory and not to "populations". The intention in this project is not to seek or to claim statistical generalisability from this single case. The objective is to conduct exploratory inductive research in order to test a conceptual framework which isolates key constructs and their interrelationships in the research area as defined.

Yin identifies four design issues in case studies (pp. 33, 34): identifying the major unit of analysis, whether to study a single or multiple case, the case selection criteria, and the data collection strategy. These are now dealt with in turn in relation to the research design for the current project. Firstly, the researcher must identify the major unit of analysis. The unit becomes the main analytical level for the 'case' being studied. In this research, the macro unit of analysis is the communicative aspects of the relationship between and among the band and their fans. Embedded within this are subordinate units of analysis, such as fan-to-fan relationships, fan-to-band relationships and band-to-band relationships. There are also thematic units of analysis arising from the theoretical framework, including identity, texts, and symbolic consumption and production. Secondly, one has to decide whether a single or multiple cases are to be the subject of study. In this case, a single case has been chosen in order to focus the available resources on one instance and therefore obtain the deepest possible understanding of the phenomenon. Thirdly - still according to Yin - one must specify the case selection criteria. New Model Army offers a particularly interesting site of tension and conflict

between its creativity and music on the one side and its business or economic activities on the other, conflict which is made explicit in commentaries by the band, as discussed in Chapter 1. An extract from the Rough Guide to Rock (first edition) originally on the band's web-site when this research project started reflects this tension in the band's journey:

> *Despite their potential for commercial success they [New Model Army] have always been more interested in pursuing their own musical and lyrical agenda than falling for the trappings of celebrity. To date they have shunned the mainstream and with each subsequent record retain their cult appeal whilst at the same time paradoxically maintaining a huge world-wide following.*

The band's process of development is presented as being driven primarily by its creativity, and not by e.g. business reasons. This sits well with an independent, alternative stance in the music business adopted by many bands over and against the major record labels. Secondly, NMA fans' passion and enthusiasm is also hinted at in the notion of NMA as having 'cult appeal'. Thirdly, gaining access to a rock band is not exactly a simple matter. Feasibility was a key issue in the selection of this case. The band had been based in Bradford since 1980, and the researcher worked at the University of Bradford for much of the research period. Geographical proximity and the willingness of the band members, and of course the fans, to co-operate made this study feasible. Fourthly, and lastly, amongst Yin's four case study research design issues, there is the question of choice of data collection strategy, between either a one-time data collection effort or a more extended data collection period. In this case, different aspects of the data collection took place at different times and for different lengths of time, as outlined in the next section.

DATA COLLECTION

In this section, I discuss the status of texts as data, and the various methods which were used to collect data, including interviews, online observation, live observation and videography.

TEXTS AS DATA

As we have seen above, Barker (2000) defines text as 'all practices which signify'. I have theorised the interaction between and amongst band members and fans as textually (discursively) constructed. The kinds of texts which are constructed by band and fans, or third parties, include: lyrics, art, merchandise (T-shirts), tangible packaged products (CDs, vinyl), interviews, reviews, tattoos, body piercings, publicity photographs, articles, the music sounds, videos, live performances, web-site graphics, text postings and sounds, physical features and appearance, footwear and clothing in general. These text categories constitute both objects of analysis in themselves as well as sources of data constructing the phenomenon under investigation. The strategy was to use a combination of methods to collect the data with a view to triangulating the data at the analytical stage. The methods used were: interviews, participant observation of the web-site (chapter 5), heritage exhibition (Chapter 6) and live performance (Chapter 7), electronic capture of web-based material (lyrics, artwork) from the band's site and other sites, as well as purchase of products such as CDs and clothing merchandise. The strategy was to take a range of readings of these different texts, to compare and contrast what resources they mobilised and signified, and what their referents were (see Circuit of Popular Music Culture framework). To call social action a text is to frame it metaphorically, to make salient its 'textuality', to construct it as, or give it the status of, a set of encoded signifiers, and therefore to present it for analysis as something readable, or amenable to interpretation. The danger with this text metaphor is that, like

all metaphors, it abstracts certain aspects of the phenomenon and carries the meaning away to the workbench for analysis and dissection leaving the living reality behind. The strategy which I employed to deal with this was to seek accounts from text producers and consumers of what different texts meant to them, and thereby to balance my own lived sense of their meanings to me, and my own interpretation of the texts, with members' accounts of them.

AN INVITATION

In order to gain the answers to at least some of the questions which had been opened up by watching the U2 concert (see Chapter 1), my research objective was to identify a rock band and gain access to it and its fans. My connection with the band in this study was established at a time when I was stuck with an earlier attempt at a PhD, namely an analysis of the UK fine art market, with a particular emphasis on visual art brands[32]. This project was an attempt to get the answers to my questions about art, markets and meaning – since I knew some visual artists, and no rock musicians, it seemed a more sensible approach to try visual arts. Then, I received an invitation from a business school colleague at Bradford, who was aware of my 'stuckness', to meet with someone who had a connection to a locally-based band. I went along to a meeting at the Love Apple café in Bradford. My colleague's contact turned out to be Joolz Denby, the spoken word artist, novelist and Orange Prize nominee, whose partner Justin Sullivan was the lead singer/songwriter of the band in question, New Model Army.

As a result of this meeting, I was invited to spend time with the band as they prepared for a concert at the Rock City venue in central Nottingham. I went along, met the band,

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[32] See O'Reilly (2005) for traces of this earlier project.

and watched the sound-check and show. The impact was immediate, and the questions which had pre-occupied me since I first watched the U2 video came into sharper focus. The reason I had been stuck with the visual art branding project was that the art world was not the place to find the answers to the questions I had been asking about meaning, art and marketing – easy to see this now, looking back, of course. There was something about the passionate, social nature of the musical experience that made it a more interesting and exciting world to study than the rather 'white cube' cerebral space of contemporary visual art. Following further discussions with supervisors and colleagues, I decided to change topic.

This change was undertaken with some trepidation, for I was about to enter an art world (Becker, 1982) about which I knew very little. The sense of unease was not helped by reading the following description of this new world on the band web-site:

... nothing in show business is ever what it seems This is a world of illusions and deceptive half truths, founded upon sleights of hand and puzzles without solutions. It's a world that depends on flexibility, profound use of physical and mental energy, desperate improvisations and tricks of light. We have, like all tribes, our own hierarchy, our own argot, our own allegiances, both obvious and subtle. Joolz, IVP09

KEY INFORMANT

The above quotation from a band-side participant with which this Chapter began invokes a magic trope to characterize the 'art world' (Becker, 1982) which I set out to study. Its mobilisation of notions such as 'deceptive half-truths', 'sleights of hand', 'puzzles without solutions' and 'tricks of light' suggest a world which cannot easily be

understood, and may even be deceptive. The reference to 'obvious and subtle allegiances' also sounded a cautionary note about power interests and coalitions in the field. The development of a framework may help to guide the inquiry conceptually, but who could be trusted, in a community so characterised, with its own hierarchy, argot and allegiances, to be a reliable guide to the social dynamics and culture practices of the tribe?

Joolz Denby has been a key informant in this project, acting also as a gatekeeper and adviser throughout. I first met Joolz at the Love Apple café in Bradford, where I was introduced by a colleague at the University there. At the time, as previously mentioned, I was working on an earlier thesis about visual art branding, which was making slow progress. As a result of this meeting with Joolz, and a subsequent performance by the band to which she kindly invited me, I switched PhD topic to the present one. Joolz is an established writer and performer in her own right[33], as a novelist and spoken word artist. She has published four novels: *Stone Baby* (2000), *Corazon* (2001), *Billie Morgan* (2004) – shortlisted for the Orange Prize - and *Borrowed Light* (2006). Her poetry has been published by Bloodaxe Books and Flambard. A full CV is at Appendix D. In December 2007, she was awarded an honorary *D. Litt.* by the University of Bradford. In addition to her career in poetry, performance and writing, Joolz is also Justin Sullivan's partner. Joolz has also been the band's visual artist since the beginning. She has done the artwork for almost all of the band's covers. As will become clearer, she has had a profound influence on the symbolic/cultural dimensions of the band-fan relations by virtue of her graphical work, as well as her knowledge of tattooing, body modification and curation. She has also frequently toured with the band, officially as merchandise assistant, a role which enables her to meet the fans at the booth where the band's merchandise is sold. In addition to her own career as a spoken word artist and novelist,

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[33] See www.joolz-denby.co.uk for Joolz Denby's dedicated web-site

she occupies, therefore, a number of roles specifically connected with New Model Army. She herself describes her role in relation to the band as follows:

My job is the lowest of the low - that of second swagman, or, in Plain English, the T-shirt seller's assistant ... In the outside world, I design the band's record sleeves and merchandise line and have done so for 17 stormy years ... I also live with the frontman, Justin Sullivan, in an obscure Northern city in Britain, a small island off the coast of mainland Europe.IVP09

In the ensuing years, in pursuit of deep immersion, I have spent as much time as my day-job, family and other responsibilities would allow me in maintaining contact with the 'field'. Joolz helped me considerably with my research. For example, she facilitated access to Justin Sullivan for the interview; she allowed herself to be interviewed; she helped me with answers to or comments on the many questions which I had; she responded to my e–mails; she put me on the guest list when I went to see the band in Dublin; she facilitated access to Tommy Tee, the band's manager, and helped the research in a range of other ways.

Maintaining a connection to Joolz was important for a deeper understanding of band-fan relationships. I saw it as an important aspect of my immersion in the field, and my ongoing participant observation, to maintain a good working relationship with her. Outside of NMA concerts, I took time to acquaint myself with Joolz's work in her own right. This involved my attendance at poetry readings which she organised in Bradford Central Library for other poets, or which featured her own work (for example at Matt and Phred's in Manchester, or Bukowski's in Sheffield). I found this experience very illuminating. At the Matt and Phred's event, for example, I was able to gain an insight

into her views on the relationship between art and the market, as outlined in the following field note:

> *Joolz was asked during a Q&A session: what does being nominated for the Orange Prize mean to you? Her answer was: 'that's all marketing; it has nothing to do with the writing'.*
>
> Source: Field notes

This presentation of the art of writing and the publishing market as entirely separate spheres of activity arguably carries resonances of indie ideology, and relates to one of the central questions of this thesis. Joolz is not saying 'find out what the customers want and give it to them' (a basic view of marketing), but 'marketing ... has nothing to do with the writing'.

I also attended the launch of one of her novels at Waterstone's in Bradford, and another reading in Waterstone's in Orchard Square in Sheffield. I met with Joolz intermittently for coffee and chat in Bradford, and maintained contact through e-mail. I visited the art show which she put on at the University of Bradford Gallery. I also attended a week-long course in spoken word art which she gave at the Arvon Foundation in Todmorden, West Yorkshire, which gave me insight into her approach to performance. I attended performances of the band she has more recently been promoting, New York Alcoholic Anxiety Attack[34]. At one point, Joolz kindly agreed to mentor some of my screen-writing. I found this process very helpful indeed, in so far as it revealed to me her quick

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[34] See www.nyaa.org.

intelligence, literary-political nous, and fierceness and confidence about her own artistic vision.

Seeing Joolz and NMA members at close quarters in different contexts afforded me different insights into their work and their identity constructions and relationships. It also helped to keep my research project alive, by demonstrating to Joolz and to the band a continuing interest in their work. I was in a way reciprocating their support for my project with support of my own for theirs, showing loyalty to the cause in a sense. Elliott and Jankel Elliott (2003) say that rich data can be gained from 'informal talk between researcher and informants', and I found this to be the case. I found that keeping my eyes and ears open and my mouth shut also helped ...

This extensive range and variety of contact helped me to gain a sense of Joolz as a key influence on the visual aesthetic of NMA and the symbolic representation of the band's values. I also gained insights into her artistic ethic/aesthetic, and supplemented the insights gained from other sources, such as the NMA web-site, and of course her novels and poems themselves. At a personal level, I found it highly instructive to see a person who lives by her art and her wits, to observe how she behaved, spoke and thought about the creative 'business'.

This would be quite a different thesis if my key informant had been Justin Sullivan, or Tommy Tee; there is no dispute about that. The stories of their respective involvements with the NMA project would still be interwoven with those of the other band members and associates of course, but quite different.

INTERVIEWS

Elliott and Jankel-Elliott (2003) state that 'ethnography makes use of small samples of informants'. An interview is a purposeful conversation between two people (Kahn and Cannell, 1983). Interviews are generally classified into three types: unstructured or in-depth, semi-structured and structured (Saunders et al., 2003:246). For exploratory research, it is more common to use unstructured interviews, where the informant is enabled to 'talk freely about events, behaviours and beliefs in relation to the topic area' (op. cit. p. 247). Kvale (2002:3) suggests that there are two types of interviewer: miners and travellers. The mining metaphor assumes that nuggets of information are waiting there for the researcher to discover from the informant. Knowledge is 'given'. The traveller metaphor positions the researcher as someone on a journey which 'leads to a tale to be told upon returning home' (op. cit., p.4). Given the social constructionist perspective adopted here, the traveller metaphor applies more to this project. Kvale argues that there is no set of standard rules for interviewing. A lot depends on the 'expertise, skills and craftsmanship' of the researcher.

The approach to the interviews was based broadly along the lines advocated in Mishler (1986) and to some extent McCracken (1988), and a short list of discussion topics was prepared and used as a guide to interviews based on the research questions. In the case of fans, the topics related to the fan's involvement and relationship with the band and the band's offerings, i.e. texts; in the case of band associates, the interviews focused on the processes by which different texts were produced, the nature and meanings of the texts themselves, and marketing- and identity-related issues. The dialogue tended to follow different routes depending on what the fan mentioned. The potential meaning which is created in a transcript is co-created by the questions asked as well as by answers given. As Ellis et al. put it (2005), 'the interviews were regarded as a co-production where the researchers' assumptions guided the questions that were asked '.

Echoing Mishler (1986:52), Schwandt (2001:136) comments that: 'The meanings of questions and responses are contextually grounded and jointly constructed by interviewer and respondent ... What transpires ... is the active joint construction of plausible stories or accounts of social life'. McCracken says (p. 42): 'The object of analysis is to determine the categories, relationships, and assumptions that informs the respondent's view of the world in general and the topic in particular'.

A pilot interview with an NMA fan was done. This identified a number of issues, for example the question of subdivision of the fan base into different subcultures - goth, punk, crustie. This sensitised me to a subcultural aspects of identity, and their reflection in the literature. Another pilot was done around the same time with a person who had been on security duty at an NMA gig at Bradford University. From this interview, I got a sense of the unusual composition (mixed age range) and considerable passion and enthusiasm of NMA fans. Neither of these pilot or preliminary interviews obliged me to change my approach. If anything, they encouraged in my sense that the best thing I could do was to enable the respondents to talk at their ease about NMA.

Potential fan interviewees were then identified off the web-site noticeboard. I targeted people who were regular contributors and in my opinion had something interesting to say. Fan no. 1 was recruited this way, as well as fan no 2, who brought along 3 with him. Fans 4 and 5 were organised through fans 2 and 3, using the snowballing technique. This operated quite successfully. Fan 6 was a direct e-mail, using Fan #1 as a warrantor. Tommy Tee, the manager, was used as a reference point for those wishing to check up on me. It seemed that almost everybody checked me out with Tommy Tee or Joolz. The transcripts are at Appendix F. They were sent to a transcriber, who sent me back a Word file on each one. I then re-listened to the tapes and then with the aid of the transcript made copy-editing changes to the transcript and sent it back to the respondent for vetting. None of the respondents wished to make any changes to the transcripts. Had

they indicated desire to do so, I would have examined each point on its merits and in full consultation with them.

I let the fans chose where we met. In one case I drove 600 miles in one day there and back to get an interview at a time and place convenient to the fan. Settings were to be conducive to relaxing. Unfortunately for fans 2 and 3 we couldn't find a quiet pub, so there were problems with audibility on the tape. Two interviews were in a pub, one in a hotel lobby.

The interview with Joolz was in a café, the one with Justin there was a pre-meeting in a café in Bradford, and the interview itself took place immediately afterwards in NMA's recording studios in Bradford. Looking back on this particular interview, I speculate that the pre-meeting was an opportunity for Justin to satisfy himself about me as interviewer.

My first meeting with him had been at the Rock City gig to which Joolz had invited me. My field notes remind me that he asked me what were the three most recent songs I had been listening to. This felt like a kind of test of my musical taste. I decided to be absolutely truthful, and mentioned Canadian diva Celine Dion first. There was no reaction, but what must he have been thinking?! I then mentioned a fairly middle of the road rock band as the second track (still no reaction). Finally, I mentioned the third piece of music which I had been listening to at that time, namely, Compton gangsta rap group NWA's *Straight Outta Compton* album, and the (in)famous track *Fuck Tha Police*. To my relief, this mention brought an animated response from Justin who liked the song very much ...

The word came back later through Joolz that I had been honest and polite on the day, which was a relief. It felt like I had passed an initial test. In Chapter 5, as the data indicates, we see how honesty is constructed as a core value for the band and the Family. I was in.

The emphasis for me was on building rapport and trust, acceptance. I felt this was the best way of getting quality information. I did not feel a challenging approach was appropriate. I did not feel I had to disagree with NMA fans about their perceptions. I took them as stated. The principle of informed consent and the right of the informant to change or withdraw statements was respected at all times. Kvale's criteria for assessing the quality of interviewing are classified in Table 4 below (op. cit., p. 145):

Table 4:   Quality of Interviews

Criterion	Application to This Project
The extent of spontaneous, rich, specific and relevant answers from the interviewee	Transcripts averaged about 11,000 words, content was relevant and specific
The shorter the interviewer's questions and the longer the subject's answers, the better	On a word count of interview transcripts, informants' share of content was approximately 85%
The degree to which the interviewer follows up and clarifies the meanings of the relevant aspects of the answers	Probe and clarification questions frequently used
The interviewer attempts to verify his or her interpretation of the subject's answers in the course of the interview.	
The ideal interview is to a large extent interpreted throughout the interview	Attempts were made to summarise. Pace was slow in order to digest fully what was being said.
The interview is 'self-communicating' – it is a story contained in itself that hardly requires much extra descriptions and explanations	I can only say I believe this to be the case, the reader may wish to test this for himself or herself by consulting the transcripts in Appendix F

Source: Kvale (2002:145)

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION (PO)

Elliott and Jankel Elliott (2003) see the essence of ethnographic methods consisting primarily in PO. An understanding of the social and musical interactions at gigs required participant observation. Attendance at, involvement in, and observation of live performances enabled me to immerse myself in the field and gather data at first hand. Participant observation has been used for example in interpretive research by Kates on gay culture (2000, 2003), by Derbaix, Decrop and Cabossart (2002) in relation to football fandom, and in music-related research in Goulding, Shankar and Elliott's study of the rave scene (2002). The advantages of doing observation are the exposure of the researcher to the richness of lived experience - holistic, dynamic, multi-sensory immersion; the opportunity for obtaining direct, first-hand eye-witness accounts, its ability to help with the emergence of categories, the ability to link actions with people, its ability to generate new ideas and contacts, and its corroborative power when used in conjunction with other methods. The disadvantages include the fact that it is time-consuming, and that it involves reliance on a single subjective point of view, with consequent threats to validity. However, this need not be a problem if treated as such. The researcher's account should be verifiable from others'. As Adler and Adler note (1998), observation has remained 'underaddressed' in the methods literature. They outline three main roles for observers: peripheral member researcher, active member researcher, complete member researcher. I found that my actions meant that I belonged to different categories at different times. Atkinson and Hammersley (1998) identify the following dimensions of variation in the kind of researcher activity in this area, namely, whether the research is know by different members to be researching or not, how much is known about the research by whom, what the researcher does and does not do and how these choices position him in with the group being studied, and how complete the researcher's engagement is with an insider or outsider role.

These lines from the NMA song *Adrenalin* refer to a journalist whose intentions are suspect:

> *There's this funny little bloke asking all these questions*
> *Writing down what we say*
> *So we wound him up like a clockwork dog*
> *And we watched him trotting away*

<div align="right">Adrenalin (Sullivan, 1985)</div>

If read as a reflection of the band's own experience, they convey a sense that the band is in control of what data is given to people who ask questions about them. Certainly, band members, particularly Justin and Joolz, have had extensive experience of media interviews, and could be expected to be adept at positioning their projects. In Joolz's novel *Billy Morgan*, a journalist creates havoc because of her failure to understand the lives and complex issues of the people she is writing about. There is also a band song called *Stupid Questions* which sounds a cautionary note about choosing sensible questions to ask. Finally, Joolz joked that making field notes overtly at a gig might cause fans to think I was from social security. This latter point was partly in jest, but I took it as good advice anyway. All of these things shed further light on the trickiness of the research inquiry into this tribe with its own argot, allegiances and hierarchy (see opening quote of this Chapter).

Live performance in particular presents an interesting challenge methodologically. Because both band and fans are co-present; band and fans co-produce the text interactively; there is a greater intensity to the consumption experience than in other types of NMA consumption (e.g. listening to a CD); the text is a multi-media one. A very

wide range of symbolic practices and artefacts are observable at a gig, from musicianship, lyrics, to artwork, to T-shirts, to moshing, dancing and gesturing.

I attended gigs in Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield, Bradford, Bristol, Wolverhampton, Dublin, Holmfirth and Nottingham. I was conscious I had no training in this work. I found myself wondering how I could make sense of what was going on. I could see what people were doing, but what did it mean – to them, or to me? Were they just getting 'off their faces' and having a good time? Was I going to be getting all intellectual about nothing? It was a long way from the ruck to the academy, and what was I doing there? I made regular notes of my fieldwork, as well as of any thoughts that occurred to me about the inquiry as it progressed. After the very early gigs which I attended, I would sit in my car and dictate some impressions into a tape recorder, which could act as aide-mémoires to be written up more fully in the following days. Later I was able to dispense with the audio recording and simply write up notes from memory, using the vivid impressions created by the intense noise, heat, sights, rhythms, movements and smells of a gig as starter dough. These notes offered support for reflection about the process of doing this inquiry and for emerging insights and further questions.

Some textbook treatments on participant observation are not as helpful as they might be. Either they spend time talking about the early Western anthropologists and wringing their hands about the crimes of the colonial gaze, or they give the reader tick-box forms for classroom observation for PhD students in the department of education. Although I acknowledge the need for systematic observation, going to a rock gig seemed to me to require something above and beyond these approaches. I was looking for insight into the fan experience of gigs, and for ways of interpreting gig rituals, and to gain a kind of induction as a fan member. I went for the experience, to see what was going on, to hear the music, to feel the noise, to <u>listen</u> to the music, to see, smell and feel as a fan how the fans reacted, to the band and to each other, to see what they did, to look at how the

security worked, how the promotional build up worked, how upcoming gigs featured on the web site noticeboard, and what fans felt after gigs and what they did. I looked at how the band seemed to manage its performance and how this projected the band's values. I looked at people and how they were with each other, or seemed to me to be, as people, how they dressed, what expressions were on their faces, how closely they stood to one another, whether they ate or drank, where they stood and so on. The whole point about gig PO was to help put gigs into context, using online observation and also the interview with Justin Sullivan and the fans, to get a holistic contextualised view of texts within contexts.

During PO, I therefore moved around to different parts of the venue, down the front right up against the security barrier to watch the band and how they related to one another; on the edges of the ruck to get the feel of what was going on and what that was about; away to one side to get a more detached sense of what was happening, and finally, more and more towards the end of this kind of fieldwork, where the venue had a balcony, I would go up there. The advantage of the balcony was that it would allow me a clear view of everything that was happening on stage and in the ruck (see field notes, Chapter 7), and sometimes in the wings also, as well as affording a view of the entire floor, usually including the sound desk. Each of these locations offered different perspectives and focus, enabling me to isolate smaller units of analysis, e.g. dancing, band member interaction, the way the drummer behaved on certain songs, instrument changes, pyramid building, the lead singer's expression, and so on. From the balcony I could get a macro view of the whole gig, from the edges of the mosh-pit I could get a sense of the surging energy of the fans and their physical communal dancing, with the presence of Justin Sullivan slightly above on stage, roaring out some song above a forest of heads.

I supplemented PO with video analysis. Firstly, there is footage of live performance, and secondly, there are music videos recorded to help promote the songs. I examined live performance recorded onto video of the NMA gig at the Bizarre music festival in Germany in August 1996, and of the Rock City 20th anniversary concert (which I also attended). In terms of music videos, I studied 'Here Come the War', a 26 minute compilation made in 1993, which includes some interview footage with Justin.

ONLINE OBSERVATION

Online research has been widely used in consumer research, for example Kozinets (1997, 1998, 2002) and Catterall and Maclaran (2002). Kozinets adapted ethnography to an online environment, calling it 'netnography'. He defined it (2002) as 'a written account resulting from fieldwork studying the cultures and communities that emerge from on-line, computer-mediated, or Internet-based communications'. He saw it as being 'informed by … cultural anthropology', and regarded its aim as being to enable 'a contextually-situated study of the consumer behavior of virtual communities and cyberculture'.

On the NMA web-site (see Chapter 5 for description), there is daily/nightly discussion on the noticeboards. Anyone, NMA fan or not, can start a thread (a series of postings linked by a common topic) at any time by simply posting on the noticeboard. Anyone in the world who has access to the internet can read this noticeboard. I was able to 'listen' to 'conversations' by reading the threads on my PC. When fans post on this noticeboard, they are posting a public message, potentially visible to anyone who is online. By far the majority of fans use a handle rather than their own full name, i.e. a made-up name. This is a means of protecting their privacy. Almost all fans also do not leave their e-mail addresses when posting. This is an added safeguard against being pestered, flamed, or

targeted in any way. Online observation followed AoIR Guidelines (2002). The view
taken was that the web-site noticeboard was a public space, not a private chat room,
and that participants were aware at all times that this was the case, and that their
comments were readable by anyone. In fact, a band message on the site – not currently
there – used to say that it was the 'public face of the Family'. Posts are accessible in an
archive.

Given the aim of having a holistic inquiry there was a need to balance the amount of
attention paid to different texts. In the end, the choice was made to foreground three
kinds of text for analyses in the three empirical Chapters which follow this one. A text
entitled 'Some thoughts on the idea of the NMA Family' written by Joolz Denby and
posted on the band website in 2004, a touring exhibition of its arts and artefacts
mounted by the band from 2005-7, and live performances as a category of texts. This is
summarised in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Outline Summary of Data Collection

Chapter	Primary Data Collection Site	Data Collection Methods
5	Web-site	Online observation, fan interviews
6	Touring exhibition	Participant observation, curator interview, photography, visitors book
7	Live performance	Participant observation, band interview, fan interview, video

Source: Author.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the research perspectives and strategy, and discussed the data collection methods, and the plans for data analysis. The different texts through which NMA and their fans communicate constitute a multi-dimensioned popular music culture or sign economy. By analysing data on the principal texts and the sites where they occur, the intention is to build up a picture of the production, circulation and consumption of meaning in the band-fan relationship, and its connection with the durability of the NMA project. The data analysis is divided into three Chapters. Chapter 5, coming next, deals mostly with online data which offers a discursive negotiation of the notion of the 'Family', a framing construct offered by Joolz for the band-fan community. Chapter 6 then deals mainly with NMA art and artefacts as shown by the band in the recent touring exhibition (2005-7). Chapter 7 contains the analysis of live concerts. After this, the analytical work is synthesised in a discussion in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 5 – THE NEW MODEL ARMY 'FAMILY'

Give me some place that I can go

Where I don't have to justify myself

Swimming out alone against this tide

Looking for family looking for tribe

Family (Sullivan/Heaton, 1987)

INTRODUCTION[35]

Having in the foregoing chapter explained the research design, and how this is intended to help answer the research questions, I now begin to present an analysis of the data collected through interviews with the band and fans, and online and live performance observation. The analysis and preliminary discussion of this data is laid out in three empirical chapters, of which this is the first. Each of the three empirical chapters in this thesis deals with the ways in which the band and fans construct identity and other meanings around their practices of producing and/or consuming New Model Army. Chapter 5, the present chapter, examines the notion of the 'Family' promoted by the band to characterise the band-fan community. Chapter 6 deals with how the band and fans co-construct the Family heritage, and Chapter 7 deals with the renewal of community through Family gatherings (live musical performances).

This chapter deals directly with the notion of the 'Family' advanced by New Model Army as a framing concept for the band-fan community. The data considered is mainly in the

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[35] A discussion of the New Model Army 'Family' was published as a book chapter in Mike Ayers' edited collection 'Cybersounds: Essays in Virtual Music Culture' (O'Reilly and Doherty, 2006).

form of online texts generated by band and fans around the topic of the Family as such, or of the band-fan community in a wider sense. This data is supplemented with data from other text-sources where relevant. For a number of reasons, the preliminary analysis of the Family directs itself mainly to the online circuit of the band-fan relationship. The band's notion of the Family was first formally articulated online; furthermore, fan reception and elaboration of this construct can be read from a variety of online postings on the topic; and, finally, it is online that an important part of band and fan identity work is done.

Because of this online focus, it is necessary to orient the reader to the internet presence of New Model Army and its fans. Throughout the period of this inquiry, the band's web-site, or more precisely its web-site noticeboard, has always been an important site of band-fan interaction. In addition, a small number of fans operate sites which offered valuable information and other functions to fellow fans internationally. However, as the research process neared its end, there was clear evidence of both the band, band associates and fans taking advantage of additional resources offered by the internet, such as MySpace and YouTube[36].

Below, I begin by outlining the band's internet presence, of which its official web-site is the key element, and indicating a number of the fan-originated web-sites about the band. Individual and collective identity is conceptualised as provisional, to be constructed and negotiated in the context of social interaction online. The band- and fan-generated texts are treated as interpretative resources, which are mobilised by

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[36]   www.joolz-denby.co.uk; www.myspace.com/joolz_denby; www.myspace.com/wildthingjoolzdenby; www.facebook.com/JoolzDenby; www.myspace.com/redskycoven; www.nyaaa.co.uk; www.myspace.com/newyorkalcoholicanxietyattack; www.newmodelarmy.org; www.myspace.com/justinsullivannewmodelarmy

band and fans to construct accounts of who they are and what they are doing around this musical 'project'. One of the research objectives was to gain an increased understanding of the utility of theoretical constructs (metaphors) such as 'brand community' and 'consumer tribe' in the context of popular music. An initial finding in this chapter is that there are already other constructs of the band-fan community, or metaphors for 'groupness' in circulation. Data in relation to this finding is presented and discussed. It will be seen that the band and fans use these metaphors in discursive interaction in attempts to define what their New Model Army fandom means to them. The discussion then moves on to an examination of a key text entitled 'Some Thoughts on the idea of the New Model Army' (Denby, 2004) posted on the web-site by the band which offers the notion of 'Family' as a framing construct for the band-fan groupness. I examine this textual data and elucidate the ways in which it constructs the Family in relation to a range of issues. I then consider how the fans take up the idea of Family and use, embrace, ab-use and critique it. The findings are then related back to the research themes around notions of brand community and tribe in a discussion which foreshadows the final discussion in Chapter 8.

NMA AND THE INTERNET'S IMPORTANCE

The New Model Army Website Noticeboard offers a way of establishing and maintaining an online community of band and fans. According to Anderson (2006), contemporary communities depend to a large extent on the idea of imagined others. The Internet offers a material infrastructure that can support online social exchanges between fans and assist the imagining of a community. Such online groups are also very much woven into the fabric of offline life (Baym 1997; Kozinets 1998) and online interaction displays all the typical social dynamics of community life (Baym 1995). As we will see, participants develop forms of expression that are unique to the group, form and actively explore group identities and relationships and create group norms and sanctions.

The primary internet site relating to New Model Army is the band's own web-site at www.newmodelarmy.org. This web-site is the band's chief means of communication with fans between gigs, and an important means of communication amongst fans. It therefore supports important moments of social interaction between the two sides. The site has been in existence for the duration of the inquiry period. During this time it has undergone a number of significant technical changes, although the site structure has remained essentially the same. Within the past 2-3 years a number of technical changes have been introduced in response to difficult operating issues, including persistent trolls, heavy spamming, and the hacking and dumping of the two of the noticeboards. For a band like New Model Army, which enjoys very little media coverage, the website provides a vital means of communication with its fans (Joachimsthaler and Aaker 1997) and a vehicle for promoting the band. Ultimately the website contributes significantly to the on-going viability of the New Model Army project. The site is used to post information about the band and its activities, and also operates as an online store. In addition to these practical functions, the site also enables the band to construct, differentiate, explain and elaborate its brand identity within the music industry, via the publication of band texts (in the wider sense).

WEB-SITE STRUCTURE

The site is usually fronted by a photograph of the band. At the time of writing, the relevant photo is from a New Model Army gig in Darmstadt, Germany in November 2005 (see Figure 18 below).

Figure 18: New Model Army in Performance, Darmstadt, Germany, November 2005

Credit: Jochen Melchior (www.newmodelarmy.org, accessed 24/9/07).

The picture shows the audience in darkness, some waving their arms, while, on the stage, several beams of green and blue light shine down on Justin Sullivan (centre stage) and on the other musicians (Michael Dean, the drummer, appears to be missing). Closer to stage level, a number of bright white lights shine out towards the audience. This photograph is fairly representative of the visual aesthetic of an Army gig. The photograph acts as a kind of screen which changes after about four seconds into the home page, see Figure 19 below.

Figure 19: New Model Army Home Page. (www.newmodelarmy.org, accessed 24/9/07).
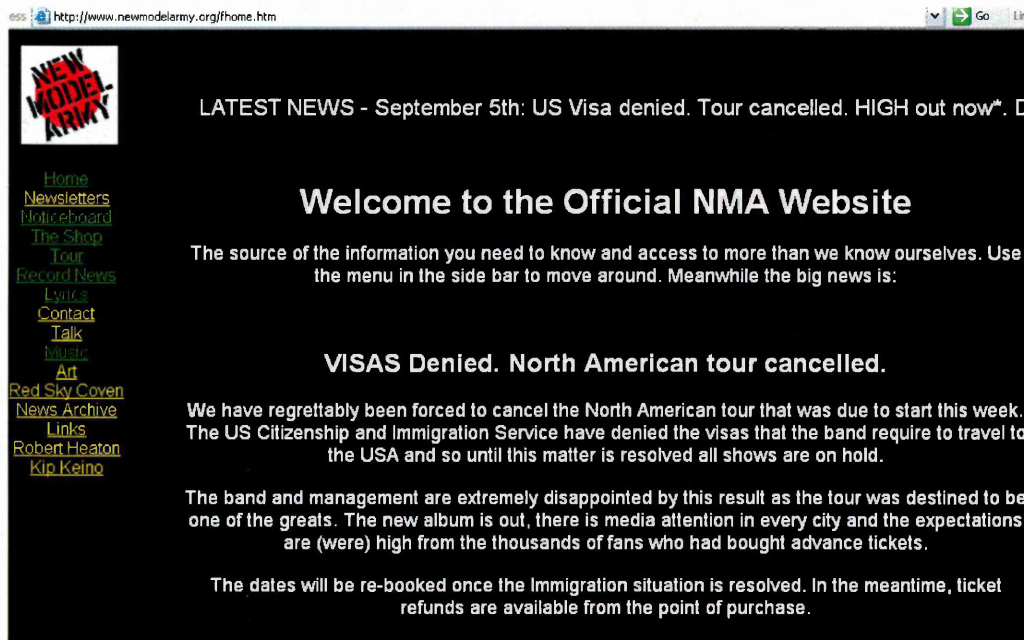
Source: New Model Army web-site

There follows a brief description of the structure of the web-site home page to orient the reader. In the top left-hand corner is a white square on which is superimposed a red circle which in turn is overwritten diagonally, bottom left to top right, by the name of the band. This visual element is an important part of the band's visual repertoire. It featured for example on the band's debut single, *Bittersweet*, March 1983, as well as more recently on the *BD3* EP (2006), and can be seen on some fan T-shirts at gigs. The main panel of the home page includes a moving news banner headed 'LATEST NEWS'. At the time of writing, as can be seen in Figure 18, the main news was the denial of a touring visa by the US immigration authorities. This led to the cancellation of the band's proposed North American Tour, which was due to start on 5th September, 2007, in Philadelphia. The moving banner is followed by the words 'Welcome to the Official New Model Army Website', which is then characterised underneath as 'The source of the information you need to know and access to more than we know ourselves'. This statement is interesting for its mixture of authoritative statement (the band is the

source of the information the fans need to know) and a contrasting disclaimer of full

knowledge ('access to more than we know ourselves'). The rest of the web page

contains an elaboration on the ticker line above.

The side panel offers access to a range of options, which are described in Table 6 below:

Table 6: New Model Army Web-Site Side Menu Contents

Menu Option	Description of Contents
Home	Home page, as described above.
Newsletters	A series of eight (8) newsletters from band to fans covering the period October 2003 to October 2004.
Noticeboard	The official New Model Army Noticeboards – see below. This is a space where fans and band can post messages on different topics.
New Online Shop and New Download Shop	The commercial part of the site, where the band sells its CDs, clothing merchandise, videos, DVDs, as well as work by other artists , including Joolz, Rev Hammer and Ed Alleyne-Johnson.
Tour	Contains details of all confirmed live performance dates.
Record News	Contains images of a range of New Model Army records, with track listings and links to e.g. an interview with Justin Sullivan.
Lyrics	The lyrics of all of the 176 band's songs together with release information.
Contact	Band contact details
Talk	Contains mainly interviews with band members, but also a tribute to John Peel from Justin Sullivan, and 'What is the "New Model Army Family" - some thoughts by Joolz Denby', a key band text which is analysed below.
Music	Four downloadable tracks from the album *New Model Army ... & Nobody Else*
Art	An account written by Joolz of her creative process, together with a link to 'New Model Army's Book Choice'.
Red Sky Coven	Information on the folk group which includes Brett Selby, Joolz Denby, Rev Hammer, and Justin Sullivan.
News Archive	'Old news' items about the band or individual band members.
Links	Links to 25 sites dealing with current and former band associates, and of fans (particularly noteworthy here is the site of Peter Zych[37], which contain a rich range of resources on the

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[37] http://128.130.177.2/~zych/privat/nma/index.htm

	band. There are fan web-sites which are not formally linked to this section of the band site.
Robert Heaton	A tribute to Robert Heaton who died November 4th 2004. "Robert joined the band in 1982 [as drummer] and for the next fifteen years co-wrote many of the band's greatest songs, including being responsible for all the music to the anthem *Green & Grey*".
Kip Keino	Link to Kip Keino, the side project of bassist Nelson.

Source: New Model Army Web-Site. Accessed 25/7/2008

In terms of its contents and functionality, the web-site is broadly similar to that of many other bands, though it does not have the slick technological functionality of contemporary mainstream bands such as Coldplay or U2. This is partly because of the band's relative lack of resources, and partly because of its deliberate aesthetic. Throughout the period of this inquiry, it was this web-site which was the principal unit of analysis of the band online. Note that the band web-site was characterised in a band associate posting as the public face of the 'Family', the family of fans talking while being potentially observed by others.

The fans use the Noticeboards to keep in touch with each other between gigs, to solve practical problems such as arranging pre-gig meet-ups, checking directions to venues and arranging accommodation on tour. However, the thread content of Noticeboard postings is not simply of a purely practical nature. Of central interest to the analysis in the present chapter is the sense in which the Noticeboard also works as an online site for the fans to "do being a New Model Army fan" (Sacks 1984) i.e. to construct, maintain and evaluate their identity as a New Model Army fan in interaction with other contributors to the site. For example, posters to the site sometimes relate how they first encountered the band, and narrate conversion stories extolling the significance of the band in their lives. There are detailed discussions about the meanings of band lyrics, favourite New Model Army gigs, songs and artwork, and about popular music industry

issues (e.g. copyright, bootlegging, trading and levels of media attention). The characteristics and behaviour of different band members are interrogated, as is fan behaviour at gigs, including circle forming, 'arm-dancing', 'moshing', drinking and talking while the band is playing. Through this discursive interaction, the fans negotiate what the band means to them and what it means to be a New Model Army fan and a member of the wider community of New Model Army fans.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The data here consists of texts generated by the band and fans about how to account for the 'groupness' of the band-fan interaction, in other words how to characterise the collectivity which includes the band and the fans. The data presented here consists of an online essay written by Joolz Denby (2004) and fan postings to the New Model Army Noticeboard, offered in asynchronous interaction between posters to the site. From an examination of the site and from observation of the Noticeboard, a range of postings was selected for analysis that bear on the notion of Family. Site traffic was tracked over a number of years as part of a wider study of the band-fan interaction. During this period, a number of themes were observed to recur, among them the nature of the New Model Army collective. The band-fan discourse on the question of what one might call their joint project, is an ongoing negotiation. Then in May 2004, a band-side posting by Joolz crystallised the band's thinking on this issue for the first time. This piece is published online, but not in any other medium, and runs to about 1,500 words – see Appendix G. It can be found by clicking on the side menu item entitled 'Talk', and then clicking on 'What is the "New Model Army Family" - some thoughts by Joolz Denby - 15/02/04'.

Joolz has been closely acquainted with the band since its origins, and is in regular contact with the fans on the Noticeboard, on the merchandise booth at gigs, and at other venues where she performs in her own right. The essay is particularly interesting,

because it was deemed of sufficient importance by the band to be posted alongside the relatively few other items in the Talk part of the site, and because it is a text by means of which a respected band associate can be seen to be actively working to "...provide members with the meaning, connection, inspiration, aspiration even mystery and shared sense of purpose that is related to their shared consumption identities" (Kozinets 1999: 261). Also selected were fan postings that touch on the notion of the New Model Army collective as Family. Some were in immediate response to this document whereas others were drawn from the period before and after its appearance. Figure 20 below illustrates the different groupings in the band-fan community.

Figure 20: Groupings within the NMA Band-Fan Community
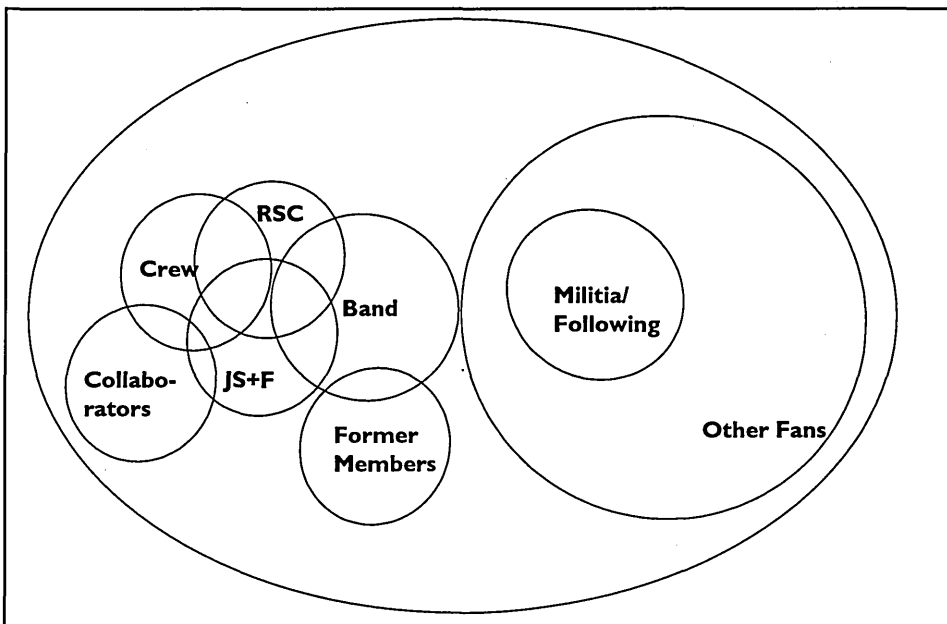
Source: Author

This indicates that apart from the band and fans there are other groups involved. Within the fan community, there was at one point a group which followed the band very closely, and were called the Following or Militia. On the band side, there are the band members themselves, the management, the crew, independent producers, tour management, sound and lighting engineers, and collaborators, as well as musical groups

such as Red Sky Coven and Justin Sullivan & Friends to which some of the band and their associates belong.

FIELD METAPHORS FOR BAND-FAN 'GROUPNESS'

In the course of the online observation, it was noticeable that band and fan talk used a wide range of metaphors to characterise the band-fan collective as they saw it. These constructions may be read as field metaphors which seek to account for aspects of 'groupness' in consumption. The data enables us to see how, in the field, identities are strategically deployed, and are performed by social actors in the relevant context or scene. To put it another way, the approach here is to make the point that producers and consumers also have 'naming rights'; and rather than choosing between academic constructions of 'groupness', I examine what the band and fans might or might not wish to call themselves. At this stage, rather than asking the question, 'Is this a case of a 'brand community' or of a 'tribe'?', the aim is to try to understand the utility of these two theoretical metaphors. The question is, therefore, not whether a particular band-fan relationship may be construed as a 'brand community', a 'tribe', a 'brand tribe', or a 'subculture', but how do popular music bands and fans construct their own 'groupness', both in terms of the socio-cultural processes by which this groupness is constructed as well as the particular label which comes to be applied to it. In this Chapter, however, it is demonstrated that producers and consumers together negotiate (implicitly as well as explicitly) the naming of their groupness, and that their preferred name stands in a kind of opposition or difference to other terms which are negatively, or less positively, evaluated. Of course the band and its fans could be studied for signs or 'evidence' of 'brand community', 'tribe', or 'subculture'. This would be an exercise in academic classification. It would not however acknowledge the right of the band and/or fans to name their own 'community', or examine by what processes their particular notion of groupness comes to be selected from other competing metaphors. This Chapter

examines the elaboration of the band's notion of 'Family' and how it is used in band-fan interaction.

From an analysis of online data, and from band and fan interviews, it becomes clear that there are several notions of groupness in circulation within band-fan and fan-fan talk. As we shall see, these include (a) metaphors which tend to be negatively valorised, such as such as 'gang', 'club', 'elite' 'Family' and 'tribe'; (b) metaphors which tend to be differently valorised in different contexts, such as 'Following', 'militia', 'cult', and 'subculture' which can attract different valorizations in different discursive contexts; and (c) metaphors such as 'Family' and 'tribe' which tend to be positively valorised.

NEGATIVELY VALORISED METAPHORS OF GROUPNESS

In this section, I examine alternative appellations for the collective which are negatively valorised. The metaphors for community which tend to be negatively valorised are "gang", "clique", "club". "Following", "Militia" and "cult" have both positive and negative connotations. Not only are these terms regarded as descriptors of undesirable kinds of groups or group values, the first three tend mainly to be used to describe groups outside the ambit of the music scene (e.g. political groupings), and to be used less frequently than the positively valued metaphors, which are "Family" and "tribe".

"GANG", "CLIQUE"

A band-side poster states:

I don't like mini-cliques or mini-gangs being formed within the Family in this way because we should all be together in this thing not excluding some people. Also, like it or not, such cliques appear to other audience members as aggressive - even if they're not - because they're all wearing the same 'uniform'.

Gangs and cliques are in this way characterised as excluding and aggressive, particularly if this is signalled through the visual culture, e.g. by means of an in-joke T-shirt, as was the issue here. Aggressive, excluding behaviour is directly contrary to the inclusive, friendly behavior which the community promotes, arguably in order to survive.

Another fan moves to draw attention to economic and childcare issues as explicators of non-attendance at gigs, which could be seen as a lack of commitment:

See, now there's one of the things that really annoys me. How many gigs someone attends is far more likely to be based on their cashflow/childcare/how much time they can get off work and all sorts of other things than whether they can be bothered to make the effort. Going down the line of judging people because they're not at every single show makes the jump from family to clique, and that's really not something [the band] is about and not something most would like to see happen. What's next, excommunication for those that don't buy t-shirts because they're allergic to cotton? Lynching for those who don't order the new albums in time? Honestly.

The cashflow/childcare/job issues risk threatening this individual's right to membership of the group, and this strip of text can be read as an attempt to counter that threat.

"CLUB"

The negative connotations of 'club' are demonstrated in the following web posting:

At times, fans here have acted like members of a select club, even viciously, yet over the years this board has never entirely been converted into a members-only clubhouse, thankfully. I think that's because, even during our most hostile, prideful, stubborn moments, like any family, we know deep down we really can't get along without each other.

'Gang', 'clique' and 'club' are all negatively valorised, and this turns essentially on the issue of inclusiveness, which as we've seen, is an important value for the band.

METAPHORS OF GROUPNESS WITH DIFFERING VALORISATION

The range of field metaphors which, from observation, are both positively and negatively regarded by band and fans include "Militia", "Following", "subculture", and "cult". I examine each of these in turn.

"MILITIA", "FOLLOWING"

For a while, a committed core of the fans formed themselves into a group known as the 'Militia' or 'Following'. The notion of 'following' is one among many aspects of popular music fandom which have strong parallels in sports fandom. Sports fans 'follow' teams, either literally by attending matches both home and away (or simply from the couch), and music fans also 'follow' bands by attending gigs. The 'Following' was the 'collective

name for the dedicated fans who attend the concerts serially' (interview with band associate). Other fans felt excluded by this.

The following fan interview extracts illustrates in greater detail the perceived dangers to community posed by a sub-group such as the Militia:

> *The Militia was a group of fans who was also travelling to every gig, everywhere, and it was a really small group and the thing is that at a certain point there was too much of a difference between those fans and other fans who didn't have the time or the money to travel around and there was some sort of an attitude like - we're (sings) better than them[38] and I think that's a pity. You get the feeling that way people are not open minded to say, OK, you're here for the first time. Welcome. Enjoy. It was when you went into a moshpit, you'd be one, the odd one out, and that's a bad thing.* [fan interview]

> *and the whole thing with - there was a big argument on the Noticeboard about the Following. Are you part of the Following, are you not? This was a while ago. What's that about? Elitism. We're supposed to be completely anti-elitist.* [fan interview]

The lead singer commented in a web-site interview:

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[38] A reference to the New Model Army song *Better Than Them* (Sullivan, 1984), which contains the lines: We tell ourselves over and over again/We're better than them , we're not like them.

Q: There is a lot of talk on the Website about "The Following". What are your thoughts about this?

A : The "Following" is an idea - not a fixed set of people.

In this interview extract, Justin Sullivan detaches the collective noun 'Following' from any specific group of people. This can be read as corrective action by the band to reduce the risk of a dominant sub-group emerging within the wider family and causing discord.

The 'Family' ethos therefore acts as a brake on a section of fans who might think they are better than the others. Against that, it must be said that in the days when the Following was much more a feature of the band's fan grouping than now, the members of the Following valued this term highly as a marker of the fervour with which they related to the band. The point here is that 'Following' is good in the sense that it connotes close identification and committed involvement with the band, but bad in the sense that it can be seen as exclusive and elitist.

"SUBCULTURE"

"Subculture" is very seldom used by fans to denote themselves. In interview, however, Joolz Denby did make use of this term, as follows:

> *the fans have developed a fully integrated sub-culture, with its own elaborate dress codes, behavioral codes and mores.*

But any attempt to define the band as part of a specific subculture, e.g. 'goth', is challenged, both by the band and the fans. In fact, any attempt to categorize the band musically or 'subculturally' by means of a specific label is talked down. It is as if to define the band is to limit it in some way. Indeed, there has even been a discussion on the

web-site which concluded that there is no band in existence which could be accurately described as 'a Goth band'. In other words, the <u>complete</u> identification of the band with any <u>particular</u> subcultural label is talked down. It is not so much the case that that the term is negatively valorised, more that particular applications of it to the New Model Army project are rejected.

"CULT"

One metaphor for collective identity often applied to underground bands is that of a "cult." Underground bands are seen as occluded from mainstream public view, somehow counter-cultural and subversive. The case band has been labelled a cult band in the past, but mainly in a promotional context. In Chapter 3, I considered some of the literature on the sociology of religion, including NRMs, sects and cults. It is clear from the data in this Chapter, however, that NMA cannot be categorised as a church, sect, cult or denomination in any properly religious sense. NMA is a rock band; it writes songs, not sacred scripture. There are some aspects of the band's practices which come under the heading of religiosity, such as the references to the sacred experience of live music (see Chapter 7), or the sacralisation of the Family or tribe (see Chapter 6), or references in the lyrics or interviews. Since sects are characterised (Aldridge, 2000:34) as groups with a "strong sense of their own identity", and "protest movements", one might be tempted to regard NMA as a kind of sect. But it does not have "strict criteria of entrance", but, rather, permits membership to anyone who has been emotionally touched by NMA's music. And, in any case, the band's raison d'être is not religious, it is artistic and musical. There are things which might <u>on the surface</u> support the idea that NMA is a cult, such as Justin's at times prophetic lyrics and singing (in the Evangelical sense of speaking powerfully), plus the fact that one of his forebears was a travelling bishop in North America, but this is really stretching the point. The idea that Justin is a cult leader with all which that implies in terms of brain-washing is simply not in accord with my observation of his and fans' behaviours. The cult metaphor does not have any purchase in this sense amongst the fan-base. There are two reasons for this in my

opinion. Firstly, the term "cult" carries connotations of religion and of a hierarchy between the object of worship (i.e. potentially Justin Sullivan) and cult devotees (see Chapter 7 for an analysis of this issue). However, as we shall see elsewhere, the ethos of the Family member as independently-minded citizen - behaviour which is modelled by the band itself - leaves plenty of scope for dissent and not brain-washing (see Aldridge, 2000:10-11). Secondly, connected to the notion of cult is the vexing question of celebrity. Being pop idols or celebrities would also be anathema to band members. They (and their fans) are more likely to mobilize utterances about "musicians doing a job of work," or "professionals" and being unlike stars in their behavior. As one fan said in interview:

> *Just because these people are doing something that's sincere, doesn't mean you*
> *have to worship them.*

However, very occasionally the band may use the term "cult" in a promotional interview, as in "We've got this cult audience in every city in the world".

Nor is NMA or the Family a NRM. As we saw in Chapter 3, NRMs offer a range of claimed benefits to their recruits (Barker, 1995:25-31, cited in Aldridge, 2000:166), including community. On the evidence of this Chapter, NMA also offers a sense of community. This does not, however, make NMA a new religious movement, for there are many other organisations which offer community which are unreligious.

POSITIVELY VALORISED METAPHORS OF GROUPNESS

There are two positively valued metaphors in circulation, namely Family and tribe. In this section, I deal with "tribe".

"TRIBE"

Before Maffesoli published the original French version of his book (1988), Justin Sullivan wrote a song called 'Family' in which the lines at the beginning of this Chapter occur. The notion of "tribe" has also enjoyed a lot of popularity amongst the band's fans, aided by the visual culture created by Joolz, involving album covers, merchandise, body modification and tattoos. It was the band's visual culture with its Celtic inspiration which lent the fans a strong and common visual identity back in the late 1980s. "Tribe" is also a term used by fans, for example, here is a fan web posting which discusses the idea of a video documentary on the band:

> *it would include footage of the band and management as well, we'd see the family*
> *from their perspective as well as from the fans, and use NMA as an example of a* `
> *global tribe thats created by the power of music, words, thought and shared*
> *passions. Love, even. Respect: not stuff thats normally associated with or talked*
> *about in the music business thats focused on units sold.*

Note how the notion of tribe is articulated by this fan with a number of ideas, namely that there are two perspectives on the tribe, the band's and the family's, that the tribe is 'global', that it is created by music, discourse and feelings, like love and respect. These elements are constructed as being 'not ... normally associated with or talked about in the music business that's focused on units sold', casting the tribe in a non-commercial light.

There will be more to say about the tribe, when I come to discuss the band's use of its artistic heritage to promote tribal and family cohesion in Chapter 6.

Finally, one fan, in interview, showed an awareness of the importance of who exactly mobilises the particular labels for collectivity (emphasis added):

> Q: *How do these labels fit? ... a tribe, a family, a cult? Do those labels fit in any way?*
>
> A: *Yeah, they all fit. It isn't about the letters that form the words and the words that ... it's about <u>who says it</u>. [fan interview]*

In the next section, I explain how Joolz Denby, my leading informant and a key band associate says what label fits, namely that of 'Family.

'FAMILY' AS THE BAND'S FRAMING METAPHOR

It is in fact 'Family' which is offered by the band as the key interpretive resource with which to frame 'groupness' within the band-fan relationship. The key document on 'Family' within this band-fan relationship was authored by Joolz Denby, posted on the band web-site in 2004, and is entitled 'Some Thoughts on the idea of the Family' – see Appendix 5.1.

This text is structured as a kind of unfinished story, and could be said to function as a kind of socio-political manifesto for the band. It is also a statement of belief that 'music made by human beings about things that other fellow human beings feel to be their deepest and most sacred emotions will never die'. It can be considered as a creation or

constructive myth - in the sense of a signifying story – which stands in fierce opposition to the atomising destruction myths – in the sense of false stories - of Margaret Thatcher ('there is no such thing as society') and of the music media (e.g. that heroin abuse is cool). Its relevance to this thesis is that it offers the notion of 'Family' to frame the band-fan relationship. It also records the band's history as the band sees it, giving the band's own account of its development. It constructs what the band is and is not, and what constitutes a good fan, as well as constructing its enemies and opponents. It attempts to define what it is that has kept the band and fans going for so long. Note that this statement comes 24 years into the band's life and was presented as an answer to a question that 'often came up in private and in public' as to the meaning of the 'Family' - a reference to the fact that this term had been in circulation for some unspecified time. Its significance is evidenced by the fact that it is one of only a few items posted in the 'Talk' section of the web-site, giving it considerable prominence, along with interviews with band members.

In Denby (2004), 'Family' is defined as follows:

> *Firstly, I think it's important to state for the record, it is not, nor ever has been during the long years New Model Army has been in existence, an elite, a club, a gang or anything else along those lines; more than anything else, it's a feeling; some would say, an instinctive emotional response to the intensely emotional music created by the band.*

Note that this text is written 'for the record'[39], which lends it an official status or authority. Joolz then clears away those metaphors which convey a sense of exclusiveness – 'an elite, a club, a gang or anything else along those lines'. The Family is defined as a 'feeling' ('more than anything else'). The fan reception or consumption of

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[39] In fact, the web-site is rather like the band's 'site of record', an intentional digitial archive of significant band documents or texts of different kinds.

the music is characterised as instinctive and emotional, clearly placing the fan response in the affective rather than cognitive domain, as one might expect with this kind of 'product'[40]. Just as Justin Sullivan detached the 'Following' from a specific group of people, here Joolz Denby removes the notion of 'Family' from a particular group of people and locates it in an emotional response to the music.

The writer also seeks to characterise the band as something 'more than just a rock band', and akin to a movement with tribal roots which has both a new and archaic consciousness. The 'Family' is presented as not being a formal, contrived organisation, but a spontaneous sense of fellowship that has developed over the years.

There are those who say New Model Army is now much more than just a rock band, that it has slowly metamorphosed into a kind of Movement: not resembling accepted forms of conventional religious or political movements, but rather a new kind consciousness derived from archaic tribal roots and the most basic human need for a sense of belonging, transplanted into the fragmenting twenty-first century to create stability and a sense of collective power via New Model Army's music, ideas and creative endeavours. For many, New Model Army and the Family has simply become a place of emotional sanctuary where they don't have be anything but themselves and where they can be proud, not ashamed, of their deepest feelings in an atmosphere of comradeship, love and support. In a world obsessed with spin, materialism, fake-celebrity and plastic superficiality this authenticity is an infinitely precious resource.

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[40] Fan accounts of encountering New Model army for the first time, whether at a concert, in a record store, or in the form of a snatch of song in a bar, tend to talk in terms of being intrigued, excited or 'blown away'. Their initial consumption decision does not tend to go through the steps of the rational consumer decision-making process.

Here, it is emotion which is made sacred, and the Family is a place of emotional sanctuary[41], within which fans are enabled to be put in touch with their own feelings in a supportive, accepting atmosphere. This sanctuary is seen as archaic-tribal, and opposed to inauthenticity. Rock music, in particular, has often laid claim to being authentic, compared to, for example, pop. The 'Thoughts' also take pains to situate the band and fans in relation to the music industry, so that this affective metaphor of emotional bonding is placed in stark opposition to the intrigues and cruelties of the musical industry, particularly of the music media.

A KEY DIMENSION OF 'FAMILY' IS ITS INCLUSIVENESS:

We understand the "family" thing very well. We've created it, sung about it. But the NMA family is inclusive of everyone who loves the band no matter how they dress, whatever colour or gender, from whatever country, no matter "how many concerts they've seen", no matter what they do in their everyday lives. It's about music and feelings and passion and it's open to everyone.

Justin Sullivan, media interview

The emergence of the family is presented in this text as a spontaneous, organic reaction (not formal or contrived) to the sustained "persecution of a creative force" and, by implication, the ideas, beliefs and values of their fans.

Seeing and feeling the persecution of a creative force that intelligently addressed and examined the ideas and beliefs they held dear, that never patronised them, that spoke the secrets of their hearts and was not afraid to stand up and be counted, fans became more loyal, more devoted and identified even more strongly

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[41] Compare the band's song lyrics 'home is where the heart is ...' *Home* (Sullivan, 2002) and *Wired* (Sullivan/Nelson/Dean/White/Gill, 2007)

with New Model Army than ever before. It was as if the band in some way became a genuine part of their lives, became, in fact, part of the fans' families ... not a formal, contrived organisation, but a spontaneous sense of fellowship that has developed over the years.

In response, the fans are constructed as strong-minded and independent in their refusal to be influenced by negative evaluations and dismissal of the band. They are characterised as possessing a strong psychological and emotional connection with the band that transcends any attempt to sabotage the band's project and engenders a desire to defend and protect it as if it were a family member. This is couched in terms of loyalty, devotion and shared hurt. A spatial metaphor is used to describe the division between "the family," characterised here as a "fellowship," standing together and closing ranks and the detractors outside of the family. This version of family also contains a moral dimension, implicitly invoked here, that it is the responsibility of those bound by family ties to be loyal to each other and thus defend and protect each other, sometimes unquestioningly. Potentially then, there are beneficial consequences for the band in constructing them as joined by family ties to the community of fans. By implication, the fans are asked to remain loyal, even in the face of public criticism.

This construction of what the Family is here takes the emphasis completely away from "outer" signs of identity and moves it into the "inner" sphere of feelings and "instinctive" – genuine and true - emotional response.

New Model Army and the Family has simply become a place of emotional sanctuary where they don't have be anything but themselves and where they can be proud, not ashamed, of their deepest feelings in an atmosphere of comradeship, love and support ...

Family here is constructed as a "sanctuary" where members can "be themselves" and display, without fear of judgement, the worth of their own deepest emotions, because the Family is imagined here as a place of solidarity, "comradeship" and love. The categorization "sanctuary" mobilizes a religious metaphor to characterise the experience of being with the Family and evokes strong images of protection, safety and comfort against one's enemies on the outside.

The New Model Army song *Family* also describes how it might feel to be dislocated or misunderstood and to be searching for a place of acceptance. In the song this experience is vividly imagined as like swimming alone in the ocean, struggling against the tide of one's detractors (in a society where there is pressure to be accountable to values that are not shared) to find a somewhere to be oneself. In this metaphor, the Family (or tribe) as sanctuary is constructed as a "harbour" of support and acceptance:

Give me some place that I can go
Where I don't have to justify myself
Swimming out alone against this tide
Looking for family looking for tribe

Family. Sullivan/Heaton 1987.

In New Model Army texts, Family is therefore configured as a sanctuary, a place of comfort and relief from feelings of dislocation and alienation, a place where one can find a sense of belonging and tribal solidarity or an emotional "consciousness of kin" (see Muniz and O'Guinn 2001) – an intrinsic connection that members feel towards each

other based in shared attitudes, perceived similarity and importantly, a collective sense of difference from those not in the community.

The collective sense of difference formulated in terms of a rejection of convention, this time in terms of a refusal to identify the New Model Army family with "conventional religious or political movements." The emergence of New Model Army consciousness is constructed as something much more essential, naturalised as derived from "the most basic human need for a sense of belonging" (more urgent in the "fragmenting twenty-first century") and connected to ancient tribal forms. This extract is also interesting for the way in which the focus of shared attitudes and sense of similarity is detached from specific players on the band side or from a core grouping of primarily music fans. The Family is categorised as a "Movement" which has "metamorphosed" into "much more than just a rock band," keeping the boundaries free-floating and membership inclusive rather than exclusive. This "inclusivity" is more likely to sustain and renew the New Model Army Family, enabling the New Model Army to retain and develop its position in the cultural industry. Throughout this extract, organic metaphors (e.g. metamorphose, transplant, essential and basic) are mobilised, constructing the emergence of the New Model Army family as natural rather than strategic or manufactured. This theme is echoed in the following extract where the relationship between the band and fans is configured in terms of mutual pride and respect and an honest unmediated love of the music. The assertion that the New Model Army may strategically manipulate their fans (like so many others in the music industry) and be, at the end of the day, "only it for the money," is mobilised and rejected:

The band, unlike so many others in the music industry, have never manipulated or lied to the fans for financial gain and in return, generation after generation of fans come to the music and love it honestly.

THE FANS AND THE NMA FAMILY

The "Family as sanctuary" repertoire is a discursive resource which fans are invited to use to frame their experience of participation in the New Model Army collective. In this section we shall see how they discursively elaborate (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998) this resource and as they do "being a New Model Army fan." I begin by examining posts where the family construct as formulated in the web posting is enthusiastically embraced by some fans as a way of making sense of their encounters with the band and each other. I then move on to look at instances where fans question the appropriateness of the "Family as sanctuary" repertoire as a way of framing their experience with the New Model Army. This discursive work centres on charges that the concept of Family is dangerous because it carries with it expectations of unquestioning solidarity and conformity to group norms. An alternative "Family as constraining" repertoire is deployed to re-imagine the collective in negative terms as potentially oppressive and a threat to the values of individuality and freedom of speech. The fans dispute how inclusive membership of the New Model Army family really is, arguing that in practice, individual or sub-groups of fans may attempt to regulate entry to the family, setting criteria for who is or isn't an authentic fan. Specifically, we look at the way this is played out to defend or criticise "moshing" at gigs.

"THE FAMILY FEELING IS WHAT KEEPS US COMING BACK"

Joolz's piece and her construction of the New Model Army collective using the "Family as sanctuary" repertoire was hailed enthusiastically on the Noticeboard by a number of posters. This selection of extracts provide a flavor of this kind of posting:

Joolz as ever sums it up perfectly, the family feeling is EXCACTLY what keeps us all coming back

Top read! Almost brings a lump to your throat when it reminds you of all those happy times, all those fellow fans you love so much!

Thanks Joolz for finding a way of saying what we can't find the words to! But then, that's your job innit? ;)

The following post is interesting as an example of those that endorse the appropriateness of the "Family as sanctuary" repertoire as a way of making sense of their experience in the New Model Army collective but in so doing, invoke a more complex version of "family life" than is offered in the band-side postings:

New Model Army fans I've encountered, many of whom I'm familiar with through this board, haven't been the easiest bunch for me to associate with (hell, I even once bitched out Justin here), and quite honestly, many times I've felt alienated by the "Family." But it doesn't really matter. I've been listening to New Model Army since 1986, and anything you do for that long will have a profound effect on who you are as a person. No petty differences or faux pas can change that. New Model Army is a significant part of my life, and I willingly respect that they are so in the lives on any New Model Army fan here, even if they wouldn't be so generous to me in return. And I can honestly say that I love anyone for whom New Model Army plays a similar role in their lives, because that shared experience means more to me than anything they may say or do that might otherwise piss me off ... We're an incredibly passionate bunch and we're very human in some very real ways; we are also very blessed and we probably need each other more than fans usually do, if only to remind each other of just how blessed we are. I think that need to remind

each other of our own blessings [is] the most convincing evidence that this is a

"family."

This poster raises the possibility of sometimes feeling alienated from the Family and foregrounds the idea that sometimes family members may not be the easiest people to be around. However, this tension is resolved by minimizing the significance of the differences between family members ("petty differences or faux pas") and by reaffirming the primary significance of the glue that holds them together as a family: their shared love and respect for each other, their mutual experience as fans and their passion for the New Model Army project. In this eloquent posting, a religious metaphor is invoked to describe the connection with the music and association with the band as a "blessing."

"IT'S A BIT SHEEPISH"

However, the family idea is not always unquestioningly adopted. For some, being in a family, and the New Model Army Family is no exception, means feeling pressure to do things they don't like doing. For example, for a time it was common practice for some New Model Army fans at a gig to make certain arm and hand movements synchronised with song lyrics. The poster in the following extract considers this kind of group behavior "completely ridiculous" and too big a price to pay if this sort of behavior is the criterion for admittance to the New Model Army family.

so to be part of the family you need to be a huge fan and do the same as everybody else does? so i agree i am not and will never be part of the family... but i know people who are big fans and still find all this hand business completely ridiculous

For some fans ritualistic behavior at gigs may well be experienced positively as a signifier of solidarity and belonging to the New Model Army collective. However, others reject these practices. This therefore marks a potential difference between the fans, which can then be constructed as, on the one hand, a marker of authentic fanhood (where people who don't do the gestures are excluded or may feel excluded) or, on the other hand, as a "ridiculous" example of conformity. "Doing the same as everybody else in the family does" can thus be characterised positively or (as above) negatively as the fans actively make sense of their identity as a New Model Army fan.

Offline, in interview, some fans are also clear that they do not buy into the family idea if this means being a "sheep" or a "lemming" – powerfully pejorative cultural identity labels used to categorize those who are unable to think for themselves:

> *Everybody thinks that - every fan thinks they are part of New Model Army for some reason. They belong together, that's why they're called a tribe, a family. Which I don't necessarily agree with too much. I think that's a bit sheepish, a bit following each other, like lemmings*

<div align="center">Fan interview</div>

The band's project encourages independent, critical thinking. In particular, Justin Sullivan in interviews and gig links is critical of the mass media, for instance characterising it as "all shit" at a recent Leeds Met gig (17/11/07). The song *You Weren't There* is an important vehicle for communicating the importance of making up one's own mind on the basis of first-hand evidence: "so you think you know what's going on - but you don't because you weren't in Belfast, no you weren't there" (Sullivan, 1999).

<div align="center">- 194 -</div>

"IT'S MORE LIKE A CLUB THAN A FAMILY"

Discussions about the differences between "club" and "family" and the appropriateness of these terms as descriptions of the New Model Army collective come up frequently in postings to the Noticeboard. This dispute is of some significance as clubs can be construed quite negatively as elitist and divisive whereas the family construct in band-side texts banishes notions of elitism and embraces inclusiveness.

In this extract the poster considers what counts as a club and what counts as a family and concludes that, although the collective does have the capacity to behave like a club, it does, for him, remain a place of sanctuary and solidarity. This is accomplished by arguing (in a similar move to the post examined above) that members of the family are bound together on a very deep level through love that is bred from "being together and shared circumstance and shared experiences." Family members are allowed to be controversial and critical within a general context of love and acceptance. The tension between "club" and "family" membership is resolved by this fan in a way that ultimately protects the investment in his social identity as a New Model Army fan:

> *I once got on my soapbox a few years back about how New Model Army fans here*
> *tend to act more like a club than a family. I'd like to return to that, for a moment: a*
> *club has rules and regulations that you have to follow in order to be a member.*
> *Clubs therefore have a natural expectation for its members to behave and conduct*
> *themselves in a pre-ordained manner. A family is an entirely different scenario --*
> *there are no "rules" to being a family. GK Chesterton once said that the family was*
> *the only truly anarchist institution in human society because its members cannot*
> *be governed by rules, but only by love that is bred from being together through*

shared circumstances and shared experiences. Nothing is pre-ordained for a family
-- Behavior and conduct is determined by love. At times, fans here have acted like
members of a select club, even viciously, yet over the years this board has never
entirely been converted into a members-only clubhouse, thankfully. I think that's
because, even during our most hostile, prideful, stubborn moments, like any family,
we know deep down we really can't get along without each other.

The distinction between club and family also arose in another online interaction, when
one fan posted bemoaning the lack of interesting content on the Noticeboard:

It seems to be "dominated" by about 5 people who keep writing childish (non New
Model Army related obviously!!) things to each other

A second fan posts in response:

Yes, sometimes I get tired of finding nothing of interest on the NB for me too... but
you know what? Such is life. If it doesnt look like a thread that interests me, I pass
it by & dont let it bother me. There are so many more important things in life...
why worry fret over the content of some posts on the New Model Army
Noticeboard? [name] ... take a deep breathe in....breathe out.... take it all in stride.
We are all family here.... yes?

And this triggers a reply from a third poster setting out the difference in his/her mind
between a club and a family:

I do not think that simply listening to a band makes people "family." Sharing a common interest, at best, makes a club. To be family requires a certain degree of hospitality, generosity and etiquette by which members actively seek to include the other members. A true family is willing to change, grow and sacrifice in order to bring others into it or to bring back those cut off, alienated, or disenfranchised. An attitude like "This is how it is--just accept it" is really more appropriate for a club than a family ... Confusing what is more of a club for a family only makes your response sound patronizing, which only adds salt to the wound.

In this extract, the second fan is castigated for her "patronizing" attitude to the first posting. A particular definition of family is offered in order to draw a contrast between "true family" behavior and the alleged behavior of regular posters to the Noticeboard. They are indirectly challenged for a perceived lack of hospitality and generosity and deep-seated conservatism. They are categorised as more like a "club," an elite, with hurtful "take it or leave it" rules or attitudes, who don't actually care about those who may be disenfranchised from the group and who fiercely protect a non-negotiable set of core values. This alternative picture of experience in the New Model Army collective is of course potentially troubling to the broader integrity of the New Model Army project and its brand identity as discussed above. In the final section of analysis we look further at how individual or sub-groups of fans regulate entry to the New Model Army collective by setting criteria for who is or isn't an authentic fan. Specifically, we examine the way this is played out to defend or criticize moshing at gigs.

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP AND MOSHING

A mosh-pit has the potential to be experienced in a number of ways and may be perceived by some as a violent place. Chapter 7 contains an account of moshing

observation. Debates about "what's going on" in mosh-pits frequently engage posters to the Noticeboard. Accusations of violence may be particularly significant in this community not least because issues of violence or violent feelings are problematised in New Model Army lyrics. Fans often discount levels of violence at New Model Army gigs by saying that if you fall down at a New Model Army gig there will be friendly hands to pull you up. This tends to be true, from observation. Whereas, at other bands' gigs, the implication is that one can suffer injury from deliberate violence or the uncontrolled aggression of other "fans."

One New Model Army fan is able to resolve the controversial nature of moshing by drawing on positively evaluated elements of the "Family as sanctuary" repertoire as follows:

I go down the front for the feeling of family you get, looking out for everyone not just your friends seeing new people and getting to know them after the gig NOT to try and hurt as many people as possible.

The mosh-pit here is characterised as a safe place and moshing is reconfigured as a necessary part of the rough and tumble of family life where "everyone looks out for everyone." Notions of "tough love" and "not being wrapped in cotton wool" are also hinted at and positively evaluated.

In contrast, a considered opponent of moshing, posts:

mosh is mosh, and it hurts people, both physically and emotionally. Not moshing doesn't hurt anyone in any way.

This poster positions himself as a long-time student of music, and argues that moshing is intrinsically violent. His assertion is challenged strongly by another fan in the next post and in the extended interaction following:

and my question to u is have u ever even been to nma concerts? or [name] that started the whole topic has she seen nma more then once? at first i thought that those that were complaining were frequent followers, or u are u talking from the outside[?]. i'm not english myself but i can say that nma followers are very friendly and respectful (at least for most parts) of each other, very [rare] our days. i'm glad to have know great people with big hearts and a musician with great view, while following the army. do u have any positive input into all this or all u have to do is bitch about the following which u [might] not even know at all?

The objections to moshing are reformulated in the above post as "bitchings about the following" and the poster's move is to try and discredit the anti-moshers by making relevant the frequency of gig attendance as an important difference marker between real fans and those on the outside. The anti-moshers are argued to have no speaking rights on the subject of moshing because they are accused of only superficial involvement with New Model Army. In addition, the notion of respect is invoked as a necessary quality in a family member, one that is argued to be lacking in the anti-moshers:

well like most families (not all) respect of ... it's culture and it's people is a must and u have very little of both.

Mobilizing another category of identity, nationality, he labels the anti-mosher pejoratively as:

u talk like american that thinks as if [he] teaches u how to think

So far then we have seen that a critique of moshing on the Noticeboard is treated in practice by another fan as evidence that the poster must be someone who stands outside of the community of fans and who has no respect for the New Model Army family culture. A pro-moshing stance is constructed and defended as a marker of authentic fanhood, and the pro-mosher attempts to exclude the anti-mosher from the New Model Army family using this criterion and further accuses the poster of possessing undesirable "American" values. The opponent's response is to re-categorize himself as non-American, an outsider in his own country, in a move that seeks to restore his credentials as a New Model Army fan:

Your observations about Americans are, sadly, mostly true. I've always been an outsider in my own country. A Polish guy I used to work with, a physicist who had lived in France, England and Israel, told me that I was the first American he had met who had a European mind. Whatever that means. Just my way of saying that you've pegged me wrong. I'm not one of these Land of Opportunity androids.

Note that the authority invoked here is European, from the Old World, quite well traveled, and an educated scientist. On this person's authority, not only has the anti-moshing poster a "European mind" he is to be treated as a human being, not an android. He places himself outside the category of those who believe in the "land of

opportunity" – a term synonymous with capitalistic exploitation in this context[42]. Laying claim to the categories of being human and non-American (or perhaps even un-American?) is to lay claim to categories or values that are important parts of New Model Army discourse, and helps to re-establish the right to be part of the New Model Army family. The pro-moshing contributor then moves to explicitly exclude his opponent from the New Model Army collective:

u are not part of the nma family and never will be

Others challenge this eternal exclusion of the anti-mosher from the New Model Army family, invoking notions of childishness to sideline the pro-mosher and to reformulate the dispute as a playground squabble:

all this reminds me of being in the junior school.

"do you want to be in my gang? Well you can't!"

"don't want to be anyway"

"good"

etc etc...

Aren't we a bit old for this?

And the pro-moshing poster comes in for other criticism, both indirect:

He'll kick you out of the family too if you can't pass the test.

Too friggin' ridiculous,

and direct:

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[42] A reference to the Cartwright/New Model Army song from 1985, *51st State*, in which England is satirised as the fifty-first State of the USA, and which contains the lines: *Here in the land of opportunity/watch us revel in our liberty/You can say what you like/but it doesn't change anything/Because the corridors of power are an ocean away.*

I think if you keep going you may end up with a family all of your very own with

just you in it!

This issue came up again on the current <u>High</u> tour, particularly after the Leeds Met gig[43], when one fan posted the following:

i went to leeds last night, as usual down the front shirt off, but this time it felt

different, we talk about family, but it seemed more like us and them, and i was one

of them! people looked as if to say "what are you doing here, who are you, you

don't belong". we used to spend all night throwing each other about, then it would

be "see you tomorrow night" or "same place next year" now, i'm not so sure. We

welcomed any one and everyone, now it seemed i didn't have the right to be there.

So rewind 13 years, i got the feeling it would be my last time again, i was thinking

about sheffield tonight but i think i'll stop at home, my family are very important to

me, i'll spend some time where i feel welcome.

This fan sees the problem not as one of violence but of inclusion, welcoming and belonging versus exclusion, separation and division, and he makes a telling contrast between the Family and his real family at home where he does feel welcome.

For reasons of space, it is necessary to draw this part of the chapter to a close and move on to a summary discussion. However, the final word is left to a very recent

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[43] 16th November 2007. I observed the moshpit from the balcony throughout this performance and can confirm that the moshers were very conspicuous and active on the night.

posting by Joolz, this time a direct response by her to the discussion about moshers, whom she calls "pit dancers" and belonging:

> *I would hope - really - that the pit dancers continually strive to include rather than exclude. But this accusation of territoriality and elitism (not to mention aggression) has been leveled at the various generations of them since the beginning and sometimes, at some shows has some basis in truth, sadly, and I say that as someone who has watched, like, duh, a lot of shows. However, it must be said, there is never any place whatever at an NMA show for bullying or harrassment in the dancing, as I know everyone will agree.*

DISCUSSION

In this chapter I have argued that a web-site empowers a band in many ways. Of particular interest has been the way in which it offers a band the chance to control and project not only its band identity but the combined band and fan collective identity to a potentially "global" community of consumers with internet access. New Model Army does so partly through offering the construct 'Family' as a way for fans to make sense of their experiences with the New Model Army band-fan collective. This construct offers fans added value to their involvement with New Model Army - it's not just about the music; participation also offers the promise of the experience of belonging, a sanctuary from an alienating society and a space in which fans can be themselves.

New Model Army's preferred construction of the band-fan collective as a "Family" is an important part of its identity work. As discussed above, in a range of band texts the New Model Army explicitly positions itself against the "fat golden goose of mainstream rock

n' roll"; where certain music fans are seen as "enmeshed in the illusion of consumerism and what they sadly consider "normal" society' and where the media celebrate fake celebrity and plastic superficiality". This is a Puritan kind of ideology. Deploying the "Family as sanctuary" repertoire to give meaning to being part of the New Model Army collective helps to create and maintain this brand identity. It promises fans the opportunity to experience a sense of solidarity, acceptance and emotional honesty. The band's positioning of themselves as bound by family ties to their fans also breaks down any perceived divisions between the band and the fans and backgrounds the commercial stake of the band in the longevity of the New Model Army project.

The fan posting analysis examined how consumers appropriate the "Family as sanctuary" repertoire as they do "being a New Model Army fan." Some fans enthusiastically accept the band-side framing of their experience as a member of the New Model Army collective. However, not all contributors to the Noticeboard straightforwardly accept this consumption information. An alternative "Family as constraining" repertoire is deployed to re-imagine the collective in negative terms as potentially oppressive and a threat to the values of individuality and freedom of speech. Also the New Model Army collective is argued by some to be at risk of becoming an exclusive "club," and we saw how authenticity of New Model Army fanhood may be actively disputed in the context of an argument over the validity of fan practices such as moshing at gigs. "Tribe" is more promising than "cult," but a potential problem with this categorization is that it can become associated with visual markers of membership, and lead to clannishness and therefore a sense of exclusiveness. New Model Army's use of the Family construct, on the other hand, is all encompassing, inclusive, and open to any who have an emotional connection with the music.

The Family construct can also be read as a means of displacing the producer/consumer dichotomy, which a more commercialised model of band-fan relationship would

endorse. In the case studied here, the fans are invited to endorse a non-commercial, affective version of the New Model Army collective and are also, it must be said, afforded the opportunity via the Noticeboard to debate and negotiate the wider meanings and implications of this framework of meaning and the broader musical project. The notion of Family can, finally, be seen as an imaginative attempt to deal with the producer/consumer and performer/audience divides in a manner which foregrounds human, social relationships, offering a positively evaluated social identity for existing and potential members of the New Model Army collective which is congruent with New Model Army's values. In effect, it relativises and downgrades the importance of the economic exchange relationship between band and fans.

Arguably, the band and fans need the wider spectrum of different constructions of collective identity in order to work out nuanced meanings which they feel are pertinent to the particular band project and to themselves as individuals and as fans. Since meaning is relational, the more negatively valued constructions are necessary shadows which add dimensions of meaning to the positive constructions. The negative labels are also used to mark the differences between the fan group and other groups, thus contributing to the band and fans' identity work.

Not all of the COPMC texts deal directly with Family. It is above all in talk that the 'Family' is conceptually elaborated by both band and fans. In this case, such talk appears to occur primarily on the web-site (although off-line talk also has its share of mention of 'Family'). The particular meaning-nuances of 'Family' are revealed also in fan interviews. The performance of, and singing along to, songs at a live performance engenders a sense of togetherness, and the various elements of visual culture serve to create a sense of visual identity of the group, but these kinds of cultural texts seldom explicitly address 'Family'. Therefore the uses of songs, performance and artwork serve to build group togetherness, but it is important to note that they do not define it. It has to be defined

and sustained, in this case at least, by a different kind of communication, mainly offline and online talk. NMA uses different kinds of texts to achieve different purposes.

The 'Family' construct can be seen as an imaginative attempt to articulate the production and consumption of the band in a way that foregrounds hedonic response, offering a social identity and mode of identification that is congruent with the band's values. Of course, all of the constructions of groupness need to be seen in the wider context of the circuit of popular musical culture, the totality of meanings constructed by producers and consumers around their social interaction.

It has to be said that at times is not always absolutely clear whether 'Family' refers only to the fans or whether it includes the band and the fans. The notion of where the band sits in relation to the community (inside it, outside it, or both inside and outside it) appears to be contingent on either party's interests on any particular occasion. What is interesting is that it may suit either band or fans to define Family differently depending on the context. The construct should then be seen as an interpretive resource whose use is occasioned, contextual and strategic.

The relevance of social identity theory (SIT) can be seen in relation to this data. As was mentioned in Chapter 3, SIT is not much used in the consumer or marketing literature on brand communities and consumer tribes. Its concern is with group membership, in-groups and out-groups, and positive distinctiveness. In this Chapter it has been possible to see how NMA offers an account of itself which is in opposition to the mainstream media and musical industry, constructing itself in effect as an in-group which is positively distinguished from the mainstream out-group. Also apparent is that membership of the Family is something which is valued. However, it is also contested amongst fans – "you are not a real fan" – and fans may be cautious or critical about

what the implications of membership may be. The positive distinctiveness of the Family is that it is an unconventional movement around the band's "music, ideas and creative endeavours", and an "emotional sanctuary" where "people can be proud of their deepest feelings". The Family in-group is an enabling or facilitating community offering a treasure, namely authenticity, in contrast to the world's obsession with "spin, materialism, fake-celebrity and plastic superficiality".

In terms of the brand community literature, the most obvious connection to make here is with two of the three primary markers of brand community, namely consciousness of kin and morality. Clearly, Family is kin, and being a Family member imposes certain obligations of solidarity. But this is a community which is anti-brand in the sense of anti-mainstream. Also, the theoretical perspective and data show how many notions of groupness are in circulation, and how these are discussed and valorised by the band and members as they work out their values and identities in social interaction. In the next chapter, we encounter the third of the brand community markers, namely religiosity.

CONCLUSION

This Chapter has been an account of the selection, treatment and interpretation of web-site and other texts concerning New Model Army and its fans, with particular reference to the notion of Family. In the next chapter, Chapter 6, I present data relating to a touring exhibition of art and artefacts co-curated by the band and a number of museums in England and Germany during the period 2005-2007. Whereas the present chapter focused on examining mainly online texts to explore the collective identity of the band-fan community as constructed by both sides, the next chapter focuses on the way in which the band, with extensive fan involvement, makes use of museum settings to mobilise primarily its visual identity in a way which helps to 're-member' the Family.

CHAPTER 6 – FAMILY HERITAGE

Heritage is a powerful tool.

It can inculcate a sense of belonging.

It can be used to include or exclude.

Agyeman, 2006:16 (in Simpson, ed. 2006)

Let it not be said that everything must die

without some mark being made of its passing.

Snelsmore Wood (Sullivan, 1996)

INTRODUCTION[44]

In this, the second of the empirical chapters, the focus is on how the band makes use of a touring exhibition of its art and artefacts to construct a communal heritage for itself and the fans. In the foregoing chapter, it was demonstrated how the band mobilised and offered to the fans the 'Family' construct in order to frame the band-fan collectivity. It is perhaps then no great surprise that the title of the touring exhibition was: *One Family – One Tribe: The Art & Artefacts of New Model Army*. There are a number of reasons why this exhibition has been chosen as an important empirical focus for this

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[44] Some of the material and ideas in this Chapter have already been published in book chapter form in O'Reilly, Daragh (2007) By the Community, for the Community: Exhibiting New Model Army's 25 years of rock visual heritage, in Rentschler, Ruth and Hede, Anne-Marie (ed.) *Museum Marketing: Competing in the Global Marketplace*. Butterworth-Heinemann.

chapter. Firstly, this particular kind of move to heritage is unusual and innovative for an independent rock band. Secondly, as we shall see, it is an important way in which the band creates an opportunity for itself and the fans to construct and to reflect on the meaning of its enduring musical project. Thirdly, it presents an opportunity for the researcher to interpret from the exhibits how the Family constructs itself by means of visual culture and what discourses it uses to do so. In this chapter, using a variety of data sources, I analyse how the exhibition was produced and consumed, what items were exhibited and how the exhibition contributes to an understanding of the New Model Army Family or tribe. I also examine the symbolic space opened up between band and fans by the presentation of artefacts which present the band as musicians and performers. I explain how the exhibition can function as a means of fans 're-membering' themselves into the Family, as well as a means of recruiting new fans to membership.

POPULAR MUSIC AND HERITAGE

When one thinks of rock music heritage, one might think perhaps of rock celebrities such as Bono or the Sex Pistols being inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame; of media stories about Beatles or Rolling Stones memorabilia being auctioned in London or New York for large sums of money; of the role of The Cavern in Liverpool's European City of Culture project, 2008; of the heavily-sponsored Experience Music Project in Seattle, or even of Sheffield's failed National Centre for Popular Music. There are signs, however, that museum authorities and other exhibition spaces in the UK, encouraged by the Labour government's policy on widening access to culture, are at least beginning to open themselves up to exhibitions about individual popular music acts. For example, an exhibition entitled *Punk: Sex, Seditionaries and the Sex Pistols* took place at the Urbis Centre in Manchester, England, from 26 May to 11 September, 2005. Again, a Kylie Minogue exhibition toured the UK in 2007. The author visited this exhibition during its stay in Manchester. The show explores 'Kylie Minogue as a "popular style icon and

international performer"[45]. From observation, Kylie's heritage is essentially about televisual and musical celebrity, fashion, and sensuality - the contrast with New Model Army's exhibition could hardly be greater.

THE NEW MODEL ARMY 'HERITAGE PROJECT'

I take the heritage of a band, in the widest sense, to include all of the meanings which it has ever negotiated with its fans - musical, visual and experiential – and therefore all of the texts which band and fans have generated. NMA is a band with a very strong sense of English heritage, both political and religious. Sullivan's song Snelsmore Wood, written about the destruction of nature caused by the building of the Newbury by-pass, contains the lines: 'Let it not be said that everything must die/Without some mark being made of its passing . The band's exhibition is a fundamentally important signifying practice within the overall construction of its cultural identity. In 2004, NMA began to plan a free-of-charge exhibition of its art and artefacts in collaboration with the local museum service in West Yorkshire. The event was entitled "One Family – One Tribe: The Art & Artefacts of New Model Army". The show toured for two years, from 2005-7, in the UK and Germany. As the name of the exhibition implies, it is a collection of the band's art and artefacts, and reflects 25 years of NMA's visual and material culture, including original cover artwork, lyrics notebooks, stage clothes, instruments, merchandise, photographs, audience souvenirs, press-cuttings and audio-visual material. Initially, the exhibition was given a preview showing in the Old Courthouse in the small town of Otley, West Yorkshire, England. The Old Courthouse is a community arts centre which is generally the preserve of arts events appealing to a different kind of audience from rock fans. The show then moved to the larger Cartwright Gallery in nearby Bradford, where it received

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[45] See www.vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/future_exhibs/kylie/

approximately 10,000 visits[46]. Under a municipal twinning arrangement between Bradford and Hamm, Germany, it was next shown at the Hamm Maximilian Park (6,000 visitors), and most recently (2007) at Salford Museum & Art Gallery, near Manchester, England. At the time of writing, negotiations for the extension of the tour to other UK venues are at an advanced stage[47].

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The objective of this part of the inquiry was to document what it contained and gain an understanding of how the exhibition was produced and consumed. The show itself can be read as a text, of course, a text which contains an assemblage of other texts. The following Table 7 below contains a brief summary of how the data presented was collected and analysed. The approach to data analysis was to (a) observe the exhibited texts themselves, and (b) examine the related accounts given by band and fans, with a view to understanding how the heritage project was being used to construct a communal cultural identity, and (c) discuss with academic colleagues who visited with me. Drawing on semiotic ideas (see Chapter 4) of signification and reference, as well as the DPDA idea of interpretative repertoires, the art and artefacts were studied for what they appeared to mobilise and signify.

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[46] Source: Bradford Museums Service

[47] Justin Sullivan has also recently worked on a number of separate music-related projects with the National Railway Museum in York. Joolz has also worked frequently with museums services.

Table 7: Art and Artefacts Exhibition - Data Collection

Data Collection Method	Narrative
Interview	Interview with curator about the production and consumption of the exhibition
Participant Observation	Otley Courthouse (one solo visit, opening night, with video) Cartwright Museum, Bradford (two visits, 1 accompanied), video footage/photography Salford Museum (one visit, accompanied by museum studies expert) Band web-site (online observation of band promotion and fan reception of the exhibition)
Acquisition of copy of Visitors Book	Cartwright Museum (copy of Visitors Book text obtained by permission of museum).

Source: Author

Before considering the exhibition itself, however, it is helpful to look firstly at the wider range of art, artefacts and other components of the band's cultural identity.

ART AND ARTEFACTS – THE CIRCUIT

The culture of any particular band is shaped by the texts which the band encodes, by the structures of these texts and by the ways in which the fans respond to, use and discursively elaborate their responses and uses of these texts, as well as by the texts which fans themselves generate. The diagram in Figure 21 below represents the circuits along which band culture flows.

Figure 21: Band-Side generation of Texts
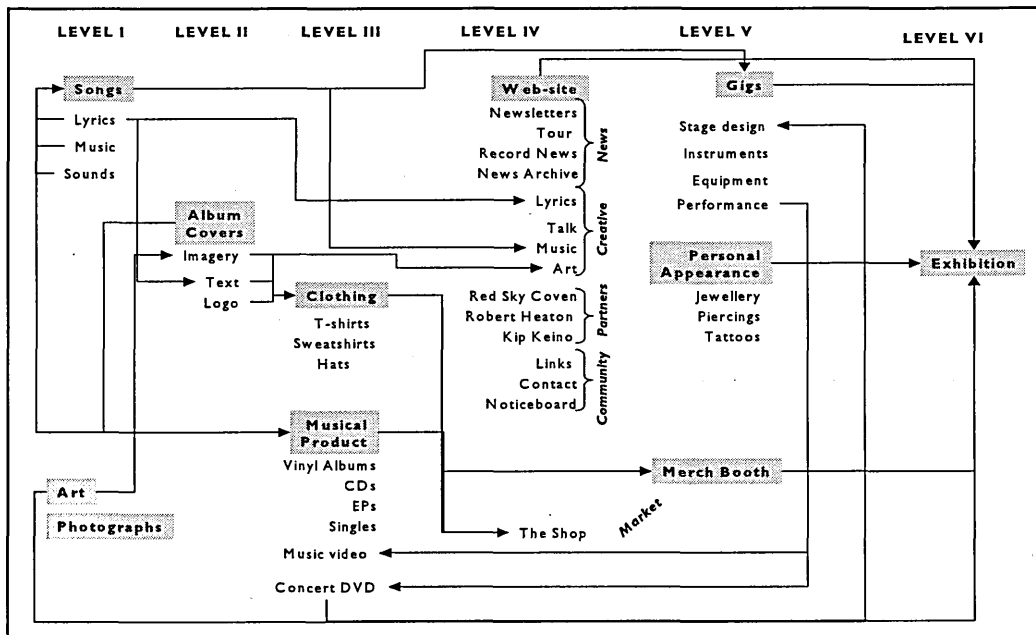
Source: Author

This diagram attempts to map the origination and circulation of band-side texts by differentiating between different 'levels'. Primary texts, such as songs, sounds, lyrics and images, are generated first. These are then used in a range of other texts such as CD covers, merchandising, the web-site and live shows. Note that the exhibition, because it contains all of these texts, is seen as a further level of the circuit. Also worth noting is the fact that not all of the artefacts used by the band are originated directly by them, for example, clothing, footwear, and jewellery. I now go on to discuss how the band in effect gathered all of these texts into a single exhibition as part of its heritage project, before turning to an examination of the show's content and how this was consumed. In the exhibition, I examine an altar, a backstage pass as a signifier of the band's separateness from the fans, and a Visitors Book in which fan comments in support of the exhibition's funding were made an exhibit in their own right.

NMA ARTWORK

In this section I examine the artwork of New Model Army, with particular reference to Joolz's aesthetic and to the visual motifs of Celticity and religiosity to be found in her art.

JOOLZ'S AESTHETIC

Joolz has designed almost all of NMA's album covers. She is therefore an important source of information concerning the production of the primary images which occur on NMA record and CD covers, T-shirts and other merchandise. Her band artwork eschews the polished, synthetic, professional look of much contemporary graphic work. As one fan put it in interview, 'Joolz's artwork [...] is very ungraphic ... That worries the hell out of some people ... but I quite like that'. This is consistent with the band's 'indie' preference for 'organic' values over technical ones in relation to sound also, for 'unschooled' values over the conventional (Fonarow, 2006).

It is worth pointing out that Joolz regards NMA's CD covers as 'art':

... no doubt some of you reading this will be puzzled by why I take such a serious viewpoint on a "simple CD cover" - hey, it's just a record sleeve, it's not real Art - but you see, I believe that it is. ...

Joolz statement on band web-site

Joolz regards her art work as a 'solitary discourse between me and time, a long one-sided conversation overheard by other people - the people who buy the art'. This relativises the importance of the customer in relation to the artistic process itself. The process is one whereby the images come into her mind, are stored for a long time, and are then summoned by the music (for which she is making the cover art). As far as getting the work done, she says: 'The only real way to learn is to practice like a demon and be spiritually prepared to give yourself to the work, to the exclusion of any other life'. She asserts that NMA art 'requires passion and commitment. It requires close attention to details, long study and years of observation'. She frequently mobilises ideas of magic, religious and other esoteric resources as interpretative repertoires with which to construct accounts of her creative process. Fire and light imagery are also used, as in the following quotations:

when that bright, small voice sings inside me I have to hear it, do as it says, paint what it says because it's spiritually dazzling - dark and dazzling ...

my hands create these things from the fiery bright voice inside.

Joolz statement on band web-site

This brings to mind the line from the NMA song *Ballad of Bodmin Pill* (Heaton/Sullivan, 1987): 'I want to dance with this fire 'cause it's all that I know'. In fact, the image of fire and light occurs frequently in the band's song lyrics. Fire and light are key parts of this image system, representing a number of things, but chiefly the creative imagination itself.

NMA VISUAL MOTIFS – CELTICITY AND RELIGIOSITY[48]

NMA's very early artwork (1980) is characterised by the band's use of plain Cargo font and the rather stark use of red, black and white colouring, and this style has been recently repeated on the BD3 EP (2006) – see Figure 22 below.

Figure 22: Classic NMA Graphics

Bittersweet (1983) Single	*BD3* (2006) EP
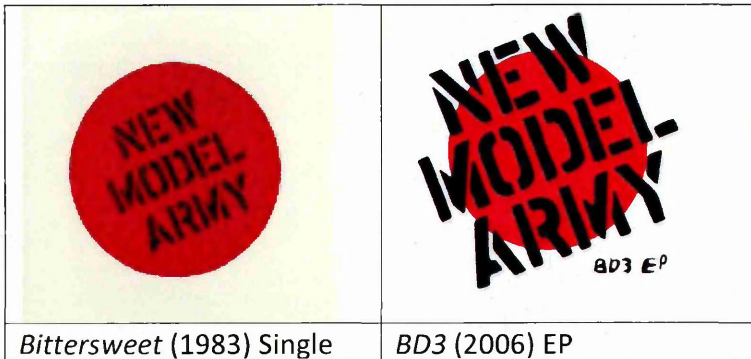
Source: New Model Army

Over the years, there has been quite a wide range of motifs and visual treatments, mostly artwork but with the occasional photograph. In terms of figures or objects, there are, for example, representations of the band members themselves[49] (9, 11, 14, 29, 33), of mythical figures (18), unidentified human figures (6, 8, 23, 32), a tribal head (28), images of death (31, 37), and snakes (5, 19) as well as a variety of abstract and decorative elements.

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[48] Appendix B contains around 40 images taken from the band's web-site of the covers of NMA albums, EPs and singles.

[49] Numbers refer to classification in Appendix 2.

Of particular interest in the context of this Chapter are the use of Celtic motifs (See Figure 23 below) and the related use of religious motifs (see Figure 3), both of which were featured in the exhibition. The band embraced Celticity as a resource for visual identity and religiosity in the late 1980s - see Drummond (2006), for an account of Led Zeppelin's similar embrace. The Celtic knot used on the band's *Thunder and Consolation* album is a visual resource which is central to the iconography of the band-fan community, as we shall see. This graphic is therefore an important clue to understanding how 'the' meaning of the band is visually constructed and circulated. This Chapter pursues how these images of Celticity and religiosity are used through the lens of the exhibition.

Figure 23: Use of Celtic Images by NMA

Thunder/Consolation (Album)	Green and Grey (Single)	*Vagabonds* (Single)

PRODUCING THE EXHIBITION

The idea for the exhibition came from Joolz Denby, who has been responsible for the album cover artwork for the band since the early 1980s. Nina Baptiste, a New Model Army family member who worked closely with Joolz in developing the event was at the

time the audience development manager for the Yorkshire Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. At this time, government policy on museum access required engagement by museums with new audiences. The idea of an exhibition of rock music culture was attractive to the museum as it offered the possibility of accessing and developing new audiences which might not normally visit a museum . Together, Joolz and Nina Baptiste planned for the Otley preview event and secured the funding. Artefacts and artwork which had been lying under beds and in cupboards were given professional curatorial treatment and put on display. While the form which the exhibition took was primarily the result of their collaboration, our focus in this paper is on what the exhibition tells us about New Model Army and its relationship with its fans. The preview event in Otley was visited by a museum service team and, on the basis of their appraisal, the show was permitted to move to the Cartwright Hall in Bradford, where exhibition space is usually reserved for major artists—for example, Anish Kapoor had been a recent exhibitor.

It is interesting to note that Joolz Denby actively solicited the support of the fans in the exhibition grant bid. Using the website and e-mail, Joolz solicited fan testimonials 'from Family members for whom New Model Army has been an important factor in their lives':

Obviously the exhibition will be visited by hundreds of people who are not familiar with New Model Army, or the way in which for many people, it has become more than just a band. Therefore, it is our intention to include in the exhibits an album of writings, stories and reminiscences from Family members for whom New Model Army has been an important factor in their lives. These writings could take the form of testimonies about the effect New Model Army has had on you, along the lines of the wonderful letters already sent [...]; or they could be in story or letter form or they could be poems. Contributions can be either anonymous or signed.

The large number of testimonials which were sent in response to this produced a strong file of evidence which helped to persuade the Otley and Bradford venues it would be worthwhile to programme their spaces with the New Model Army exhibition. A selection of their testimonials was subsequently included in a Visitors Book which became an exhibit at the museum, and I will discuss the significance of this evidence file as an exhibit in the analysis of the exhibition that follows. The fans are represented in the exhibition by these testimonials, which contain their accounts of the band, themselves and their relationship with the band. In a sense, they function as a kind of approbatory chorus or fan endorsement for NMA as a band with heritage. In addition, the physical work of setting up the initial Otley and subsequent Bradford exhibitions involved different members of the local Family volunteering time and effort, doing favours and lending resources.

CONSUMING THE EXHIBITION

The promotional material positions the exhibition as an unrivalled opportunity for music fans to see a unique archive of paintings, photographs, concert footage and objects. The collection is promoted as a 'must-see' for contemporary music fans, highlighting the roles of art and music, bringing together different backgrounds, ages and cultures. In fact, the exhibition had a variety of audiences. First of all were the New Model Army fans who travelled from far away. It was possible to schedule some band gigs in venues which were quite close to Bradford (Manchester), so that some fans were able to combine gigs with a visit to the exhibition. Secondly, there were other music fans, not necessarily fans of New Model Army, who were also interested. Thirdly, the existing audience of the museums came to see something different. Finally, large numbers of school children also made the trip. Ten thousand people altogether visited the Bradford

Cartwright Hall venue, including people who flew from the USA to see the exhibition. A museums officer explained that the exhibition had been among Cartwright Hall's most popular shows in recent months: "I've been here 9 months and it's one of the busiest [exhibitions] … it's a whole new audience that might never normally go to a museum". There was some wry comment on the band web-site about the assumption that NMA fans "might never normally" visit museums!

THE EXHIBITION AND ITS CONTENTS

The New Model Army exhibition collected a range of elements of the band's visual heritage together. Their selection and incorporation in the exhibition suggests that these texts carry significance for the band and its presentation of itself. Their presentation in a show enables the band and fans to construct a visual aesthetic for the Family and helps construct a coherent band offering. For the first time, it was possible for New Model Army fans and other visitors to have a historical retrospective of the history of the band as related through material objects. Figure 24 below provides a general shot of the Bradford exhibition layout.

In the two rooms occupied at the Bradford exhibition, objects exhibited by the band included lyrics notes and books, paintings, portraits, photographs, a photo-collage, the original painted leather jacket from the Ghost of Cain album cover, posters, CDs and album cover artwork. Other items included stage costumes and banners, as well as a selection of electric guitars and keyboards. The exhibition also included artefacts created by the fans themselves, such as a selection of the testimonials displayed in a Visitors Book near the entrance and a comic strip drawn by a fan which illustrated his interpretation of a New Model Army song. A looped band DVD (New Model Army Live 161203) was playing on a large wall screen in a side room. There were also objects which originated from outside the immediate band–fan community, including laminated

backstage passes, press cuttings, clogs and a hat worn by Justin Sullivan on 1980s videos.

Figure 24: NMA Exhibition Layout

Source: Author

Five mannequins dressed in stage clothes stood around the main room facing the entrance, possibly representing the five current members in the band line-up. There were, finally, several objects pointing to death (skulls, skeletons) and spirituality (an altar, a serpent on a cross, Tarot cards, a framed painting and statuette of the Blessed Virgin Mary). On the walls of the museum, and providing a framework of interpretation for the other exhibits, was a series of panels reproducing the 'What is the"New Model Army Family - some thoughts by Joolz Denby" text (Denby, 2004), which was a key focus in the previous chapter. These objects go beyond a simple presentation of band artefacts and provide another layer of interpretation.

It is important to note that the exhibition was dedicated to the memory of Darryl Kempster (1967-2004), a Family member who had died the previous year. In that sense, the exhibition was a mark being made of his passing, and also, arguably, a mark being made against the passing of the band itself – the exhibition also featured a photograph of Robert Heaton, the band's founder member, creative contributor, and drummer for many years, who had died not long before, in 2004.

Lack of space prevents a detailed analysis of all of the exhibited 'texts'. Instead, I have selected three for analysis. Firstly, I examine an altar which formed the centrepiece of the Bradford exhibition, and reflect on what it signifies. Secondly, the analytical focus turns to those artefacts which signify a symbolic distance or space between the band and fans, namely the signs of musicianship, in particular the "Access All Areas" (AAA) pass. And finally, I consider the Visitors Book, or Family Album, a collection of statements from fans which was used in support of the funding application for the exhibition and also formed part of the display itself.

THE ALTAR

Extract from field-notes:

On entering the Bradford exhibition, the first thing I see is a kind of altar structure [See Figure 25 below]. On a dais about 12 centimetres off the ground stand two very tall candlesticks wrapped in a white fabric and holding thick red candles. Midway between them, against a white-emulsioned back panel, is a framed copy of Celtic knot original artwork for the 'Thunder and Consolation' album (1989). The sign underneath the artwork reads 'Band logo'. Its location in the exhibition in the centre of the altar is a clear sign of its importance. I recall that in a Catholic church,

for example, it is the tabernacle which is in the centre of the altar; the object of
worship is central.

Figure 25: Altar
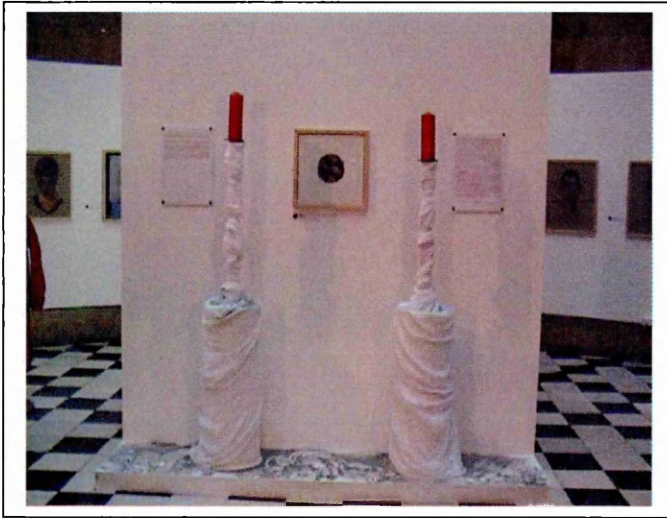
Source: Author

The making of this altar for the exhibition stems from Joolz's own spiritual practice. I know this, because she once gave me a photo of the shrine which she kept. The folklorist Kay Turner, who has conducted extensive fieldwork on altars, sees them as 'in essence thresholds between realms, and, as such, a place to resolve dichotomies', and states that 'many women … make altars to assert the interdependence between nature and culture and between the material and spiritual worlds' (1999:63). She writes (1999:79) that:

in making their altars, women assemble images that represent the power of and
need for good relationships and positive affiliations. As a visual testimony to the
emphasis that women place on creating links between people, between things,

and between realms, the altar specifies a context for building and sustaining

relationship [...] the altar is both a model of and an instrument for relationship.

In this exhibition, the centre of the altar was a visual image of a Celtic knot. This image had been used on the band's *Thunder and Consolation* album – see Figure 23 below.

Figure 26: Thunder and Consolation Album Cover
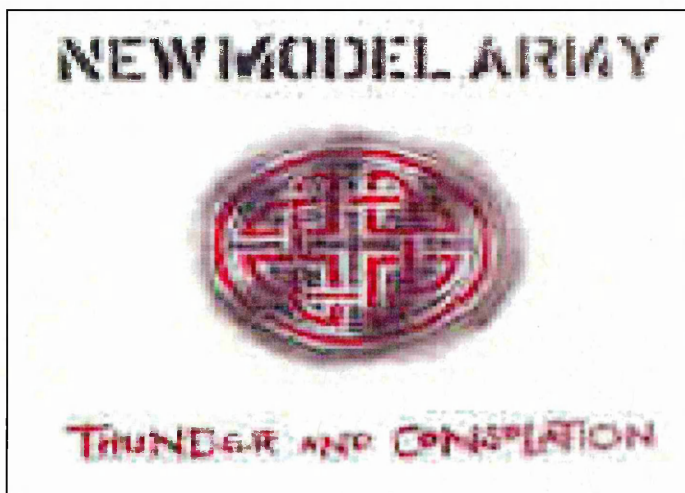
Source: New Model Army

Joolz Denby drew on George Bain's 'Celtic Art: The Methods of Construction' (1982) in developing this image. The following passage from an interview with Joolz explains her approach to the emblem:

People very often want to know about Celtic work, and what drew me to it. That's easy—it's beautiful and it is the expression of spiritual dedication and prayer. It

expresses a link between mathematics (which are my own, personal mystery) and art (which I do understand). The piece that symbolises 'Thunder and Consolation' came from a Pictish stone carving—now people have it on a record cover, it serves its purpose again through another medium.

A panel to the left of the knotwork symbol, signed by Joolz, characterises the symbol as

a charm to protect us all from the evil eye of materialism and negativity. It is powerful as only the most purely organic images can be ...a window to another place and time ... a satisfying image, to me, full of emotion and meaning, remembrance and belief ... The image has the sense of mystery and empowerment that characterises the music it stands for; it was made with the same degree of commitment and direction that the music was – and that's what matters, in the end

Joolz, Exhibit Panel

Note the use of notions such as "powerful", "organic", "satisfying", "full of emotion and meaning, remembrance and belief", "sense of mystery", all of which seek to position the symbol in relation to the visitor.

Celticity is a word used to describe the use of 'Celtic' references in contemporary culture. Bowman writes (2005):

The term 'Celtic spirituality' in cotemporary parlance covers a huge variety of belief and praxis and involves a wide range of spiritual seekers. Celtic spirituality is used

broadly to describe pre-Christian Celtic religion, the Celtic Church and contemporary religiosity inspired by the 'Celtic spirit', and is often predicated upon the image of the 'spiritual Celt', inherently spiritual and intuitive, in touch with nature and the hidden realms, epitomising in many ways that which is lost but longed for in contemporary society … Current celtic Pagan spirituality is often influenced by the assumption that Celtic naïve religion was and is akin to that of contemporary indigenous or tribal groups.

The Celtic symbol points to a kind of spirituality and culture which is pre- Christian, and to the idea of a time and place when society was organised tribally. In this way, it offers a certain version of community which constructs the nature of the relationship between the band and the fans.

The band's Green and Grey cover carries the well-known Celtic triskeles, which Laing and Laing (1992) suggest were of magical significance - but (p.18) 'the exact original meaning of the symbolism is lost to us'. Green and Grey is considered by many to be the band's defining song; significantly, this was the song which was chosen to be sung at the funeral service for Robert Heaton, the band's drummer and creative contributor from 1982 to 1998.

Joolz invokes the sense of sacrifice involved in the production of Celtic documents as a kind of artistic value:

It pays to remember Celtic manuscript illumination was undertaken as a sacrifice to god, and so had the deepest possible significance to it's creators. The vortex of

Postmodernism with it's emphasis on stealing images from everywhere and using them in the most cynical ways possible destroys what it touches.

Just as Sullivan's lyrics and aesthetic infuse the NMA project with at least some of the Puritan and Romantic values associated with indie ideology, so Joolz's artwork and aesthetic mobilises a discourse of Celticity which colours the band's identity. There is of course a link between Romanticism and Celticity in the notion of the noble savage, read 'brave' or 'tribal member'.

In this exhibition, therefore, NMA mobilises a particular discursive resource or interpretative repertoire (the Pictish emblem), then sacralises it by displaying it on an altar, and links it to a number of different elements: to the band by calling the signifier the 'NMA logo', to the band's music because of its association with the *Thunder and Consolation* artwork, and to the Family by means of the altar's centrality to the exhibition entitled 'One Family, One Tribe'.

The *Thunder and Consolation* album cover Celtic knot is used by fans in their signifying practices, sometimes even as a tattoo. In interview, Joolz commented that 'alternative' music fans 'seek to publicly declare their allegiance to their chosen band by being tattooed with the band's logos … This is done to demonstrate solidarity not so much with the band themselves but with the other fans who are part of the tattooee's 'family'. From observation, the Celtic knot symbol appears to be regarded as the most important visual symbol in circulation in the band-fan community. Its function is, according to Joolz, to serve as a sign of family allegiance.

At this point, it is helpful to revisit the notion raised in the discussion of Maffesoli's work (op. cit.) in Chapter 3 of the 'social divin' (p. 38), the aggregate force which is the basis of any society or association. Maffesoli argued that religiosity should be seen in the most elemental light, that of reliance (p. 77), and that (p. 78) – there is a link between the emotional and religiosity. He stated explicitly that he was 'adopting the perspective of Durkheim and his followers, who always placed the greatest weight on the sacredness of social relationships'. The Celtic knot is a symbol of the ties that bind NMA and the fans. Its Celticity indexes an eclectic religiosity consistent with a New Age perspective. What is being sacralised here is the Family, and this may be read as a contemporary example of demotheistic move. This claiming of divinity for the community sits well with a certain strand of Puritan thinking. The Celticity represents the Romantic strand of NMA's ideology.

This interpretation is not entirely untroubled, however. There is a question here as to whether what is being sacralised is the band, or the Family. There is a tension here between the appellation 'band logo' and the community idea. In fact, it was noticeable that the term 'logo' was replaced by 'symbol' in a subsequent version of the exhibition I visited. I read this as a reflexive de-branding move by the band, an example of an attempt to distance themselves from branding discourse, and to de-emphasise the band in favour of the Family. At the same time, the Celtic knot is now available for sale from the band online Shop in the form of a pendant or a nose stud – see Figure 27 below.

Figure 27 – Celtic Knotwork Jewellery

| Thunder and Consolation Pendant | Thunder and Consolation Small Pendant | Thunder and Consolation Nose Stud |
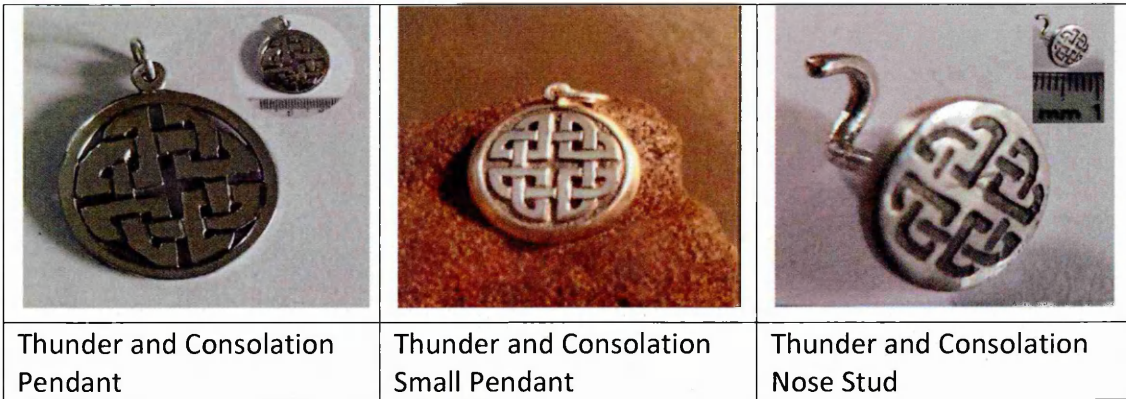
Source: New Model Army

The ongoing little tensions between commerce and the sacred is revealed in these details.

ACCESS ALL AREAS?

Although the concept of the Family works to articulate and subsume the differences between the band and the fans, there is a countervailing move here to preserve the 'specialness' of the band as distinctive, creative, professional musicians. This move risks creating a sense of separation or symbolic difference between band and fans. There is a need to give fans a reason to belong, hence the emphasis on the distinctive, creative, authentic value contributed by the band. Apart from the affective bonds between band and fans, there is also a commercial relationship. This separates the band from the fans in a number of ways. Production is part of the band's work, consumption of the music forms part of the fans' leisure pursuits; the band is a seller and a provider of a 'product', the fans are buyers and consumers; the band is a group of performers, the fans form an audience. The band seeks to makes its living from the pursuit of its creative musical

project. This requires it to engage in a number of practices which are quite separate from the everyday lives of the fans. The band's work is to make music by writing lyrics and composing sounds, rehearsing, recording, touring, performing and managing its relationship with the industry, media and fans. Fans are not automatically allowed to enter the recording studio, the dressing room or the tour bus, though this is not impossible. There is a clear hierarchy: band, management, crew, fans. Within the band, there is a creative hierarchy, with Justin Sullivan at the top, by virtue of his role as founder and sole remaining original member. Below him, the creative hierarchy may depend on which other band members are contributing most to current projects.

In the exhibition, the level of interactivity is lower than contemporary museum trends and practice might prescribe, particularly those museums which tend more towards entertainment and shopping than education (see Phillips and O'Reilly, 2007). This was a function of the money available of course, but also of the nature of the objects, items which, it is worth remembering, are precious to the band and carry their personal memories too. Some of the objects were protected by signs and by enclosure in glass cases. There was therefore a risk was that this could produce a sense of separation from the band. The stage clothing, hats, banners and instruments – the paraphernalia of stage performance – also mark the band as separate from the fans. At live performances, the stage is out of bounds to fans, separated by a security barrier. Fans who attempt to breach this barrier are firmly replaced amongst the audience, or ejected if excessively troublesome. To be on stage is a special privilege, reserved only for guest musicians, management or crew members. At live performances, access to the area backstage is controlled by the issuing of backstage passes. The authority of the pass is backed up by the presence of professional security people, sometimes using dogs. The level of access depends on the event and the individual pass-holder – whether artiste, manager, crew member, fan, member of another band, record label executive, press representative, or personal friend or relation of a band member. The highest level of

access is the "Access All Areas" pass, although even this may not guarantee access to particular areas at all times, for example to the dressing room immediately after a gig. Several passes belonging to the band have become artefacts in the exhibition. In one glass showcase at the exhibition was a selection of laminated passes with the name of the event or venue, designation or category of the pass-holder, date and signature – see Figure 28 below.

Figure 28: Backstage Pass

Source: New Model Army

On my first visit to Rock City at Joolz's invitation, my field notes record that she gave me an "Access All Areas" pass, which was a plastic-laminated badge on a blue lanyard – see Figure 29 below. This pass enabled me to go back stage, meet the band, enter the dressing room, be introduced to the members of the band and the crew, enjoy a meal with them, hear their stories, jokes and chat, help with the 'in' by carrying some boxes of merchandise into the venue, and hear various comments from Joolz and Warren Hogg about what was going on and why. Looking back now, at the time of final writing, I realise this was a very precious gift to someone with no position in the music industry and no prior connection to the band or to the Family. Later that evening, as the venue was emptying after the gig, I was standing in the venue's hallway, waiting to thank Joolz as fans streamed past. The head of security approached me and jerked his thumb

brusquely towards the exit, indicating that I needed to leave the building with everyone else. He then saw my AAA pass, and his demeanour changed instantly. We got talking, and he grew very animated about the value of the pass, and offered me money for it, but I declined, and am very relieved that I did so.

Figure 29 – Access All Areas Pass
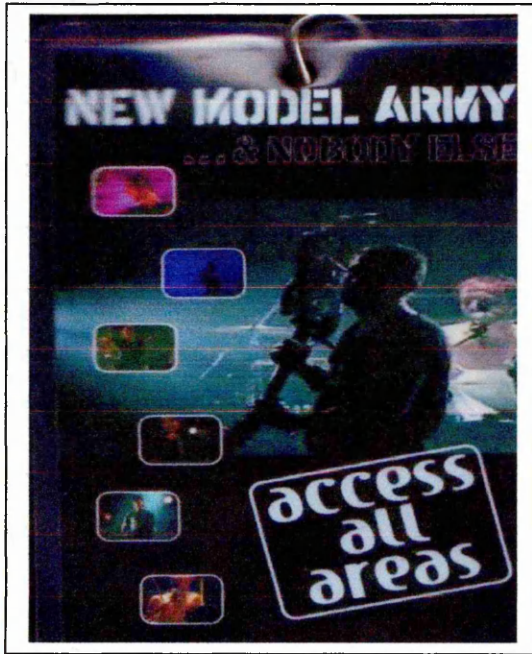
Source: New Model Army

I was impressed by the power of the pass. It set me apart from the fans who were obliged to leave, operated to put me in a different category to theirs. In a sense, too, for several precious hours, the AAA pass put me in the same category as the artists, and allowed me to experience a little of what it might feel like for them. Fonarow (2006) comments on how passes are used to constructed a graded degree of access to the band, and how prized these are. There is a kind of discourse of passes, with wearers using different codes to signal different positions within the music industry. They are indexes of privilege and hierarchy. They function as regulators of physical access to the band and therefore of the degree of cultural connection which a fan may have with band members. These security arrangements which years of experience have persuaded

the industry are necessary for the smooth functioning of gigs, are a sign of the symbolic space which exists between band and fans, even within the Family. They risk reminding the fans that there are differences of hierarchy within the Family. In Chapter 7, I examine an incident when these underlying tensions are brought to the surface during and after a gig.

THE FAMILY ALBUM

The Family Album, which was a series of testimonials incorporated into the customary museum Visitors Book was on display close to the entrance to the Bradford version of the exhibition[50]. It contained word-processed versions of comments sent in by fans to the curators in support of the funding for the exhibition. This meant that, when the exhibition opened, fan comments were already available as part of its contents. It was also possible for visitors to the exhibition to complete their own handwritten comment sheet on NMA and/or the exhibition. A photograph of the Visitors Book is at Figure 30 below.

Figure 30: Family Album

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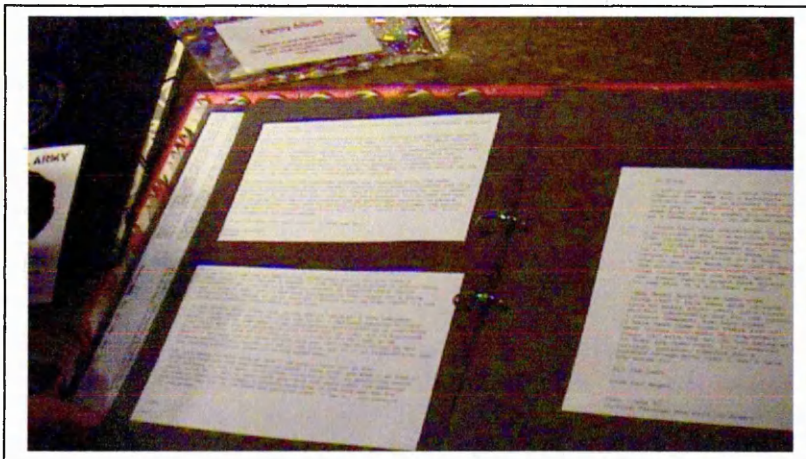
[50] I use the term Visitors Book, as this is what it would normally be called in a museum setting. NMA called it a 'Family Album'.

Source: Author

The Book held a set of 38 texts originated by New Model Army fans in response to a call for help from Joolz and Nina Baptiste the exhibition's curators (see Appendix H). The presentation of fan in this way comments positions them as a kind of 'chorus' commenting on the band's heritage 'performance'. In this section, I consider how the fans express their feelings about the prospect of an exhibition. All but two of the texts were generated in 2005 before the Bradford exhibition, the others were completed by fans at the Salford exhibition – (see Poster for Salford Exhibition in Figure 28 below).

Figure 31: NMA Exhibition Flyer (Salford version)

Source: New Model Army

The length of text varies from just over 40 to nearly 2,400 words. Most of the fans who give a clear indication about the length of time they've been 'into' New Model Army are long-time adherents. There is some geographical spread, but most fans are from the USA and UK. The texts in question are fan-generated cultural texts, structured sets of signifiers which are placed into circulation along the band-fan cultural circuits. They originated in response to a call for help from the band. They were read by band members, other fans, museum professionals, non-fans, and the wider public.

The texts may be regarded as solicited <u>testimonials</u> which seek to argue the band's case to the grant awarder, the custodian of officially sanctioned 'heritage', and to advance the band's cause, by attesting to their power and impact in the lives of the fans, and seek also to warrant the fans' authority to make statements of support by virtue of their enduring commitment to, knowledge of, witness to, and love of the band. The fan contributions take a variety of forms, ranging from short functional statements of support, to memories, to storytelling, to accounts where there is a significant shift of register into an imaginal evocation of a perceived deeper meaning of New Model Army.

DURATION AND DEPTH OF FANDOM

Several of the contributions testify to the long-standing nature of the writers' New Model Army connection and its importance in their lives. Several entries state how long the writer has been a fan, from example 'I have been following them for around 15 years', 'I've been a New Model Army fan for almost 20 years', I've been a New Model Army fan since 1987', and 'I first heard New Model Army around 1984/5. These entries attest to the duration and continuity of the writer's fandom. Several of the entries also speak of the degree to which the band's music is connected with their personal, family and social lives, as for example this one:

I have been following New Model Army since I was 17 and the music, has inspired me to deal with some difficult personal challenges and problems. New Model Army is the soundtrack to my, my wife's and my two kids lives. Songs mean something deeply to us. My first daughter was born to a New Model Army track. I have been singing New Model Army music to my kids since they were born and my oldest would rather have New Model Army on than her Wicky Bear CD!!

This poster locates the beginning of his fandom at the age of 17. He attributes to the music the ability to inspire him to 'deal with some difficult personal challenges'. This is a comment often read on the web-site noticeboard, and seems to refer both to the meanings of the lyrics, the sound of the music or a combination of both. It is a testimony by this fan to the power of the music as a source of meaning which sustains him. The significance of the band's music is emphasised by constructing it as "the soundtrack to my, my wife's and my two kids lives", and the claim that songs carry deep meaning for the family, not just the fan. And in the final sentence of this extract, there is an echo of oppositional brand loyalty when the oldest is said to prefer the band's music to a children's CD. Given the stark difference between NMA's music and children's CDs, this is a testament to the early maturity of his daughter's musical taste.

The fact that NMA music was playing as the first-quoted writer's daughter was being born attests to the suitability and meaningfulness of the music at a highly significant moment in the life of this fan and his family. Appropriately enough for fans of a band which uses the notion of Family to create a sense of community, quite often in the Visitors Book and on the web-site noticeboard there are references to fans' children experiencing NMA music. It is as if fans wish to hand on to their offspring something which they feel matters to them – see, for example, the following Visitor Book statement:

This summer my four year old son will get to see and hear New Model Army play at the Beautiful Days festival. I can't think of anything more fitting than to take him to experience something that has been such a major part of my life since I was young.

Another writer testifies to the effect which being a fan has had on her social life: 'some of my closest friends are people I initially met through following New Model Army'. In fact, from online and gig observation, it seems clear that the Family contains within it many friendship sub-groups, clusters or networks.

The lengths to which some fans will go to see or follow the band are also mentioned. One fan speaks of arranging a work-related trip to New York to be able to see the band. Another speaks of hitching around the UK and Europe to follow the band. For this writer 'New Model Army ... are not just a band, they are a way of life, a way of living your life'. This echoes constructions of NMA as 'more than a band' (see below).

Other fans recount how the band is an important part of their identity and values:

NMA was the first gig I ever went to see at the age if 16 and they form part of what I am and what I believe in.

The NMA fans feel deeply connected to the band's songs and music, both personally, and through their friends, life-partners and children. Their relationships have lasted a

long time. These points both warrant the fans' authority to testify to the grant-awarders and endorse NMA as a project worthy of support in the context of public heritage.

FAN AS OBSERVER AND WITNESS OF OTHER FANS

The fans can testify to their own experiences of New Model Army, but it is interesting that they claim to be able to recognise the same thing in others:

So many times I've turned round during a song at the precise moment to see someone be stabbed through the heart by mere words. I've seen tears spring spontaneously into the eyes of the person stood next to me, seen a face clouded with rage, lit with joy or screwed up in pain. I've felt it myself so many times, a song has reached within and touched my very soul.

This writer seeks to convey his sense of the precision of the impact of NMA's songs by invoking a metaphor of stabbing through the heart, a fatal knife-blow, to characterise the songs' impact. This powerful impact is occasioned by 'mere words' – a possible reference to the idea that the pen is mightier than the sword. The contrast between the power of the impact and the insignificance of its cause ('mere words') is also noticeable, as if the band is able to achieve powerful impact with apparently little effort. The writer also presents himself as someone who is immediately present as a witness at the precise moment when this stabbing happens 'so many times'. The piercing of the heart is a metaphor for sorrow and suffering, and it is interesting that this is the first emotion that springs to the fan's mind. The band's music, in my experience, is often about the more difficult emotional aspects of life. This fan has also witnessed a variety of emotions on fans' faces at gigs, including "rage", "joy", and "pain", and – elsewhere in his contribution – "betrayal", "abandonment", and "loss". This variety fits well with Justin's

idea of the gig as an emotional journey (see Chapter 7), as well as with DeNora's idea of music as mood regulator (DeNora, 2000). The writer, finally, mobilises the notion of songs touching his 'very soul'. In this way, he makes use of a religious construct to indicate the depth and intimacy of personal impact which the songs create.

ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXHIBITION

The fans advance a number of arguments for the exhibition to take place:

The artwork, songs, lyrics and history of this band is one not rivalled often and could only truly be understood with an exhibition like this.

I feel that this band and everything associate with it represents a truly good thing for this planet

I'm very pleased that the worldwide New Model Army Family will be given a chance to present it best face to the rest of the world. It's really about time they caught up with us, don't you think?

an exhibition would allow people who lived through this, such as myself, to re-live and re-assess the period. It may also help younger people to realise that the 80's weren't just about silly outfits and materialism.

In these texts, the fans are claiming a wider historical significance for the New Model Army project, one with educational import. The band's project is constructed as something which is a 'truly good thing for this planet', something 'not rivalled often' which could 'only truly be understood' by means of this exhibition, and as something

which is ahead of other people – 'it's really about time [the rest of the world] caught up with us'. Jean-Michel Moreau, the French film director, points to the band's 'artistic polyvalence'.

> *Their artistic polyvalence through words, paintings, sculpture, "Art de Vivre",*
> *slogans, streetware is recognised worldwide.*

Other reasons advanced include the need to document and therefore preserve something meritorious from the past, and to produce the band as heritage:

> *Admittedly many of the subjects they have covered are not glamorous, but are well*
> *worthy of being documented for posterity in the carefully crafted words and music*
> *New Model Army have consistently produced for almost 25 years now.*

Another discursive move in the argument for funding is that New Model Army is 'more than a band'. Numerous fans point to New Model Army as being more than a group of musicians, and describe it as a "way of life", "about people, and emotions, and support", "family", "clan", soulmates, and a means of access to "All those little dark areas of our heart that would otherwise remain uncharted".

> *Some might say: 'aren't they just another rock band?' To me, the importance of*
> *such an exhibition is to demonstrate to the world that this is not the case.*

> *New Model Army to me are not just a band, they are a way of life, a way of living*
> *your life.*

> *An exhibition pf New Model Army art and artefacts seems so fitting to me, because it has always been about more than the music. Its about people, and emotions, and support ...*

There are also many testimonies to the importance of the band in the personal lives of the fans of which only a few examples are given here:

> *I thank them for giving me inspiration, hope, anger, and a deeper meaning and understanding of my pagan heritage that lies so deep in us all ...*

> *New Model Army have done so much for me, unknowingly, over the years. There are so many of us, I'm sure, that want to say thank you, to give something back, and to welcome others to the family. People will always need New Model Army - I certainly will. I can't do this life thing by myself yet!*

> *Here was music that reflected my own dissatisfaction. New Model Army's passionate music inspired me because it provides hope and belief that we just don't have to accept that there is no alternative to the prevailing values and the fickle winds of fashion.*

These statements position NMA in a variety of different ways, including: 'an alternative to the prevailing values', thus indexing their perceived counter-cultural status; as an indispensable life-aid ('I can't do this life thing by myself yet!'); a source of 'inspiration, hope, anger ... and pagan heritage'; a band which does not follow the 'fickle winds of fashion'; and a 'reflection of ... dissatisfaction'. The references to anger and dissatisfaction are noteworthy, because they point to the band's stance of protest against what it sees as the evils of the political, societal, economic or ecological situation.

In summary, the Visitors Book, which contains statements forwarded to the band by fans to serve as support for the exhibition funding, shows the fans testifying to the significance of their experience of New Model Army's offering in their own lives and to the sense of kinship and power of emotion which they get from the band-fan community. In this way, they function as a kind of chorus of support for the NMA project, and their response to Joolz's call for support for the exhibition can be read as a kind of museological echo of the call-and-response interaction at gigs.

DISCUSSION

In a cultural policy climate which favours the broadening of access to museums and heritage services, this was a powerful example of a successful project. For arts and heritage marketers, or audience developers, the challenge of broadening access is considerable. Theoretical notions of identifying new segments in the market can easily founder on the practical problems of persuading people to give up their leisure time to visit venues which are not necessarily salient in their choice set. Simply targeting new audiences with the same old offering is also unlikely to work. Consequently, there needs to be a rethinking of the offering as well as of the audience. The New Model Army project was effective not only in the way it provided a new offering to existing and new audiences, but also in the way in which it involved the band and its fans in developing the exhibition, and in the way in which the art and artefacts themselves can be seen as community building resources.

Through their exhibition One Family, One Tribe, New Model Army created a display which constructed their work as heritage. In so doing, it was in a sense making a claim,

supported by its fans, and endorsed by the museum authorities, that its art and artefacts are a public treasure. The band was also presenting a version of New Model Army's history and core values for consumption by visitors to the exhibition. Through involving the fans in the production of the show it sought to break down band/fan barriers and to actualise the Family ethos, where 'everybody pitches in'. The exhibition adds a unique dimension to the New Model Army family culture by creating a reflexive space that promises an insight into band life, which is normally hidden backstage or 'behind the scenes'. Non-fans can gain exposure to the band story, and may be inspired to spend more time with the New Model Army in other contexts. For fans however, the exhibition offers a new opportunity to experience and perhaps strengthen another sense of connection to the band. The exhibition was a resource which helped them to re-engage with and remember what the band stands for, and what it means to them, and in so doing, to re-member themselves, i.e. to become members of the New Model Army Family all over again. As the opening quotation from Ageyman suggests (2006, cited in Simpson, ed. 2006), 'Heritage is a powerful tool. It can inculcate a sense of belonging. It can be used to include or exclude.' In this case it is being used to include existing fans and to offer the possibility of inclusion to those who have not yet discovered the Family and its heritage.

In this way, the New Model Army exhibition provides a sanctuary in which Family or tribal members can share their 'family secrets' in an open way, with each other and non-family visitors, without the potential hostility that the band has encountered in other mediums.

Like other marketplace subcultures or tribes that have been studied (e.g. Belk and Costa 1998, Kozinets 2001, Kozinets 2002; Schouten and McAlexander 1995), the members of the Family are actively involved in producing their own cultural practices and identity. The exhibition represents an interesting move to position New Model Army as a band

with heritage, and as a part of the public heritage, by displaying treasured artefacts from the band's past and presenting a version of New Model Army's history and core values for consumption by visitors to the exhibition.

This chapter has outlined the circuit of band-side visual culture, pointing out the different levels through which the original creative sounds, music and images pass from producers to consumers. The exhibition proved to be an imaginative means of communicating and sharing its heritage for a band which is starved of mainstream publicity. The artistic and curatorial skills of Joolz Denby and Nina Baptiste enabled a credible show to be mounted in a series of publicly funded spaces. The Family ethos of everyone pitching in was put to good use; fans helped to advocate the funding, and in the process made testimonials revealing the significance of the band in their lives. The relationship with the band was seen to be linked to important personal relationships of the fans. The show itself was a selection of items important to the band's heritage project. A wide range of items was included, indicating that the band sees all of these as important to its heritage project. There is justification, therefore, for regarding this project as important for the band's cultural identity, and for regarding its cultural identity as being composed by these elements. The analysis focused on a number of exhibits including the altar, a AAA pass, and the Visitors Book. The musical and theatrical artefacts (instruments, clothing, banners, mannequins) re-presented the band members as musicians. The display in glass showcases of some important items such as lyrics notebooks, clothing, stage passes, the hat and some instruments both enabled them to be seen and yet maintained their separation from the fans. Fan testimonies in the Visitors Book spoke eloquently of the importance of New Model Army in their lives, and advanced a number of reasons why the exhibition should be funded. A recurring trope in these messages was that New Model Army was 'more than a band'; its work was also seen as of historical, cultural and educational value.

The centrepiece of the show was the altar with its Celtic knotwork symbol as the central exhibit. This represents a kind of "resource mobilisation" by NMA (Aldridge, 2000:101 et seq.), a mobilisation of particular resources which are deliberately pre-Christian, deliberately tribal and "archaic". The data shows clearly NMA producing its own version of religiosity. Aldridge (2000:63) sees it as the heart of religion in the Durkheimian sense that through religion society is represented to itself. He quotes Durkheim's "famous aphorism [...] that religion is 'society worshipping itself'" (2000:64). This presentational choice of the altar, by placing the community as the object of worship, avoids placing the lead singer there, thereby avoiding the cult of celebrity, and maintaining the simple humanity of the frontman. It "de-idol-ises" Justin Sullivan. It also points back to a pre-Christian era, a time of consciousness derived from "archaic tribal roots". The place of the individual is presumably as part of the Family, one of the whole. As Aldridge points out (2000:65), "Durkheim believed that the religion of the future would celebrate individualism ... not as self-indulgence and freedom from social restraint, but an individualism based on human dignity and moral responsibility". We can connect the idea of human dignity here with the Family idea of everyone being able to be uniquely himself/herself and to be proud of his/her deepest feelings within the emotional sanctuary of the Family.

CONCLUSION

In the previous chapter, Chapter 5, we saw, among other things, how the band offered the notion of Family as a framing construct for the band-fan community, and how this was discursively elaborated by fans. Most of this chapter focused on the Family online, in cyberspace. The present Chapter moved the focus offline to a different kind of space, one constructed by the band in order to display the Family and tribe's heritage. The analysis focused on the visual and material culture of New Model Army as constituting a kind of 'Family heritage'. The inquiry also showed how fans were invited to co-construct

the content of the exhibition, and how this led to testimonials to the power of NMA in their lives. The museum spaces though which the exhibition travelled are more reflective, more contemplative, tinged with an element of sacredness. In the next chapter, which is the third and final empirical chapter, the focus is on a quite different kind of space, the live musical concert as 'Family gathering' in which New Model Army fans come together to celebrate the band and their relationships with it.

CHAPTER 7 – FAMILY GATHERINGS

INTRODUCTION

A rock gig is a theatrical event, among other things. In his book *The Empty Space* (1968), renowned English theatre director Peter Brook discusses four kinds of theatre: deadly (to be avoided), holy, rough and immediate. In the previous chapter, we saw how NMA created a kind of holy or sacred 'back-stage' space at the exhibition. In this Chapter, the focus moves to the rough and immediate theatre of the live concert, the 'Family Gathering' at which New Model Army fans come together to celebrate the band and their relationships with it. In the foregoing two chapters, I considered firstly, in Chapter 5, the emergence of the notion of Family as a framing of the band-fan community, and fans' reactions to that; and, secondly, in Chapter 6, how the band's art and artefacts, its visual aesthetic, was used to create its own heritage, sacralise the tribe and enable fans to re-member themselves within the community. In this Chapter, the focus turns to Family Gatherings, i.e. the musical concerts where fans come together to listen to New Model Army playing live[51]. Live performance is an important 'text' among the range of texts being considered, and an interesting methodological challenge, because both band

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[51] Family gathering is a phrase in everyday use to denote the relevant cultural ritual. However, gathering also has a popular music connection, in that, for example, 'gatherings' is the term used by Killing Joke (a band which appeals to many Army fans) to describe its concerts.

and fans are co-present, the band and fans co-produce the text interactively, and there is a wide range of symbolic practices on display.

The chapter is divided into three parts. In the first part, I make use of live and online observation and band and fan interviews to build a composite picture of the structure of a 'typical' gig. This serves as a basic introduction to the gig as cultural event or ritual. Secondly, drawing upon a primary interview with Justin Sullivan, I present his account of how he constructs gigs as 'emotional journeys', and show, from fan interviews, how some fans characterise their emotional experiences at gigs. In the third part of the chapter, the focus switches from the emotional dialogue at gigs to an event when the emotional ties in the Family were threatened. I examine an online quarrel following an incident in which Justin Sullivan terminated a musical performance because of fan behaviour. Whereas the discourse of Family (and indeed that of tribe and brand community) tends to accentuate the positive aspects of community, there is in this incident a very rare opportunity to explore intra-community conflict, or 'dis-community', in the form of a Family quarrel. Overall, the focus on live performances enables us to see how the band and fans see 'tribe' and 'passion' being musically enacted between and amongst them. The logic of the arrangement of the three empirical chapters can be seen therefore as: Chapter 5 – defining the Family as a framing construct for the community; Chapter 6 – the creation of a visual aesthetic Family heritage to re-member the community; and Chapter 7 – the musical enactment of Family in the cultural ritual of live concerts.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

This section contains an account of the multi-method data collection strategy used to gather data on live performances, including participant observation, online observation,

an interview with Justin Sullivan, an interviews with fans. In order to collect data on the band's live performances, I attended gigs by New Model Army, Justin Sullivan and Friends, and Red Sky Coven, as well as poetry readings by Joolz, and an Arvon course facilitated by Joolz (in writing for the spoken word), which Justin Sullivan also facilitated. Band-produced video material was available, for example, *Bizarre* festival performance video (1996), the *Rock City* video (2000), and the *New Model Army - 161203 - Live* DVD, all on sale from the band web-site Shop. These offer examples of fan behaviour, and have been used to inform the discussion. There is also the *Here Comes the War* video, which features a number of video clips including a kind of music-video performance of the eponymous song. Through Joolz, I had the opportunity of a 90-minute interview with Justin Sullivan at the band's recording studio in Bradford. The interview was taped and transcribed like all of the others (see Appendix E). This proved to be an invaluable source of insight into how performance texts are put together by the band. The fan interview data covered a wide range of material. Extracts from some of the interviews were relevant to live performance and have been used here as appropriate. All of this activity was supplemented with ongoing online observation of the band's web-site, particularly the noticeboard.

The principal strategy was to see what each data stream added to the overall picture of the performance text, and then to focus on what appeared to be important. Live observation was very valuable in affording an opportunity to watch and listen to band-fan interaction from a variety of viewpoints, and to get a sense of the 'arc' of the performances. It also raised issues about whether I was participating or observing or both.

GIG PO

The work by Fonarow (2006) on PO was particularly helpful in reviewing what sense I made of gigs. Below in Figure 32 is a diagram adapted from two which appear in her book (the dots indicate observation positions which I took up).

Figure 32: Gig as Structured Space
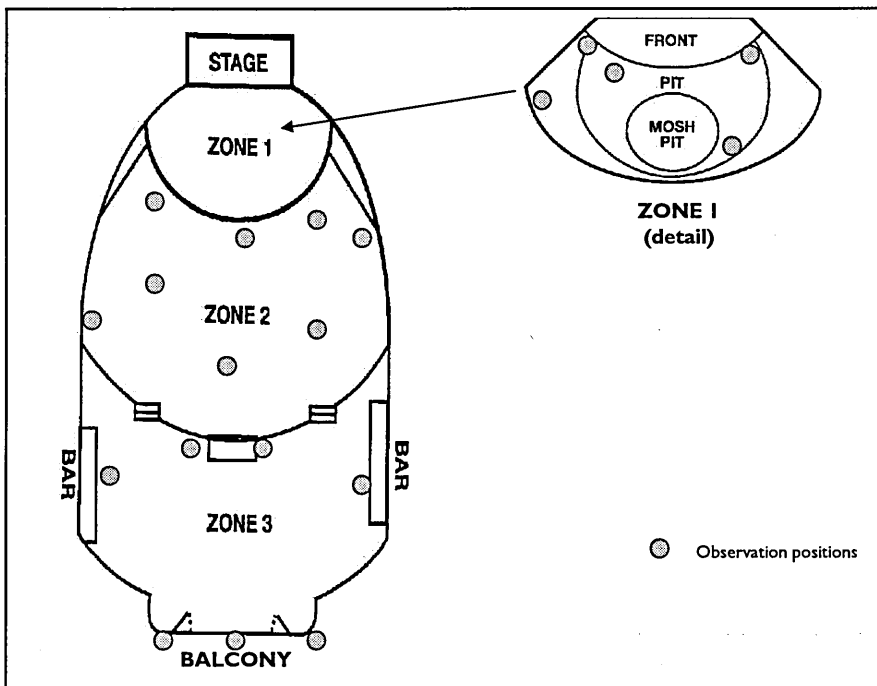
Source: Adapted from Fonarow (2006:83-84)

Zone 1, nearest the stage, was the space where fans went to dance actively or to hang over the security rail to get a close look at the band members. The pit and its more intense section the mosh pit was for a more active participation in the dancing and physical movement. Fonarow suggests that Zone 1 fans go there partly to actively

demonstrate their fandom. The mosh pit, or more correctly, in English terminology, the 'ruck' (according to Joolz) is a space where there is a lot of pushing and shoving. In this general area, fans feel free to pogo, dance, push, shove, use their elbows, form circles and generally thrash about. In Zone 2, further back from the stage, stand those fans who are not here so much to dance as to listen to the musical performance. Fonarow suggests that these are more likely to be older fans of the band or of that particular kind of music. Little movement by these people can be detected, apart from perhaps foot-tapping or head-nodding, for example. Zone 3 at the back of the venue is used as a transitional space by people getting drinks from the bar or on other errands, as well as by those who are in the industry and who therefore place themselves in a different category to the fans. This is an outline of Fonarow's analysis, and I have to say I found it congruent with my own observations. Fonarow's cultural-anthropological approach to gigs, allied to her record label experience – i.e. as an industry insider - also help to make her 'take' on gigs a credible one.

THE VISIBLE COMMUNITY

A gig involves public appearances by both band and fans. This enables the researcher to observe their appearance and interaction live. This is therefore a good point at which to offer a description of the Family members as they appear at a gig.

FAN DRESS

From interview with Joolz, I learned that:

the NMA fan twenty years ago tended to wear traditional Yorkshire clogs,

preferably with boot-style uppers; hand-sewn, patched leather jeans (women wore

black or fantasy pattern leggings and sometimes a stretchy mini-skirt or shorts

over them); a faded NMA T-shirt, preferably with the arms cut off, leaving the sides

of the body bare (women wore sport-bras or crop-tops underneath); Celtic

jewellery (from Silver Merchandise, the Bradford manufacturing jewellers

associated with NMA – see Chapter 6) and tattoos for both genders; for males,

long hair in a pony-tail; for women, long fantasy-coloured hair in crimped locks.

From my own participant observation, corroborated with Joolz's view, NMA fans
nowadays wear:

boots, clogs or trainers; combat trousers, long shorts, jeans, and women in the

same, plus sometimes leggings; a NMA T-shirt, the older the better, with or

without sleeves, women in crop-tops, sport-bras; Celtic or general silver jewellery;

piercing jewellery and increasingly elaborate tattooing for both genders; no special

hair style for men, women favour colour, extensions, dreadlocks, plaits. According

to Joolz, all the NMA fan has in common with her/his peers, is a desire to look non-

formal, and to appear casual and in some cases, 'alternative'. Clothes should look

old and well used.

[Joolz interview]

From these observations, it is difficult to characterise NMA fans visually as belonging to
any particular subculture. It is true that at gigs it is possible to see groups of fans
dressed in what might be considered a goth style, but these are in a minority. In any
case, fans and band alike seek to disconnect the band and themselves from any 'goth'
labelling. Of course, how other people read a fan's attire may be completely different to

the intended effects, depending on the situation. I recall using some video footage of an NMA gig while teaching a PhD research methods class at the University of Bradford Graduate School. A female Muslim doctoral student expressed concern about how she would feel at such an event. Almost all of the fans were white, and many dressed in combat-style clothing. To this student, they had an outer appearance similar to the 'NF', supporters of the white English nationalist organisation the National Front[52]. In fact, an NMA gig would be one of the safest places for an 'ethnic minority' individual. These distinctions, and the ability to recognise and negotiate them, had important implications for citizens' personal safety back in 1980 in the time of the skinheads, and still do so today; witness the appalling murder of Sophie Lancaster, a 20-year-old student, who was murdered on August 11th, 2007 in Bacup, Lancashire, essentially for dressing as a goth[53].

BAND DRESS

Similarly, the band members on stage tend to use informal clothing, e.g. jeans and T-shirt. According to Joolz:

> *Justin Sullivan has worn a black suit on-stage, a move which created less 'fuss' than might be imagined; the suit being specifically chosen to resemble the kind of traditional black suit worn by Bluesmen and older musicians with established reputations and the gravitas associated with long careers dedicated to music, as opposed to Pop. The fans considered this suit 'appropriate' to a musician of his age and level of respect. He did, in the early years, wear costumes designed especially*

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[52] http://www.natfront.com

[53] http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article3834296.ece.

for stage wear, but they were carefully constructed to appear hand-made, and to give the impression the fans could reasonably make one similar.

Note here the reference to Justin's 'long career dedicated to music' – i.e. not fame or money - and 'established reputation'. This entitles him to 'gravitas'. The look was chosen deliberately to reference a category of highly respected musicians, namely bluesmen. It seems important to indicate that the fans accepted this look, as a kind of validation or endorsement of the claim to status which the black suit implied. Note the reference to the fact that in the early days stage clothing was chosen 'to give the impression that fans could reasonably make one similar'. In other words, the band was careful not to widen the symbolic distance between itself and the fans.

Joolz also commented that when Justin wore clogs on stage, this set a 'fashion which became indelibly associated with NMA for many years'. There are quite frequent enquiries on the noticeboard still from fans wishing to find authentic clogs. On the one hand, this type of footwear indexes a working class culture, apart from being quite comfortable and easy to slip on and off. They are not normal attire in England, so their use involves an element of dressing up. On the other hand, back in 1973-4, while I was studying at Kiel University in (then West) Germany, clogs were worn by large numbers of my German fellow-students. So the same footwear in different cultural contexts performs a different signification.

STRUCTURE OF LIVE PERFORMANCES

The approach to analysing the text of the band's performance and the wider text of the band's interaction with the fans was one which was grounded in participant

observation. The strategy was a pragmatic one of watching and listening, of developing a chronological model of band and fan processes before during and after gigs, and treating them as meaningful practices, or as cultural rituals which were themselves communicative (see Chapter 4 on semiotics). In this respect, the literature of popular music scholars (e.g. Weinstein, 1990), culturalists (Grossberg, 1992) and anthropologists (Turner, 1995) was helpful in organising the account, mainly by focusing on the details of what was going on, and in what sequence they occurred.

Rock gigs tend to follow a set pattern, as do preparations for the gig by band and fans, as well as what happens afterwards. On the fan side, rumours may begin to emerge on the web-site that a gig is to take place, be it a warm-up gig for a tour, part of a tour schedule, a festival gig, or a one-off charity or other event. Not uncommonly, fans who frequent a particular venue local to where they live will spot this news before it is confirmed on the band web-site. The band will not post a performance date until it is satisfied all the arrangements are in place. The confirmation of particular venues, and the exclusion of others, are often the subject of expressions of joy or disappointment from fans on the web-site. For a confirmed gig, there are expressions of excitement, enquiries as to which other fans are going, and the pleasures of debating which pub to meet at before the gig. This latter issue enables some fans to display their knowledge of the gig locality, the suitability or quality of the ambience of different local pubs and the range of beers available. Fans travelling from far away make enquiries about lifts, accommodation, and directions. There is quite often a ritual moan about credit card charges associated with ticket purchasing. Some fans who have the time and money will string together several gig dates in succession and travel together – 'follow' the band. It is sometimes possible to purchase 'season tickets' for a particular tour. At the gig pre-meet, usually in a nearby pub, fans of the band may be recognised from previous tours or simply picked out from other customers by their New Model Army T-shirts or other identity markers. At the event itself, there are the security and ticketing barriers to pass.

Inside, the bars are open and fans begin or continue drinking while waiting for the performance to begin. There will usually be a support act which comes on before the main band[54]. While most of the audience members remain in the bar or back from the stage during the support acts' performances, these artistes are carefully scrutinised, and not infrequently mentioned online. Woe betide the support band that does not live up to the occasion, indeed the privilege, of opening for New Model Army. Fans have long memories for both good and bad support acts. While waiting for the main band, fans may be sitting against a wall, drinking in the bar, standing watching, chatting, taking pictures, buying merchandise or simply talking to the band associates at the merchandise stall.

On the band side, the preparations for performance are a mixture of calm and intensity. The following is an abridged account of the complexity of the band's preparations. Every member of the crew knows his/her role. If the band is on tour, it will arrive at a venue on the tour bus around late morning/lunchtime. The band will be still asleep after the previous night's performance. The equipment and merchandise is taken off the bus and into the venue. The crew work with the venue staff to get everything set up – lighting, sound, instruments, and merchandise. Depending on the complexity of the set and the quality of the local venue's sound and lighting systems, this can either be a relatively straightforward or fraught experience. A sound check is run by the band until they and the engineer on the sound desk are happy that everything is working satisfactorily. The band will then eat a meal, and begin the final preparations for the performance. Backstage, they will be aware of the audience noise from front of house, although this may not reach them in their dressing room as they begin the very last preparations, including dressing for the stage.

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[54] On the recent NMA *High* tour (2007), there were two support bands, namely New York Alcoholic Anxiety Attack, and Demander.

Once the support act has finished, the crew dismantle their equipment and run some final checks on New Model Army's set-up and instruments. From front of stage, depending on the architecture of the venue, an observer might catch glimpses of the band's manager or band members in the wings. Immediately before the gig begins, a crew member signals to the sound desk e.g. with a thumbs-up, or by clicking a cigarette lighter, often peering out into the darkness to see if his gesture has been spotted and acknowledged. There is a sense of growing excitement and anticipation from the audience, as perhaps some lead-in music is played. The audience space fills up and the crowd density increases considerably as those who have been drinking in the bar up to the last minute join the throng. The house and stage lights then come down and the band members file onto the stage in near-darkness, greeted with whistling, calls, and stamping of feet. As the band launches into the opening number, with Justin Sullivan front and centre stage, guitar in hand, the lights come up. The band will often play 3 or 4 songs in quick succession before Justin uses a break between songs to say anything to the audience. Even then, it may be just a quick 'Ok?' and on to the next song. More leisurely links or song introductions tend to be left till a little later in the set.

During the gig, the band members are of course engaged with their musical performance. While the band will interact amongst themselves, Sullivan is the main channel for any interaction with the audience, through his role as lead singer, and in linking songs. Meanwhile the fans are engaging in a wide range of practices – watching, listening, tapping their feet, swaying their bodies, singing along, dancing, 'moshing', making pyramids, making circles, playing a kind of ring-o-roses, jumping, pogo-ing, bouncing, sitting on shoulders, surging, pushing, barging, shoving, standing around, drinking, talking to each other, listening, shouting, whistling, cheering, clapping ,

laughing, heckling. calling out song suggestions[55], wandering around drunk or stoned, or taking photographs or video on cameras or mobile phones.

The set list usually provides for two encores, each of two or three songs. Once the band leaves the stage before the first encore, and the crew are checking the equipment, the fans start stamping, clapping, whistling and usually do not give up until the band re-emerges on stage. The double-encore appears to function as a kind of staged departure, signalling that the performance will be ending.

Once the gig is over, the house lights come back on and some taped music is played over the PA system. The crew immediately begin to dismantle the stage set for the 'out'. The band members are in the dressing room processing the performance and the resulting adrenalin come-down before heading for the bus. Fans begin to drift toward the bars, cloakroom, or merch booth and past the security staff to the exits. Some may try to intercept the band for a chat on the way to the tour bus. They will either find somewhere to eat or drink and then head for their accommodation, or drive, train or bus home. The band will drive on to the next gig and the process will repeat itself until the tour is over. The web-site often contains the set-list, fan accounts, and photos of the gigs quite soon after.

So much for the sequence of the live performance itself from both the band and fan point of view. There is further data in the full text of this interview at Appendix E, particularly on issues such as lighting, stage setting and sound. In the next section, in

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[55] New Model Army never deviate from their set-list!

order to give a flavour of my experience of participant observation, I discuss the fan practice of moshing.

MOSHING

Moshing is a very visible practice which is practised in a very specific part of the venue (see Figure 29 above). We have seen it mentioned in Chapter 5 where it was a subject of disagreement on the web-site noticeboard. Here is an extract from field notes which deals with this aspect of fan behaviour at gigs.

I have been wondering about moshing for some time. It causes disagreement amongst fans on the web-site, because of the risk somebody will get hurt [see Chapter 5]. Yet people engage in it willingly; for some it is even a key part of the gig. The other night at the Leeds Met gig [December 2007], I felt I understood it a little better. I went up in the balcony and was able to get a good view of the moshpit, or 'ruck' as Joolz prefers to call it, perhaps because this sounds less American. A few songs into the gig, a group of six or seven bare-chested, mostly heavily tattooed men began to form a loose circle, some with their backs to the stage. Between songs, they did not seem to do any circle dancing, in fact they appeared to remain still during the instrumental introductions, and to wait until the singer began to sing before moving (which reminded me of a similar practice at the 1960s 'hops' I used to attend). They swayed and moved to and fro with the movement of the bodies around them – people pogoing, dancing on the spot and generally jumping around. Gradually, they cleared a space in the circle. It seemed to me like a game which was about seeing who could stay on their feet. I remembered Brian, my "gig partner", who had come with me on a previous occasion, commenting that it seemed to be the case that those forming the circle

invited other people in. There was a posting on the board the next day from
someone who had felt excluded from the ruck, that he was better off staying home
with his own family where he was appreciated – the old charge of exclusivity
instead of inclusivity. So this notion of an invitation seems to fit. On the other
hand, there seemed to be people who were hell-bent on disrupting this circle by
pushing participants from one side of the ruck across the intervening space (1-2
metres) as violently as possible. Meanwhile the shape of the circle was being
continually changed as people dancing around it threatened to absorb it. I looked
at the faces of the ruckers or circle-dancers for signs of emotion. They were full of
concentration, absorbed, watchful, waiting to see what was going to happen next,
where the circle was going to go. They seemed to be enjoying themselves, mostly
smiling, with the occasional scowl which I read as a fleeting displeasure at
somebody else's clumsiness. When someone got knocked down, they were quickly
pulled up by willing hands to resume a standing position, flushed and smiling. By
the end I counted about thirty people engaged in rucking out of a crowd of about
1,500. It was a kind of highly organised horseplay, though that phrase has
overtones of a kind of authoritarian or parental disapproval that do not really fit.

This extract gives a sense of my own attempts to make sense of what was going on, with
the aid of close observation, a conversation with a friend, a gig partner and a web-site
noticeboard thread. One could take any of the fan practices mentioned above and
discuss them in great detail using similar data. However, given the limitations of space,
the remainder of this chapter is devoted to discussing the relationship between the
band and fans during live performance. I have chosen to focus on this area because (a)
New Model Army makes use of the notion of emotional politics to characterise its
ideology; (b) the Family is constructed as a sanctuary within which one can feel one's
emotions; within the literature on consumer tribes, 'passion' is an important, though ill-
defined construct; (d) gigs can be very emotional experiences; and (e) emotion is a key
component of fan/consumer relationships with cultural offerings. To pursue this

examination of emotion, in the next section I make use of primary data from the interview with Justin Sullivan to examine his how he constructs the idea of gig as exchange, dialogue and emotional narrative. After this, using fan Noticeboard data, I focus on an incident in which this exchange, dialogue or narrative breaks down, and examine what fault lines emerge when the emotional bonding between band and fans is broken.

PRODUCING THE LIVE PERFORMANCE

This section provides an insight into the way in which the band's frontman views the interaction between band and fans at a gig as an emotional dialogue or exchange. In the following section, I go on to examine how the fans view and respond to gigs.

RELATIONSHIP WITH AUDIENCE IS EXCHANGE AND DIALOGUE

New Model Army concerts are intended as an exchange:

JS: A New Model Army concert are not about, "we don't play, you watch". It's not what it's about at all. It's meant to be an exchange, it's a communication, it goes two ways. The audience watch us but don't forget, we are watching you. And just like an audience comes to a New Model Army to look up at us and tries to detect a sense of passion and life and something in the music through us. So we look out into the audience and detect a sense of passion and life, pain, all the various different things in the audience. And it is two way traffic.
DOR : is that based on what you see? People putting their arms up in the air...?

JS   No, it's not, it's the look in the eyes. It's not how much they dance or how

much they cheer because actually that's very different in different countries, but

what doesn't vary from country to country is the kind of spirit. It's a feeling ...you

feel like your energy is reaching out to people and their energy coming back at you

is reaching you. That to me is really important.

Author interview with Justin Sullivan

If one were, for example, to consider the gig as a theatrical spectacle, which to some extent it undoubtedly is, the emphasis from this perspective would be on the band as performers being watched by the fans. Here, however, in this interview, Justin stresses the bi-directional nature of the interaction – 'It's meant to be an exchange ... it goes two ways'. This fits very nicely with the marketing idea of the exchange relationship, except that the object of the exchange is not a product of course. The 'two-way' trope constructs the band as watchers or spectators also – 'The audience watch us but don't forget, we are watching you'. Justin sees the fans as looking up at the band, and trying to 'detect a sense of passion and life and something in the music through us'. And when the band watches the audience, he sees it as trying to detect passion, life, pain and other things. The signifiers of this are to be seen in the audience's eyes[56] and are characterised as a series of intangibles, namely 'spirit', 'feeling' and 'energy'.

GIG AS EMOTIONAL JOURNEY

A live performance is usually built around a selection of the band's songs placed in a particular sequence. This is written down as the 'set-list'. In the following treatment of an extended extract from an interview with Justin Sullivan, I focus on his construction of the set-list and its complexities:

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[56] Justin may not be speaking literally here, as unless the house lights are on, it is often difficult for people on stage to see the audience.

I lose a lot of sleep over setlists. That might sound stupid. But it's not. To me, it's not playing a series of songs, it's making something happen and to do that, it's like - listening to ... on the album is not like - it makes bad background music, because there's too many different moods on it, very eclectic in terms of moods, so you have to listen to a New Model Army album as opposed to just having it on in the background, and it's like a film. You have to go with it through these different mood changes. And exactly the same with the concerts to me. It's a film. It's a story. It starts with something and it ends up with something else, and during that time you've gone somewhere and been somewhere through a number of different emotions. It's not a series of songs and so to that end we don't, on the whole, stop between songs unless we want to. But we have the possibility to go bang, bang, bang, bang without really stopping through this kind of - that's the way I like to structure a show. That's very unfashionable in England I think - quite unfashionable in terms of rock and roll. That's the way we've always done it and I think it works really well. So, to that end you have to pick an order which first of all has a narrative kind of feel that works. I mean, most obviously, you start big, then go down in the middle and end big. Sometimes we start low and come up gradually. Those are the two most obvious ways to structure a set. There's more to it than that. There's more - mood swings - there's more to it. Then having discussed mood swings, then there's key changes. Key change is very important. If you - you can't have like 4 songs in the same key in a row, because it starts to get boring. Sympathetic key changes - people in the audience don't notice them, but they feel them, I think. So the right kind of key changes. The other thing is, if we change from a semitone - I sometimes find it very difficult - if it's a very noisy gig, where it's difficult to hear things clearly on stage, then if you change a semitone up, sometimes it's difficult to hear your note change, so you start singing flat or sharp, a semitone, so we try to avoid semitone changes unless there's a long intro for a song. So there's that. Then there's the change of instrumentation. If I finish a song with an electric guitar, I've got to start the next one with an acoustic and I'm the last person to play and the first person - I will never do that kind of change, well hardly ever, because it means that I finish, leave the middle of the stage, go off and get another

guitar and come back. Now most groups would feel quite happy with that. I don't like that. I don't think that's right. I feel that's like leaving the shop unattended or it breaks up that kind of continuity flow. I like to finish something and if I've got to change guitar, then somebody else might start the next one, or I'll change guitar in a kind of invisible way and I do a lot of guitar changes. [...] so there's basically all these different things go in to making a set list and then you have to pick the right one, and when you find a set that flows beautifully and reaches - all the right things happen in the right places, we tend to play that on a tour for like 2 weeks and every night the same, because it's right and people sometimes complain - oh you do the same set. Well, it works. Most people on a tour only see you once and the people that come again and again and again, well tough really. But then what happens after 2 weeks, we'll get bored with it, we'll start to get stale with it and we'll change it.

In this extract, the set-list is constructed first of all as a source of worry 'I lose a lot of sleep over set-lists'. The performance is constructed as 'making something happen', not just as a series of songs. There is a linking logic, to explain which a variety of terms are mobilised: story or film for example. A gig is also seen by Sullivan as a sequence of moods - we have seen in the literature review (De Nora, 2000) how important music is as a mood regulator - and as an emotional journey - 'during that time you've gone somewhere and been somewhere through a number of different emotions'. Sullivan makes the point that he regards this as an unfashionable performance practice: 'That's very unfashionable in England I think - quite unfashionable in terms of rock and roll'. He makes similar points in media interviews about New Model Army's unfashionablilty in other ways, and this is an important part of the band's positioning. Not being fashionable of course carries some commercial risk, and places the band 'behind' the fashion, but it also positions the band <u>above</u> mere fashion. He also makes the statement that 'That's the way we've always done it' and the claim that 'it works really well'. He identifies two principal strategies for managing mood: 'most obviously, you start big,

then go down in the middle and end big. Sometimes we start low and come up gradually'. The set list is managed so that it does not become boring, e.g. by having 4 songs in sequence in the same key. There is also considerable attention paid to continuity, and personnel or instrument changes are carefully managed to minimize interruptions to the 'flow'. Set-lists have a temporary quality, or perhaps more accurately a 'life-cycle', of their own: they may last two weeks on a tour. Finding a set-list that works, which means that it 'flows beautifully and [...] all the right things happen in the right places'. The problem is that 'then what happens after 2 weeks, we'll get bored with it, we'll start to get stale with it and we'll change it'. In other words, freshness and excitement are as important for the band as they are for the fans. It is clear from this extract also that gigs are a complex mix of emotional response from the band and fans, technical issues, musical issues and the band's strategy of mood shaping.

'TOUCHING GOD'

Sullivan quite often talks about what might be called 'peak experiences' at gigs. In this interview extract, he attempts to construct the quality of these experiences. They 'don't happen every gig', so that what we are looking at here is a less frequent occurrence, and not to be expected in the normal course.

> JS   *It's a difficult thing to put into words. The greatest thrill in live concerts is that split second when my physical body is singing and playing, but I lose all self consciousness in that respect, and suddenly there's something happening in the room, which is happening with everybody and some people are dancing, and my physical body is playing, it's almost like an out of body experience. It's more than that. It's suddenly like you lose your self consciousness in a greater whole. Now to me that's touching God. I've sort of had that experience in various different places,*

on top of mountains, or in church or ... this is basically a surrender of the ego to something that's happening, that's greater, which is shared between everybody in the room, and those are the moments that I'm looking for. They don't happen every gig and when they do, it's only a split second. But that to me is touching God and that's what I do it for. That sense. And so - and that's at which point what I'm doing physically is completely - I'm not even there really. My physical body is playing stuff I'm trained, in a way, to do, but my spirit is something else. In the same way as an audience - there's no longer a band on stage and an audience watching or dancing, or whatever, it's everything is shared. There's something happening in the room which is a kind of magic which is shared. And it's those moments that I'm looking for. And there are sometimes when you play a song and you go - f*****ing hell, this sounds good, because I love this song.

Interview

The experiences are characterised, firstly, as extremely short – 'a split second'. For him as performer, it involves a loss of self consciousness in a greater whole. He expresses it in terms which separate the physical from a psychological or spiritual awareness, 'almost like and out of body experience'. For him 'that's touching God'. He is explicitly invoking a spiritual or religious idea here. In the previous chapter, evidence of the band's spirituality or religiosity was seen. Here, the consumption of live musical experience itself is being characterised in spiritual or religious terms. A full understanding of New Model Army's and the Family's religiosity or spirituality is therefore not possible without considering these claims also. The 'touching God' experience Justin is talking about is not confined to denominational places like churches, but can be experienced in nature also. He constructs these moments as instants when there is 'basically a surrender of the ego to something that's happening, that's greater, which is shared between everybody in the room'. To speak in terms of 'surrender of the ego' is to use a mixture of psychological and mystical discourse. Note that the ego's surrender is not to God, but to something greater which is happening, in other words to a process. He is also making the claim that it is 'shared between everybody in the room'.

However, as the performer he cannot know this, of course; but it is fair to say that he claims to experience this and imagines that all of the audience does too. When he says 'those are the moments that I'm looking for', one can read this as being the 'something' that he wants to make happen' in the discussion of the earlier extract above. In other words, the (elusive) goal of live musical performance from this point of view is to bring about moments of shared spiritual or mystical experience – 'sometimes … gigging you can get really close to God sometimes, if God is those moments when you lose yourself in something wonderful and great and big'. Here, it seems to me, he is pointing towards moments of mystical community or communion, seeking to construct a New Model Army gig as a musico-socio-spiritual experience at gigs.

It is worth pointing out that in these moments of imagined community the transaction associated with them is not an exchange nor the exchange relationship but one of sharing. Russell Belk asks in a recent paper title (2007) "Why not share rather than own?" and identifies sharing as "an alternative form of distribution to commodity exchange and gift giving". Whereas brand community literature posits an exchange relationship as the basis of community, here it is a shared musical experience which is construed as forming that basis. I would argue that this contrast between sharing and exchange is connected to the band's ethic, which is collectivist and socialist rather than individualist and capitalist. It is interesting that Belk's paper is in the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, and not in a marketing journal …

FAN RECEPTION

I have explained how, according to Justin's account, a New Model Army performance is like a dialogue, or an emotional narrative. In this section I examine a number of fan accounts concerning gigs. Fan discussion of gigs on the Noticeboard tends to be confined to enthusiastic but very short comments about positive experiences they have

had. Nevertheless it is possible to gain some understanding of fan reception of gigs from fan web-postings. For example, this post shows that one fan at least has a worked-out set of criteria for assessing the quality of gigs:

I thought of every concert that I've been to that was exceptional. My list is based

on:

How good of a time I had at the concert and overall vibe

How good the sound was

How into the band I was at the time

In some cases a very special time of my life

The performance and the stage show

And in some cases shows that had a big influence on me.

This fan assesses gigs on a number of criteria, namely its quality as a theatrical, aural performance spectacle, the atmosphere, the intensity of his relationship with the band at the time, what else was going on in his life, the influence the show had on him.

IMAGINED COMMUNITAS

In another posting, one fan attempted to capture what a New Model Army gig experience felt like:

What is it that any NMA fan feels when he is at their concert looking at Justin

taking the whole mic stand and singing get me out? Or Blomberg getting on the

drum set and jumping whilst playing vengeance? Or Nelson throwing his bass in

the air and catching it at the end of the show? Or Michael Dean with his infinite

passion on the drums? Or Dean White with his atmospheric keyboards? How does it feel to be down there and share that passion that for me no other band can share with it's audience? I felt that when I was at the Astoria concert and I'm sure every single one fan there felt it also. The inner connection each and every fan had with the band and amongst themselves when we sang the vagabonds intro. Anyone else shares the same feelings? I betcha.

He begins by asking the question 'what is it that <u>any</u> NMA fan feels when he is at their concert ...? (emphasis added). The 'any' suggests that the poster is seeking a generally agreed description. He then repeats the question, relating it to a distinctive action by each of the five band members. He then repeats the question and relates it to being 'down there' (i.e. presumably 'down the front'), and testifies that 'no other band can share' the same passion with its audience. The poster asserts that he has felt this shared passion, specifically at the Astoria concert, and he feels 'sure every single one fan there felt it also'. Yet he does not say what it is except to characterise it as 'The inner connection each and every fan had with the band and amongst themselves when we sang the vagabonds intro'. So for this fan, the felt passion is construed as band-fan and fan-fan connectedness. This is interesting, because connectedness is not what one would necessarily associate with 'passion'. When New Model Army is playing and singing (for example) 'Here comes the war!' or 'I believe in getting the bastard!', <u>that</u> is passionate. But what the fan is talking about here sounds more like communitas than passion (Turner, 1995). Perhaps we are dealing here with an example of 'imagined communitas', rather than imagined community (Anderson, 2006). Again, note that the fan, any more than Justin Sullivan, cannot be sure what the other fans are feeling, and has to frame it as a question: 'Anyone else shares the same feelings? I betcha.' How can anyone answer the question if the 'same feelings' have not been clearly defined?

In fact, one fan asserts that it simply cannot be defined:

Something touches us. All of us. There is this thing we share. This wonderful, powerful thing. It doesn't have a name. Its too primal to be defined, to be constrained by as limiting a force as words. It burns in our veins, in the very blood that gives us life. It is etched on our skin in a million different languages. In our scars, tattoos, wrinkles, so many different marks. A combination of innocence and corruption, it is what makes us who we are. The building blocks of experience laid over a foundation of our own individual personalities, our most basic essence, our humanity.

From this data, one might conclude that the gig experience is, in the end, ineffable, which of course raises implications for the formulation of a theory of live music consumption!

One fan speaks lyrically about the unity of the audience:

And the concerts: the random displays of emotion and loyalty. Human pyramids, frenzied dancing bodies, trances and hymns. There is a strange beauty in the ritual itself, a transcendental experience of fellowship and tribal love. For a couple of hours we are a single living being, thinking as one, and it is beautiful.

EXHIBITION VISITORS BOOK, 2005

In the following extract from the exhibition visitor book (see Chapter 6), this fan testifies eloquently to the variety of emotions which can be experienced at an Army gig:

It's at the concerts where the spark truly meets the kindling. This sound that draws us together, like moths to a flame, comes to life through the hands of the musicians. Under its spell, we relive our memories, the feelings which the music carries for us wells up until we are engulfed by it. Some get lost in the berserker frenzy; sweating, rabid, eyes bulging. Others seem to enter trance; swaying, enraptured, lost in their private reverie.
So many times I've turned round during a song at •the precise moment to see someone be stabbed through the heart by mere words. I've seen tears spring spontaneously into the eyes of the person stood next to me, seen a face clouded with rage, lit with joy or screwed up in pain. I've felt it myself so many times, a song has reached within and touched my very soul.

… From the brutish, in-your-face, extreme measures philosophies of songs like Vengeance and The Hunt, to the late 20th Century paranoia of Here Comes the War and Get Me Out. Tender ballads, heartache, spirituality, fire, hunger, peace, passion and gloriously cathartic crashing tales of fury and rage.

Tears, rage, joy, pain, berserker frenzy, trance, rapture, reverie, remembrance, rage, hunger and peace: these are signifiers of the range and variety of emotional and consciousness states claimed to be experienced at a New Model Army gig. On the evidence of Justin's and the fans' accounts of these emotional journeys, I would suggest we may begin to conceive of New Model Army as not just interpellating the fans into (cognitive) 'subject positions', but into affectively-charged or feeling–toned states of consciousness. These states include a sense of connectedness or communitas but also states proper or private to the individual fan. In other words, communitas is not the whole story.

Having examined the emotional aspects of the New Model Army gig, I turn now to a gig that went wrong in order to see what happened when the fault-lines in the Family were revealed.

FAMILY QUARREL

In this parts of the chapter, the focus of analysis now turns to an concert when the relationship between the band and fans broke down. The reason for examining this is to see where the potential fault-lines in the Family are located. The issue of intra-community conflict has not been considered explicitly in the brand community or consumer tribes literature. This is a way of finding out what is at stake when there is a split, separation or division, within the community, a Family quarrel. In 2005, a rare incident occurred at a live performance by Justin Sullivan and Friends[57] which sheds light on other aspects of the band-fan relationship. In a nutshell, Justin appears to have been annoyed by persistent talking from certain members of the audience – to the extent that he apparently said 'Fuck the lot of you', and walked off the stage, ending the gig prematurely. This was an unprecedented action in 25 years of performing by the frontman and it led to a lively discussion on the Noticeboard. The rarity of its occurrence provides an unusual opportunity to examine what the fans believe to be at stake when their relationship with the band is threatened by an adverse event during performance, when the 'emotional journey' is an angry and fractious one, and the performer-audience relationship is not so much a 'dialogue' as a tussle. The data was collected from the Noticeboard. In all the topic extended over 8 threads, with a total word-count of 6,772, involving 44 posts by a total of 30 different fans. The total elapsed time from start to finish of the threads was nearly three days.

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[57] This is a 'stripped down' version of the full band, including Justin Sullivan and one or two other band members. The noise level is quieter than the full-on five-man sound of the whole NMA line-up.

The discussion reads rather like a trial of the singer by the fans on a charge of misbehaviour. Of course, the singer is absent, and a web-site discussion does not have the same formality and procedures which one would find in a courtroom. Therefore, it helps to frame the analysis if one regards it as a quarrel in the sense Antaki means (1994:140):

The confusion over quarrel and argument comes about merely because we casually use the word 'argument' in two senses: we say things like 'I had an argument with so-and-so' and, in the same breath, 'my argument was such-and-such'. The first use means a quarrel, and the second means the piece of reasoning you used within it.

I examine firstly the beginning of the thread in order to see how the issue is raised, then consider the different areas of disagreement, before focusing on three areas in which Justin is critiqued, and, finally, on how the quarrel is resolved or at least ends.

KICKING OFF

The quarrel kicked off with a post from a fan, A, who had been at the gig, starting a thread which he entitled 'What the fuck was that all about?' The post was made at 3:15 a.m., apparently straight after the gig. It read:

> *I'm not saying that i did not enjoy tonights gig as i got to catch up with some old frinds(you know who you are)But what the fuck was justins problem tonight i really hope some member of the band or crew explains as i think the comment he made*

> *has pissed of a lot of people that hold justins music dear to there hearts and i hope*
>
> *that what ever he said there was a good reason for it*

Note that the post begins with a double negative – the fan is not saying he did not enjoy the gig. To say that one did not enjoy an Army gig on the board could be read by other fans as saying there was something wrong with the fan! But the reason why the fan did enjoy the gig was that he 'got to catch up with some old friends', not because he enjoyed the gig. In other words, the social nature of the event was uppermost in his mind at the time of writing this sentence. He does not name these friends – 'you know who you are'. This is quite a commonly used phrase which solves any social problems possibly caused by naming some people and forgetting others. However, it also creates a sub-set of the audience, a smaller group of people, 'old friends', to whom this remark is specifically addressed, and excludes a part of his overall experience of the gig from the criticism which he goes on to make. The 'But' announces a question: 'what the fuck was Justins problem tonight[?]'. The expletive lends a critical emphasis or force to the question, suggesting anger, irritation, bewilderment behind it. And the problem is clearly laid at Justin's door; it was 'justins problem'. The poster then alludes to a comment apparently made by Justin, and says that it has 'pissed of a lot of people', i.e. angered a large number of people in the audience. This suggests that the issue has been discussed amongst the poster and his friends (it would be odd if it hadn't been). The poster then makes an implied distinction between Justin and his music: 'a lot of people that hold Justins music dear to there hearts'. (Note a posting by another fan later on who says: 'I love the music, I don't care at all about the persons performing the music'). This formulation presents the fan as one of a large group that love the music, maintaining his New Model Army fanhood while critiquing the lead singer's behaviour. His critique was phrased as a question 'what … was Justins problem[?]', pointing to something internal to the singer perhaps. He expresses the 'hope' that 'there was a good reason' for what Justin said, and that 'some member of the band or crew explains'. The poster is not demanding an apology, but – a less aggressive position - expressing the

hope of an explanation. Nor does the explanation have to come from Justin; it seems that any member of the band or crew will do. However, the fan's emotional stake in the music is clear; he holds the music dear to his heart. Therefore this unusual behaviour from the lead singer is troubling, needs accounting for from the band's side. However, at this stage in the thread, it is not clear what exactly Justin said that angered the fans. Having kicked off the thread, surprisingly, the poster does not post again on any of the eight threads which deal with this incident. It is as if the act of raising the question was enough to get it off his chest.

The next poster, B, writes as follows 3-4 hours later:

> *In the last month I have seen both Neil Young and Bob Dylan- at both these gigs people were talking/texting all the way through. It was the same at Roy Harper-quietish acoustic guitar-twice last year. It's annoying, rude and inconsiderate, more so to the fans at big venues, but I guess it's something we *all* have to put up with.*

His post constructs him as quite a regular gig-goer, and he is able to mention two very big names in the music business, Neil Young and Bob Dylan, whose gigs he has also seen recently. Further detail begins to emerge from this post about audience behaviour 'people were talking/texting all the way through', and the implication is clear - if fans do this during concerts by the greats, then Justin Sullivan should not expect to be treated any differently. The fan seems resigned to this behaviour: 'I guess it's something we *all* have to put up with.' He also points to a factor which recurs in the discussion – 'quietish acoustic guitar'. This refers to the fact that it is not the full New Model Army band playing at the gig, but Justin Sullivan and Friends, which is intended as a more intimate smaller kind of musical concert, an experience dear to Justin's performance

values. Services marketing theory warns of the need to align customer expectations with performance, and the difference in musical offering does not seem to have been effectively communicated or listened to by some of the audience. The discussion is not allowed to rest with the statement that 'this is 'something we *all* have to put with'. It is immediately contradicted by another fan. So, if it was an attempt to head off an argument, it did not work.

AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT

There is, first of all, disagreement over who is to blame for the incident, some blaming Justin for what he said, others blaming the fans whose talking and other behaviour led up to the incident. One pro-Justin fan sees the main problem as audience misbehaviour:

Why not get over it, and turn our attention to the heart of the matter: People ruining gigs

There is also disagreement about the nature of the charge against Justin. One fan (C) reports that Justin said:

Why can't you English stop talking or sing in tune?' there was a few replies and he said 'Fuck the lot of you' and left the stage and the gig ended.

The phrase 'you English' is unusual, as Justin is himself English. His criticism of 'their' singing and nationality did not go down well. In this, he was insulting both their identity

and their musical performance. This appears to have occasioned angry responses from the audience, provoking his final insult.

Another fan corrects the account as follows:

*ps actually it was a question: "why don't you all f*ck off?"*

There is also considerable disagreement about how many fans were involved in disrupting the concert:

It wasn't a couple of people disturbing it was quite a few

There is a misconception that it was a minority of people heckling that caused the problem. This was not the case. From the start of the evening the band were battling against a rumble of chatter from the crowd which built as the evening progressed. . It wasn't the heckling of the minority(Justin can generally handle this although it can be irritating). It was the constant chatter by at least half the crowd which from where I was standing at the front seemed like a wall of noise.

the admittedly dumb behaviour by about five turds

I would say 90% of the disturbance was due to the prick with the dreads near me, and the croaking witch that was with him, he was shouting rubbish, she was trying to break bottles with her voice

It is interesting that there is so much disagreement about this issue. Underlying this and at stake here is the relationship between the number of offenders and Justin's perceived culpability: the more fans were involved in the disruptive behaviour, the more

cause Justin had to behave as he did; and the fewer fans that were involved the easier the problem would have been to resolve without walking off[58].

The fan argument raises a number of issues affecting the performance. Some fans felt with hindsight that there were problems with the venue:

> *The chitter chatter- what did he expect playing a trendy pretentious bar in the yuppieville end of london?*

The point being made here is that the venue wasn't suitable, wasn't aligned with New Model Army's values, with pretentiousness and yuppies being invoked – the antithesis of the Army ethos. Before this, he appears to have pleaded with the fans for more quiet, drawing a distinction between a bar and a music venue:

> *So he says "There are plenty of bars in London, if you wanna go for a drink and a chat please go there, you are spoiling it for those that want to listen"*

Having been at a smaller venue where Justin Sullivan and Friends played it is not always easy to see where the bar area finishes and the 'non-bar' area begins. Sullivan prefers venues where the bar is away from the stage/audience area (interview).

The difference between acoustic gigs and the full band sound is also mentioned as a factor:

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[58] The colourful descriptions of 'five turds', 'croaking witch' and 'prick with the dreads' are good indicators of the pungency of fan discourse.

On the other hand, I do think Justin seems to cater for the wrong crowd with his accoustic gigs. The New Model Army crowd comes for the New Model Army atmosphere, which caters well for those out for a wild night, dancing and getting pissed. The solo gigs are more "high brow" and seem to demand more intellectualism and quite a different approach to a gig, from the audience.

Again:

the Spitz environment was less than ideal for Justin's performance - for a supposedly seated, candlelit venue plagued by sound problems, there were enough tables to seat at most 50 people, entailing the need to then make the other 200 people stand. This of course was far from an ideal environment and not conducive at all to I'm sure what Justin had planned.

In this post, the 'servicescape' is criticised as being inappropriate for the event – 'supposedly seated candlelit venue' with not enough tables, which meant 200 people had to stand.

The band had attempted to control the audience sound levels by requesting that mobiles be switched off, and there appears to be some indication that the gig was being recorded by the band.

We were politely asked at the beginning of the show to ensure that all mobiles were switched off as it can be very off-putting (and ruin a live recording) if one rings during a performance of a quiet song.

So, in addition to the quality of the live performance being at stake, the band was also making an investment in recording the show, with the implied idea that it might have released a live CD including this very show.

Some fans offer different factors in mitigation of his behaviour:

I do think Justin seems to cater for the wrong crowd with his accoustic gigs. The New Model Army crowd comes for the New Model Army atmosphere, which caters well for those out for a wild night, dancing and getting pissed. The solo gigs are more "high brow" and seem to demand more intellectualism and quite a different approach to a gig, from the audience

Justin's efforts on fans' behalf in other incidents are mobilised to speak in his favour:

When justin played in cork last year 6 people couldnt get in on the first night so he organised a second show to accomodate these fans.

His emotional outburst is also seen by the same poster as congruent with his performer identity, and therefore nothing surprising:

justin expresses his emotions quite openly and we should know that by now from both his music and live shows!!!

However, another fan is not interested in Justin's countervailing virtues:

It's irrelevant to some degree how long we've all loved New Model Army, seen them, been inspired by them, been helped through difficult times by their spirit etc. The point is, as has been amply made clear, Justin's exact words from the stage at the end of his performance was 'Fuck the Lot of You!'

A number of 'solutions' to the problem of disruptive fans are advanced, for example, telling people to shut up, moving away, insulting them, and 'creating a culture' of not talking during gigs. There does appear to be a power vacuum in the regulation of the incident, because it seems according to one fan that Justin felt the other fans should sort it out, fans were afraid of being ejected if they sought to eject the offenders, and security did not intervene at all. Sullivan could have asked security to eject the main offenders, but didn't.

THREE CRITIQUES

Having examined some of the areas of general disagreement in the quarrel, I now consider three particular critiques, each of which deals with an aspect of Sullivan's identity or behaviour. The reason for focusing on these is to consider where the 'fault-lines' in the band-fan relationship are. The working assumption is that when something goes wrong in the relationship, any underlying tensions will surface and can therefore be examined. In the case of this incident, three issues emerged. The first issue is the

band's economic dependence on the fans, and the power which this gives them. The second issue is Justin's capability as a performer. The third issue is Justin's identity as an 'idol', and this connects with the work which he does to de-'celebritise' himself, and therefore with marketing or branding issues.

BACK TO THE DOLE OFFICE?

One fan extends the scope of the quarrel by recalling an incident from another tour years before when he felt Justin showed the wrong 'attitude' in his interaction with a fan:

> *A few years back in Leeds on the SB tour, something went off in the audience involving security kicking someone out for supposedly glassing someone. The audience was obviously interested in what was going on. Justin got shitty over this, and took it out on an innocent fan who had been shouting for them to play White Coats, by telling him to 'Fuck off outside and join his mate'. This attitude pisses me off. New Model Army aren't exactly at million album selling status, so should look after their fans, 'cos if it wasn't for them....well let's just say 'Fuck off back to the dole office, Justin*

Here the lead singer is constructed as being 'shitty' about the audience's natural curiosity about an ejection over a glassing incident. This allegedly led Justin to shout at another fan telling him to go out. This fan was entirely 'innocent' and had simply been asking for a request to be played. Sullivan's attitude is seen as being unjust. It is also seen as inconsistent with the band's economic status, or level of commercial success - 'New Model Army aren't exactly at million album selling status'. The implication is that if the band had a much bigger fan base it could afford perhaps to treat some fans in this

manner. The fan is here pointing to the band's economic dependence on a relatively small number of fans, and its continuous stake in their custom – one of the dangers of being a cult band, or, to put it in marketing terms, a 'niche brand'. The band should 'look after their fans'. The alternative, doing without the fans, is to become unemployed, "fuck off back to the dole office", and try finding another job.

SHEER FORCE OF TALENT?

I'm not Justin Sullivan, but as a performer surely the thing to do have done would have been to have seen to see the set out and overcome the morons by sheer force of talent and will. If there is one performer on this planet I would have said could have done this, it would have been Justin.

This poster, who is also critical of Justin's behaviour, begins by acknowledging that he/she is 'not Justin Sullivan', a kind of pre-emptive recognition of a possible criticism of the poster's status in offering this critique. He is approaching the issue from the viewpoint of performance, rather than economic dependence. He imagines another solution which would involve Justin overcoming the audience through 'sheer force of talent and will'. He is appealing to a kind of common sense norm 'surely the thing to have done', as if it were an obvious course of action. Justin should have 'see[n] the set out', in other words carried on through until the end and completed his performance task despite the interruptions. The misbehaving audience members are characterised as 'morons', imputing to them a lack of intelligence. The notion of 'sheer force of talent and will' combines two ideas, namely a kind of pure daemonic energy and a strength of personal willpower, rather heroic qualities. This capability appears to be rather rare: 'one performer on this planet', but is most likely to be possessed by Justin. In this way, the poster is acknowledging Justin's talent and force of will, thereby staying 'onside' by

showing appreciation for his talents. However, the force of talent and will were not present on the night, and this is clearly a critique of Justin as a performer.

ONLY HUMAN?

Apart from the venue seating and technical issues, a discourse of 'Justin is only human' is mobilised by a number of fans to excuse the singer's behaviour:

Justin is a human being and like all of us he has limitations and bad days,

We are all just people here

hes only human and disruptions when your trying to perfom an art is highly frustrating.

Emotions really are rising too high to be justified anymore. Allow the man his little human mistake and let's all move on.

As already mentioned in Chapter 1, a key part of New Model Army's identity work is to de-celebritise itself and to manage the tension between being rock gods and everyday working musicians, between being exceptional and being ordinary (see Negus and Pickering, 2004). Here, I examine a post by one fan who grapples with this issue.

Justin allows a lot of his emotions into his work, which unfortunately has the side effect of making him seem like a "prima donna" and, indeed, a lecturing

demagogue. Especially to those amongst us who do not agree with his every word.
Mind you: I said "seem like". This is not what I think Justin is about. At all.

There is a certain ambivalence in this posting. The fan in question is essentially seeking to defend Justin and to focus the criticism on the disruptive fans. However, in so doing, he opens up another line of critique of Justin, 'making him seem like a "prima donna" and, indeed, a lecturing demagogue'. '[P]rima donna' is of course a (gendered) reference to star behaviour with its associated tantrums and willfulness. The suggestion that Justin might be a prima donna is a dangerous critique in the context of Family relationships, as such behaviour is clearly against the Family ethic. While Justin's walk-off, in the mind of a critical fan, might fit within a very broad notion of 'prima donna' behaviour, there is little or nothing obvious in the reports of the incident which would support the idea that Justin was thereby being a 'lecturing demagogue'. This would lend credence to the idea that the poster is making use of this defence of Justin to air some of his own criticisms. This label could be seen as a strong charge in the context of the band's efforts to move away from being a 'political band' to one which is in the business of 'emotional politics'. It would suggest that the band had not succeeded in this positioning. The poster is careful to distance himself from these labels, but then why raise them in the first place in what is ostensibly a defence of Justin's behaviour?

He then goes on to construct his opponents as occupying contradictory positions in relation to Justin's status and behaviour:

I hear complaints about Justin being too modest and turning his mic too low, but
also about Justin being egocentric and turning his mic too high. Usually at the
same gig. And you know, I hear the same stuff about just about any other band out

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there. The old fan gossip mill, I guess. And I hear, usually the exact same people, quote Justin as if his writings form some sort of bible.

It seems to me some of you are building a pedestall for Justin, then blame him for NOT stepping off it as much as for stepping off it. You want the man to be a saint. You turn him into one in your minds, and blame him for not living up to your expectations. Some fans, it seems, would like to keep Justin in a little mental cage where he could forever be your little god. But also your little oracle to make the difficult world simple.

The tone of the above strip of text is 'heard it all before'. In it the poster offers his opponents a diagnosis of their problem, an image of themselves as occupying contradictory positions, the subtext being that these are undurable. He begins by using a performance discourse - 'modest', 'egocentric', and the reference to the use of the microphone to amplify or diminish one's voice. The poster then begins to make use of spiritually inflected discourse - 'bible', 'pedestall' (suggesting statuary), 'saint', 'god' and 'oracle', which is a mixture of Christian and Greek (see 'oracle' in particular) references. It is this fan who introduces this kind of discourse. Prior to this no other poster has mentioned the spiritual dimension. The notion that Justin is some kind of 'saint' is seen as a creation of certain fans, their social construction, one with which they seek to imprison him as in a kind of 'mental cage', a captive god. This is seen as a means of simplifying the 'difficult world['s]' complexities. The implication being that the fans in question can't deal with life without imprisoning their band's lead singer. The poster is of course able to see through this, and by implication is able to deal with life's complexities. This line of argument is a long way from the actual incident itself, as if the debate has triggered a 'rant' on a topic close to the poster's own heart. But this is what tends to happen in quarrels – things get remembered and/or dragged in which are said in the heat of the moment and not necessarily directly relevant.

The poster does acknowledge, however, that 'we all do this to a degree with our idols' – note the qualifying phrase 'to a degree', which leaves this poster an out. In his use of the word 'idol', he is moving away from Christian terminology towards a pagan one, and of course the word 'idol' is frequently used in popular music media discourse.

> *And I guess we all do this to a degree with our idols.*
> *Thing is, this particular idol allows us to come up close. He makes himself vulnerable, and some of us can't deal with that because gods and idols are supposed to be onmipotent and omnicognitent. (spelling?). This particular idol even goes as far as to be human, in every way.*

I find the phrase 'this particular idol allows us to come up close' curious. First of all, it ascribes the character of an idol to Justin Sullivan. It speaks of him as an idol, places him in this identity category. At the same time, the poster is now using the first person plural 'we', switching from the more adversarial use of 'you'. So that when he makes his critique of his opponents in the quarrel – that they can't deal with the idol making himself vulnerable – he is describing them as 'some of us'. The notion of 'allowing' fans to come up close implies an object of veneration who has the power to grant or permit access or refuse it. In the context of this kind of discourse, the phrase 'makes himself vulnerable' is resonant of the Christian trope of the deity who becomes man. If Justin Sullivan is going to invoke spiritual discourse in his accounts of gig experiences or in references to his family background, it is not surprising that fans will make use of this kind of discourse too. This fan's argument is that some fans so need to keep Justin in a mental cage or on a pedestal that they can't deal with it when his behaviour contradicts this constructed image. He sees that Justin needs to be defended from charges that he might be getting above himself and beyond the fans, so seeks to locate the blame for the incident at the feet of the fans.

The purpose of this line of argument is to lead up to this point:

> *And this is my point. The man is human, ok? An exceptionally talented one in this particular field, and a very inspiring one, but human still.*

In making this key point, the poster moves away from spiritual discourse to the notions of 'talent' and 'field', which reflect a kind of musical industry view. One could read this as a kind of grounding move, which is saying, he's a musician, not a god, and therefore human. However, the constructs 'talent' and 'inspiration' themselves also have religious or spiritual resonance. In the Christian tradition, there is the parable of the talents[59]; and there is also the notion of divine inspiration. The poster has found a bi-valent discourse which enables him to do justice to Justin's exceptionality (see Negus and Pickering, 2004), while retaining his humanity.

CLOSING VERDICTS

A number of fans attempt to pass a general verdict on the incident. One rather gloomy summing up was succinct:

> *Overall the bastards won that night.*

Another more philosophical posting put it down to 'life':

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[59] Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapter 25, verses 14-30.

the way it ended spoiled a really great evening and i left feeling pretty down (yeah, yeah, poor little me) ... but now in the, er, pretty warm light of day what he did doesn't seem so bad, and they did play an hour and a half of *really* great songs. So i think maybe he could have handled it better, but that's life.

The overall view appears to be best summed up, however, by the following two posts:

For what its worth i think justin was right to walk off stage but to say "fuck the lot you" as he went was wrong as it was only a minority of the crowd that was out of order not all of us.

We all seem to agree (one or two exceptions to confirm the rule, but still) that Justin had a point. I think many people also feel that his response was wrong.

CLOSURE?

It is worth recording that although Justin did not issue an apology, one fan spoke to a crew member at a subsequent gig and posted the following account:

I spoke to Warren [Warren Hogg, crew member] at the Liverpool gig tonight and I asked him about the London gig, he said that it was a problem with people heckling when the gig was sold out with people outside. I think that they were pissed off at people ruining a gig when there were people outside who would have quite happily enjoyed the gig. I gather that one of the earlier gigs was similar. There were technical problems with the gig, and he said that Justin regretted

swearing at the audience when he walked off. I hope that people will take the

comments made as not aimed at people who wanted to listen.

This report contains Justin's expression of 'regret', though not an 'apology'. The disruptive fans were seen by the band as wasting an opportunity which was denied to those who were denied entry. The technical problems are mentioned. The poster then seeks to exclude the fans who wanted to listen from Justin's general 'fuck the lot of you'. This last point is expressed as the poster's hope, rather than Justin's or the crew member's, so there is a question as to whether the fan is simply trying to pour oil on troubled waters on his own initiative.

The faultlines within the community seem, on this evidence, to be along the seller/buyer, performer/audience and god/human divides.

DISCUSSION

A gig is a conventionally structured cultural ritual for both band and fans. For the band, it is one in series of engagements on a tour. Some fans follow the tour for a time, others manage only one gig per tour. For all fans, there is a heightened sense of expectation. The band for its part plans for the performance through rigorous rehearsal and a strategy of creating an 'emotional journey'. In other words, the affective resources mobilised by the band are deployed in a particular structure and deliberate sequence in order to provide a particular mood regulation or effect. The gig is seen as a dialogue. Given the variety of emotional states explored in NMA lyric and music, the ban's emotional repertoire is very broad. The prospect of peak experiences is held out in Justin's interview – the fans may even be able to 'touch God'. This touching God is

another invocation of religiosity which is experientially rooted. The idea of a peak experience invoked by Justin includes within it the idea of sharing, something collective, a musical communion. At the same time, the gig is a market-place, where fans can buy the band's music and merchandise, a key source of income for the band. In addition, at the merch booth, fans may have contact with members of the crew and other band associates. This social contact is valued by both sides. Above all, however, the gig is a place where fans can experience in real time the live sound and spectacle of the band in performance. They experientially renew their sense of what NMA means to them in terms of emotion and passion – the 'spark meets the kindling'. The band and fans together experience a sense of communitas. However, when things go wrong, the heavenly experience of a gig can become a kind of living hell for musicians and fans alike. When the ritual is disrupted badly enough, the emotional bond or connection between band and fans is ruptured, and the consequences are recognised as potentially grave. The Family's unity is threatened by this rupture. Three faultlines emerge in the ensuing quarrel, one which points to the band's economic/commercial dependency on the fans, one which points to the ethical and artistic conventions of musical performance, and one which has to do with just how exalted the human musician is to be permitted to be. This rupture exposes, therefore, the dark side of the band-fan relationship, basically where the band is seen to be out of line with the accepted norms of the prevailing independent or alternative ideology.

CONCLUSION

The previous three Chapters represent the analytical work on the NMA brand-fan relationship. Chapter 5 showed how the Family construct was set up by the band and discussed and negotiated by the fans. Chapter 6 showed how the band put on a publicly funded touring exhibition of its art and artefacts to create a sense of visual and spiritual

heritage for the Family/Tribe. This Chapter, Chapter 7, showed how the gig or Family Gathering functions to renew the fans' relationship with the music of the band. It also considered how the spectres of the threat of consumers' economic power, artistic criticism and accusations of hubris may arise when the bond is threatened, and how these are dealt with. The next Chapter reviews the journey so far travelled on this inquiry, and discusses a number of themes which have emerged, their theoretical implications and the degree to which the questions posed earlier on in this thesis have been answered or replaced by other, potentially deeper questions.

CHAPTER 8 – DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

The previous three Chapters have focused on three sites of interaction between the band and their fans: the web-site, the touring exhibition and the gig. These sites have enabled the inquiry to focus on the band's notions of community, its heritage and the importance of live musical performance as a cultural ritual and symbolic text. In this Chapter, I reflect on the theoretical and methodological implications of this evidence. Firstly, I review the key findings from the empirical chapters. I then present a range of analytical frameworks, each of which seeks to capture key aspects of the band-fan interaction. As an illustrative example of the application of these frameworks, I explain how each of them fits with this case. I then consider the implications of the findings for musical brand community and consumer tribe theory, with particular reference to Maffesolian thinking and to religiosity. This is then related to the cultural identity of the NMA band-fan community at the political, historical and musical-ideological level, and the Puritan and Romantic strands of the band's ideology. The implications of all of this for the application of marketing and branding theory to NMA are then considered. I then review the possible reasons for the durability of the NMA project. The chapter then concludes with an outline of the contribution of this thesis, including already extant publications as well as pending and planned submissions.

REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL CHAPTERS

Chapter 5 focused on the framing construct offered by the band as a resource for thinking about the band-fan relationship, namely the 'Family'. Data was collected from

the band web-site, interviews, and online noticeboard talk to shed light on this construct. It was clear that there were a number of field metaphors for groupness already in circulation. There was evidence of metaphors being valorised differently, some positively and some negatively. Negative metaphors included 'gang', 'elite' and 'club'. Positive metaphors included 'Family' and 'tribe', with 'cult' being used in a promotional context. 'Following' and 'militia' had both positive and negative connotations. Key emerging themes were how the meaning of the Family was constructed and negotiated in band-fan discourse, with fans discursively elaborating online what Family meant to them. Issues of cohesion and division, separation and togetherness were apparent from the data. The band suggested certain Family values such as organicity, everyone pitching in, and honesty. The function of the Family construct could be seen as being related to the myth of the band's origin. It also served to locate the band and fans in the music industry context, namely against the mainstream and the majors. The Family discourse also functioned to create an affective community which tended to elide the producer/consumer dichotomy. The creation of any group raises issues about membership, but NMA's Family was defined inclusively, so that anyone who liked NMA's music could consider themselves a Family member. By taking part in the debate around the notion of Family, fans could be said to be doing identity work and co-constructing its meaning. Part of the value of NMA's offering is the sense of community, tribe or Family. The ethic of participation encourages fans to enjoy and employ the feeling of community as part of NMA's value.

Chapter 6 focused on the band's touring exhibition 'One Family, One Tribe' and examined artefacts and art presented b the band. Photography, interviews with the artist and curators, and observation were used to gather data. A copy of the Visitor Book entries was also taken with the permission of the museum.. Exhibits used by the band included a reproduction merch booth, a Visitors Book, stage clothing, cover artwork, artefacts, musical instruments, various wall panels, including a copy of Denby's

statement on the Family (2004), stage banners, and an altar with a centrepiece of the *Thunder and Consolation* album artwork. The exhibition may be seen as a collection or representation of the band's visual aesthetic, one which draws on notions of Celticity, as well as a broad range of religious and spiritual discourses, including Christian, magical and esoteric. This visual-spiritual discourse contrasts with the more 'Puritan' discourse echoed in the band's lyrics (see Chapter 1). The exhibition was arguably designed (a) to add to the cohesion of the Family by affording fans an opportunity to participate in the production as well as to re-member themselves in a contemplative, reflective, sacred space; and (b) to recruit new members by displaying examples of the full range of the NMA offering. I illustrated from the Visitors Book how the fans became advocates for NMA, a chorus arguing for the correctness of its claimed status as a band with heritage, worthy of public funding, and a kind of public treasure. The artwork 'content' gives visual expression to the band's ideology, an ideology of New Age spirituality, mixed with the earlier more 'realistic' photographs. The key symbol of the band was not a picture of the lead singer, but an an-iconic, non-representational graphic taken from a Pictish stone-carving which was thousands of years old. In a demotheistic move, the placement on a central altar of this acknowledged symbol for the band-fan community suggested that the Family or tribe was itself a sacred object. In this way, the visual vocabulary of exhibitions was used to suggest that in the Family members are unified by what is divine in each and all of them. The exhibition also acknowledged the separation between band as performers from the fans as audience in its display of the instruments and equipment of musicianship and artistic creativity.

Chapter 7 presented an account of the band's gigs, using data gathered through online and live observation, Visitor Book data capture, purchase of band DVD/videos, fan interviews, and interviews with Justin and Joolz. Using mainly participant observation, I examined the structure of gigs as cultural ritual, detailing the sequence of a gig from both the band and fan point of view. I showed how Justin saw it as his role to construct

an emotional journey for the fans as part of the gig experience, and how he held out the possibility that the band and fans could experience a kind of transcendence or peak moment during gigs. During the gigs behaviours such as call and response singing, singing along, moshing or rucking, hand/arm gestures, forming circles, towers, and pyramids served to build a sense of occasion and community. Other practices, such as persistent talking during the performance, or overly violent rucking, served to cause division. The gigs served to create a sense of emotional excitement and passion between and amongst band and fans. Fans' visits to gigs can be read as part of a gathering in of the Family to a space where they can renew their friendships and their connection with the band and each other. Indeed, Sullivan invokes a sense of musical commonwealth – 'everyone together, sharing' in an echo of the band's political ethic and C17th precursors. By achieving a sense of togetherness, the band and fans together elide the producer/consumer or performer/audience dichotomy in favour of an affective bonding and a potential spiritual–emotional connection, a kind of sacred communion. In the same Chapter, data was also presented on a rare, indeed unique, incident in the history of the band when towards the end of a performance Justin walked off stage and did not return. The ensuing Family quarrel on the web-site noticeboard revealed the underlying tensions within the Family. The key fault-lines were to do with notions of Justin as an artist-performer, as a supplier of entertainment, and as a 'cult' figure.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

In the course of this inquiry, in order to facilitate the culturalist conceptualisation and analysis of the band-fan identities and relationships, a number of frameworks have been developed. The starting framework, the circuit of culture, was seen to have certain deficiencies (see Chapter 2), which were then remedied by the addition of certain components and the adaptation of the circuit to the research context. A range of frameworks was developed, which includes: the Music Brand Web Figure 13), the

Extended Art Firm (Figure 12), and the Popular Music Circuit of Culture (see below). I also present another framework for the holistic analysis of artistic 'projects'.

POPULAR MUSIC CIRCUIT OF CULTURE

Figure 33 below is a completed graphic of the circuit of popular culture framework. Its construction has been explained gradually as it has been built up over Chapters 2 and 3. This framework is more fine-grained than the original circuit of culture in its treatment of discursive issues. It includes specifically mobilisation and signification. In addition, it makes explicit the relationship between discursive resources (interpretative repertoires), texts, their referents and their meanings, none of which were explicitly covered in the original circuit of culture. It also relates the circuit to the popular music context by including the four moments of band-fan interaction. Finally, it allows for reflexivity and discursive elaboration on both the production and consumption sides of the dyad.

Figure 33: The Circuit of Popular Music Culture – D (Source: Author)
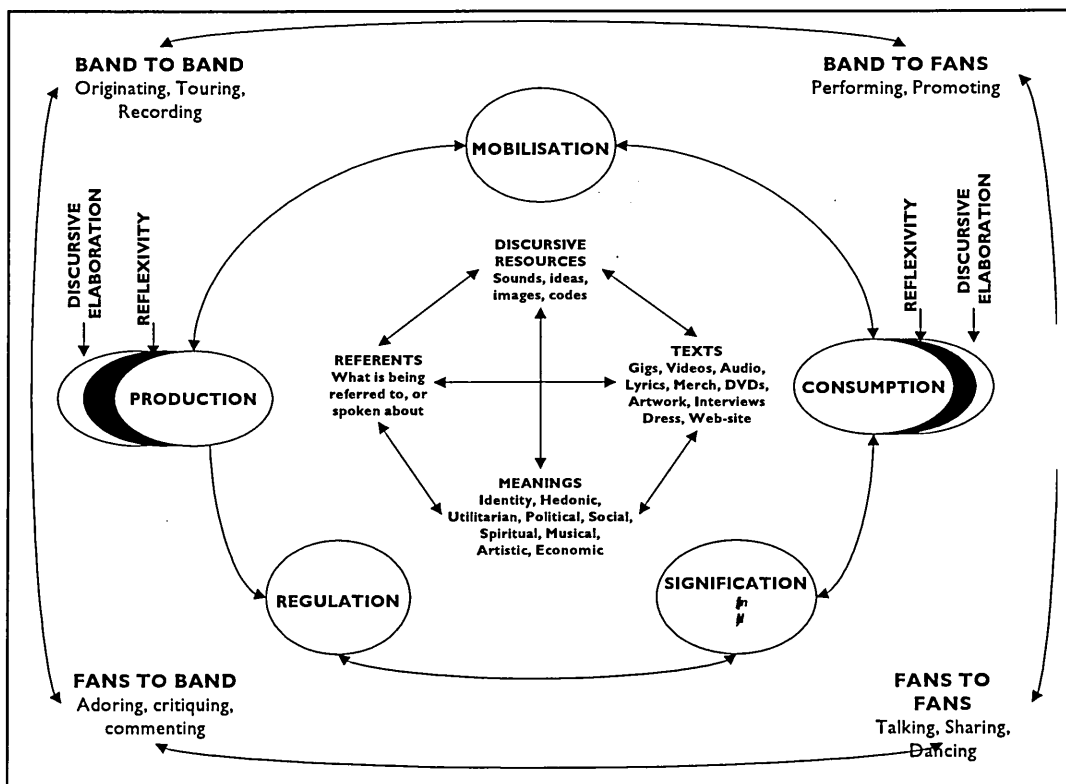
What is missing from accounts of brand communities and tribes is a detailed model of the circuits of culture that apply therein. This framework helps to remedy this by indicating how group culture is mobilised, produced, and consumed.

ART PROJECT ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

Figure 34 below contains a framework which is designed to facilitate a holistic analysis of any artistic project. It aims to draw together for analytical purposes a multi-level view of such a project which takes account of its context, as well as its social, economic, and cultural formation. The intention is that this should be capable of being used to analyse a rock band, a visual art project, a museum or gallery, a dance company, or a film studio.

Figure 34: Art Project Analysis Framework
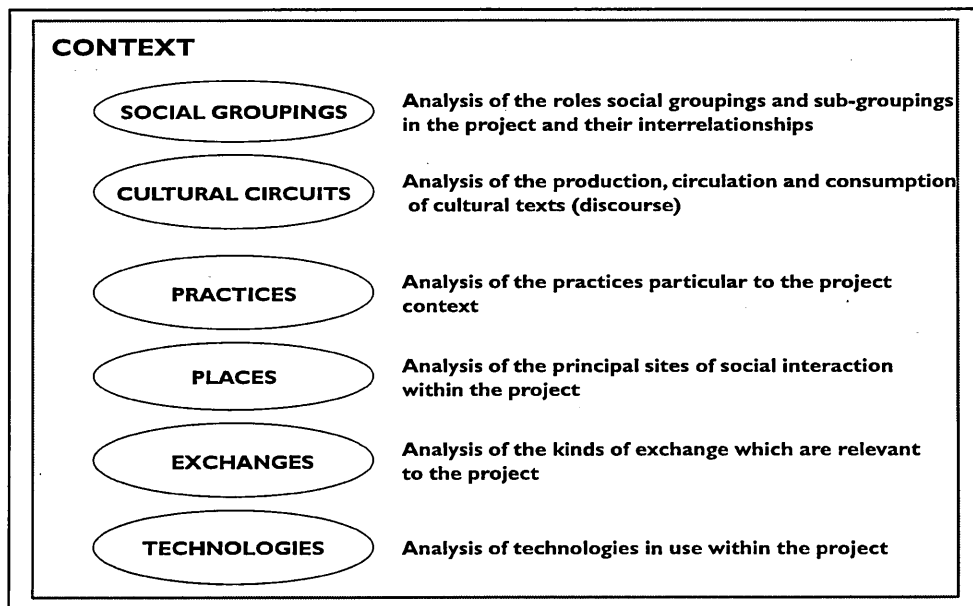
Source: Author

The analysis is conceptualised as being undertaken within a Context (top left hand corner). This is a fundamental point; analyses of organisations or projects without reference to their environment are unhelpful. The Art Firm concept is borrowed from Guillet de Monthoux (2004) where I first heard it, but is understood in the sense of the extended art firm developed in Chapter 3 (Figure 12/31). The Cultural Circuits can be analysed in accordance with the circuit model in Figure 32 above. This should include an analysis of the kinds of texts in circulation within the project, as well as how certain discursive resources are mobilised to achieve strategic purposes. In essence, this involves looking at the project discourse(s). The Social Groupings could be analysed in accordance with the type of analysis in Figure , and take account of relationships, cohesion, division, and conflict. The particular Practices which are proper to the project - e.g. performing, moshing, listening - should also be delineated, as these can lend great richness to the analysis. The Places (or sites) in which social interaction occurs may lend particular character to the phenomenon and should be specifically analysed. In the case of NMA, the three empirical chapters each focused on a particular Place, space or site which functioned as an important site of socio-cultural interaction. Exchanges and Technologies are further levels of analysis which can add insight. Clearly, each of the levels of analysis may be related to the others, leading to a potentially rich picture of the complexities of social interaction around art projects.

The framework is intended as a guide to holistic interpretive analysis. Naturally, the form in which it has emerged bears the stamp of its origins in the theoretical position taken in this case study. It is 'biased' towards a socio-cultural view of the art firm, and one which focuses on the discourse of the social groups which are connected to the project. It also seeks to point the researcher towards the particularity of each project, to the richness of the specific Practices and Places which may be encountered there. It does take account of the commercial dimensions of projects (extended art firm), but

within a loosely 'stakeholder' perspective. This means that, for example, the role of the arts marketing manager is not discursively privileged but made relative to the roles of other stakeholders.

NMA AS MUSICAL 'BRAND COMMUNITY'?

The only application of brand community or consumer tribal thinking to popular music which I have been able to locate is the book chapter by Schau and Muñiz (2007) in Cova, Kozinets and Shankar's edited collection *Consumer Tribes* (2007). Schau and Muñiz apply the notion of brand community (not tribe) to Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers (TPATH), which they describe as a mainstream US rock band. A key strand in these authors' work is the notion of religiosity, or as they call it 'magico-religiosity', and the thrust of their chapter is to argue that religiosity is not only an aspect of stigmatised and marginalised brand communities, but also an aspect of mainstream brand communities.

TPATH, according to Schau and Muñiz, 'easily meets the criteria for brand community', and the TPATH community 'evinces religiosity'. TPATH religiosity includes temperance; family-friendly values; a sense that Tom Petty is 'God by proxy but not proximity; the possibility that TPATH's music may spark a transformational moment in people's lives; and the telling of miraculous tales.

NMA may also be said to offering magico-religious experiences, e.g. at gigs, or at the exhibition, though its religiosity is less oriented towards temperance and more towards protest (though Petty has been known to do some protesting himself). Having listened to some TPATH's greatest hits, my impression is that there is quite a marked contrast

with NMA, the former being more about a kind of laconic, ironic, approach to life, and the latter about emotional turmoil and passion.

Schau and Muñiz assert that this is a case of a 'branded marketplace entity [sic] offering consumers the opportunity for re-enchantment'. The designation of TPATH as a 'brand' is in itself interesting. This is an example of the use of the term 'brand' which has become naturalised amongst marketing scholars. The fundamental problem with the mobilisation of this particular discursive resource in talking about popular music is that it elides the entire discussion about art versus commerce. Given the importance of counter-cultural ideology in the popular music industry, it is advisable to use terms carefully. I accept that 'brand' is in wide circulation, but argue that in this context scholars should be clear about the difference between a 'b®and' as a signifier indicating a commercial(ised) entity and a 'brand', indicating a more general use of the term, meaning 'sign'.

The authors report that 'Members tell a variety of stories that utilize religious discourse'. TPATH fans are said to be "simply applying pervasive and accessible leitmotifs and cultural scripts, primarily those of the magical, mythical and religious, to a marketplace phenomenon". The authors even go so far as to assert that 'brands, even those that are mainstream, are increasingly the centre of the social world'. Muñiz and O'Guinn's original paper on brand community (2001) has established itself as 'one of the 20 most cited papers in the field of economics and business worldwide".[60] Schau and Muñiz's chapter (2007) appears to be trying to further the construct by arguing that 'marginality is not a prerequisiste for a successful enduring brand community to exist, nor is religiosity a response to stigmatization'.

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[60] www.news.wisc.edu/13705, accessed 27/7/2008

I can see similarities (and differences) between the TPATH case and the NMA case. I note that the authors talk, for example, of members applying cultural scripts, which is a formulation close to the kind of approach in this inquiry, and of people mobilising discursive resources. However, from my theoretical standpoint, religiosity is not an 'aspect' or 'feature' of a reified brand community, but an interpretative resource used in the social construction of groupness around an artistic project. I do not think this position is far removed from that of Schau and Muñiz (2007), but what is surprising is that in attempting to develop the notion of brand community they have moved from products like SAABs and Apple Newtons into popular music without pausing and examining the place of marketing in the arts and the long-standing tensions between art and the market. Nor, for example, is there any connection made with popular music literature which could have shed light on the ideological roots of TPATH's religiosity. Finally, although their chapter appears in a book on consumer tribes, there is little reference to the 'tribal' literature at all, whereas this is examined here in the following section.

Is NMA a 'brand community'? Well, the community evinces signs of conscious of kind, a sense of moral obligation and the presence of cultural ritual and religiosity, so it must be a brand community on those criteria. However, this tells us little, and is simply a banal exercise in academic classification.

Religiosity is an important dimension in rock discourse (Fonarow, 2006), as well as in brand community or consumer tribal literature (Muniz and Schau, 2007). In the case of NMA it finds its expression in a suturing by the band of Celticity and other New Age religiosity (Bowman, 2005) to the band's identity, through its lyrics, art, artefacts and interviews. These and other discursive resources help the band to articulate what it

stands for. The discursive resources which serve as markers of religiosity are always already available. Different communities will mobilise different kinds of meanings/discourses to different degrees and for different reasons. The particular use to which NMA puts its religiosity in the touring art and artefacts exhibition has not previously been reported in the tribal or brand community literature. If TPATH were to attempt a similar positioning to NMA, it would not work. It works for NMA and their fans because of the 'total package' – the Family manifesto, the themes of the lyrics, the Celticity, the art-work, the Puritan-Romantic ideology all coming together in a unique and unusual combination of signifiers and signifying processes. NMA cannot be said, either from the theoretical position adopted herein, or from the data, to be a church, denomination, sect or cult in the sense in which these terms are understood in the sociological literature (see Aldridge, 2000). It is a rock band which understands how to imaginatively mobilise particular religious resources in order to sacralise itself and the fans, a way of thinking which happens to fit well with the Durkheimian notions of the "divin social" favoured by Maffesoli – see below.

NMA, TRIBALISM and RELIGIOSITY

In Chapter 3, I pointed out that Maffesoli's book (1988/1996) expounds at some considerable length five key themes which he identifies in tribalism as he sees it: the affectual nebula; undirected being-together; the religious model; elective sociality and the law of secrecy. I argued that these important ideas of Maffesoli, which are absolutely central to his thinking at the time, have not been explicitly worked into tribal marketing and consumer studies discourse - at least as far as I have been able to establish. In fact, the notions of puissance, secrecy, affectual nebula, and demotheistic religiosity fit very well with a counter-cultural group like NMA's Family. NMA is an underground band. Their political ethos is clearly about resistance to a perceived right-

of-centre dominant ideology. In fact, NMA and indie ideology in general, with their emphasis on independence, also sit well with Maffesoli's idea of puissance. The NMA Family is built on a sense of emotional kinship, it is a sanctuary for emotional self-expression; it has a strong affectual nebula. The altar in the touring exhibition of art and artefacts which positions the Celtic/Pictish tribal symbol in the place of reverence, is arguably a clear sign of demotheistic practice in Durkheimian terms, a signifier of the 'divin social'. Again, on p. 40, Maffesoli (1996) talks about a 'tribalism which is based at the same time on the spirit of religion (re-ligare) and on localism (proxemics, nature)'. Here there are clear connections with NMA and indie ideology. I argue that religiosity features heavily in the work of Maffesoli, indie ideology and NMA signification. Finally, NMA has lasted, it is not ephemeral (though, granted, it is an unusual case of a band that has survived from the 1980s); it has 'perdurance', durability, one of the key attributes of a tribe. It is respectfully suggested that NMA, which began 8 years before Maffesoli's book appeared, and which was singing about tribe before it appeared, is, for these reasons, a better example of tribe, in the Maffesolian sense, than that which is promoted in the consumer tribal literature. NMA is a good fit in this sense for the Maffesolian notion of the tribe.

However, there are several areas where NMA and Maffesoli part company. On p.75, for example, he says that "neo-tribalism … refuses to identify with any political project whatsoever, to subscribe to any sort of finality … [its] sole raison d'être is a preoccupation with the collective present". This neo-tribal attribute could not be mobilised to talk about NMA, as politics is a key element in its thinking and expression. On p. 11, Maffesoli says that 'The rational era is built on the principle of individuation and of separation, whereas the empathetic period is marked by the lack of differentiation, the 'loss' in a collective subject: in other words, what I shall call neo-tribalism'. Again, NMA's concern for a critical selfhood and citizenship does not fit well with Maffesolian thinking in this respect. NMA honours emotionality, prizes it, yet

leaves the door open for the independent-minded tribal member to critique its project. The NMA tribe <u>has</u> a polity, Maffesoli does not; he puts social form over content. It is a matter of individual point of view, of course, but in my view the social world is always already political, and certainly NMA sees it that way. It is a failing of Maffesoli's theory that he does not. I take it as axiomatic that the production, circulation and consumption of culture are all political acts.

In any case, twenty years on from *The Time of the Tribes*, Maffesoli has contributed a chapter entitled 'Tribal Aesthetic' to Cova, Kozinets and Shankar (2007), the content of which suggests he is heading off in a different direction. What appears to be primarily under discussion here is not so much consumer tribes as questions of inner daemonic archetypes, depth psychology and religiosity. And what appears to concern the author is the notion of the impersonal other which works its power in human affairs as well as the "slow and circular work that everyone must undertake" to acquire a kind of "better being". For this author, the chapter is not so much a development of the notion of consumer tribes, as a deep meditation on the interplay between psychological and social forces that act upon or 'in' the individual. This writing points to an alchemical, Taoist, view of the individual's inner-outer dialectic. His work is scarcely referenced elsewhere in the book, and even then without discussing in detail the kinds of ideas he wrote about in 1988, as mentioned above. The abiding impression for this reader is of a scholar who has gone on thinking along his own line, while consumer tribal discourse goes off in other directions without understanding the full breadth of his thinking on tribalism.

Is NMA a 'musical tribe'? Well, again, yes, in the sense that it is a group of people who share a common passion for a kind of music. But it is not just a consumer tribe, for the producers are in there too. And, again, in any case, to ask the question is to betray an interest in academic classification which risks being just that ... academic. The questions

as to whether NMA is a brand community or a tribe miss an important point completely. They pre-suppose that there is an academic authority above the field who decides these matters, like some deus ex academia. The 'natives' may propose a name for themselves, but ultimately it is the anthropologist who disposes – or the marketing academic. Rather than applying poorly dimensioned academic labels, a more interesting exercise is to explore how, why and with what consequences groups such as NMA - and others - construct identities for themselves both in terms of the socio-cultural processes by which this groupness is constructed as well as the particular labels which comes to be applied to them. In the next section I examine NMA's identity.

SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY REVISITED

The combination of the "circuit of culture" and "text" together with social identity theory can go a long way to accounting for how a musical tribe or Family is formed. The COPMC points to the many ways in which, and circuits along which, meanings are constructed in band-fan interaction. It also points to texts such as gigs, songs, lyrics, sounds, T-shirts, art, artefacts, fan conversation and other kinds of consumer or fan behaviour as important constituents of band meaning. The SIT literature offers a valid way of thinking about how a rock band and its fans may construct themselves as an in-group over against an "othered" out-group, how they define and negotiate in-group and out-group membership, and how they seek to construct a positive distinctiveness between both groups. This combination of theoretical resources offers a rich way of thinking about communities within popular music, and also within the marketplace. One of the contributions of this thesis is precisely to make this point, and support it with the evidence of an illustrative example. As mentioned in Chapter 3, social identity theory may be considered to have a rather static view of identity. This case study presents evidence of the many sites at which and texts by means of which NMA makes and maintains its identity, and how and whether the fans embrace or reject this. The process of making and maintaining social identity is fluid, an ongoing accomplishment. It takes

time for a group, a band, to work out its values, what it stands for, and to work out how it is different from and better than other groups, how it is positively distinctive. The empirical Chapters, in particular Chapters 5 and 6, present evidence of how band and fan members negotiate this in social interaction by means of their signifying practices.

NEW MODEL ARMY'S CULTURAL IDENTITY

In this section, I examine NMA's cultural identity from a political-historical, Celtic and musico-religious point of view.

POLITICAL-HISTORICAL IDENTITY

The three words New Model Army together make up a name which is associated historically with a Puritan ethic, a spiritual, military, revolutionary and iconoclastic ideology. Interestingly, Wendy Fonarow, in her recent anthropological monograph on English indie music ideology asserts that the spiritual heritage of indie music is essentially Puritan (2006:77). From an English republican point of view, the Puritan initiative was a religiously coloured, progressive project which was at least temporarily successful in establishing a commonweal, a sense of shared power, however limited by today's standards. Sullivan's views on the state of the English nation can be unequivocal, as in this example from one of his press interviews:

Meanwhile Britain is rotting from the inside - perhaps not before time. I had
always thought that the old Britain of Class and Empire was dying a natural death,
but no. It's like a monster from an old movie that cannot easily be killed. We're just

going to have to keep on stabbing at it until it finally expires and then burn it and

bury it before something new can grow in its place that has some social cohesion

and respect and Grace.

However, Sullivan frequently takes the opportunity to reject the idea that NMA is a political band, as such. He is keen to stress the notion of emotional politics, and to disassociate the band from a particular party stance:

I didn't begin writing songs just to put across a political agenda - which is a commonly held misunderstanding. Even "Vengeance" had songs about personal and social things, so in reality there has always been a mixture. ... I wrote that song in a moment of blind fury after watching a TV reporter attempt to 'interview' a known Nazi mass-murderer in Argentina in 1981: it was a gut reaction rather than a definitive philosophy. Neither does it say "killing the bastard".

In this light, NMA can arguably be regarded as musical pamphleteers seeking to put across a radical, anti-establishment, point of view in times of political change and turmoil. And Sullivan's ethic of musical sharing, which we shall see him explain in interview in Chapter 7, could be regarded, partly, as an attempt to create common wealth and social good through music. Of course, there are limits to, and business and musical risks in, how overtly politically 'militant' a rock band can be. Too much 'agit-prop' can reduce audience appeal and with it financial revenue. And it would be entirely misleading to suggest that NMA is all about militancy, or that its songs and lyrics do not cover a much wider range of issues. However, it is safe to say that the band positions itself broadly within a tradition of non-conformism and dissent which has been an important undercurrent in English social and political history for hundreds of years. This may be one of the reasons why there has been an enduring demand for its music.

CELTIC HERITAGE

Celticity warrants discussion for a number of reasons. Firstly, 'Celtic marketing' was the subject of two recent issues of the *Journal of Strategic Marketing,* edited by Stephen Brown. These cover a range of topics, and even include a paper from long dead Irish hero Brian Boru. A paper by Kent Drummond (2006) discusses Led Zeppelin's 'celtic embrace'. Celticity is mobilised by NMA in its visual culture, artistic values and notions of spiritual community. It is therefore a key trope in NMA's construction of its identity. Towards the end of this process, in June 2008, I had the pleasure of taking part in a nine-paper panel entitled 'Locating Celticity' at the 9th SIEF conference which was held in Derry, Northern Ireland. This experience helped to locate for me NMA's use of Celticity, as the panel heard contributions from linguistic, historical, cultural anthropological and other perspectives. There is general scholarly agreement that Celticity is socially constructed, a seminal text in this respect being Malcolm Chapman's The Celts: The Construction of a Myth (1992). Discourse on Celticity is not so much about the Celts as about their reputation. Celticity has many strands, including race/biology, language, archaeology, dress, customs and spirituality, and that within music it is a phenomenon that stretches across much of Europe, including Finland, Sweden, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, France and so on. Celticity and other older religious resource are widely mobilised in contemporary music – see, for example, Scandinavian bands such as Tyr, Ensiferum, Turisas, and Korpiklaani[61].

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[61] My thanks to Joan and Alice Beal for this information.

This panel also made clear to me the link between Celticity and one of the two strands of indie ideology, namely Romanticism, the Celt being one variant of the 'noble savage'. I was interested to learn that C17th English notions of democratic government could be traced to Saxon and therefore German origins! Perhaps this has something to do with NMA's popularity in Germany, their main market outside the UK ...

MUSICAL-IDEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

NMA and their fans actively resist categorisation, largely out of a desire to avoid being fixed in time, and to keep the project alive, but also as a means of retaining the richness of their felt identities. Labels, after all, have a reductionist, shorthand effect. Those members to whom I spoke would broadly agree that NMA is a rock/folk/punk band, though there could and would be considerable debate about the extent to which it might be considered to fit each of those genres. Towards the end of the inquiry, in fact in the writing up period, my frequent scanning of new publications turned up Fonarow's 2006 book on indie culture. I had never seen or heard any reference to NMA as an indie band, so had no reason to believe this categorisation could apply to NMA. However, a few pages into this book I felt a very strong sense of recognition. In other words my sense of NMA's uniqueness had to be revised to take account of Fonarow's account of UK indie music culture. According to Fonarow, indie is a term developed in the later 1990s to denote this kind of music, although there are attempts to trace this sense of independence back to the 1970s punk movement as part of a move to link different threads of independent music.

At the same time as I could recognise the similarities between NMA and ideology, I could also hear, in my imagination, NMA and its fans rejecting outright the notion that they were an indie band or fans, and giving persuasive reasons why this appellation

could not apply to them! Other aspects of Fonarow's argument also seemed very apt. For instance she sees indie fans as the 'Puritan reformers against the established Roman Catholic Church of the mainstream music industry' (2006:67); the core values of indie are 'individualism and local identity'. She sees the indie artist as like the 'Romantic … artist as a natural self-actuated genius borne [sic] of emotional pathos, self-referential introspection, and internal longings – the eternal outsider (p.73).' Indie is a Puritan ideology 'suffused with Romantic emotionalism and sensitivity'. The fact that NMA has taken its name from the historical Puritan era is a coincidence almost too good to be true. They do not feature in Fonarow's book by name but many aspects of their work fit Fonarow's account, as follows. Just as Puritans favoured an ideology which permitted unmediated and direct access to the numinous or divine (p. 77), indie ideology favours direct access to the spirit of music. Indie prides itself on a spirit of egalitarianism (p186). Its language is the 'language of emotion, told in word and sound' (201). p. 55 'introversion and valorisation of pathos and melancholy are expressions of the Romantic thread in indie music'. Indie musicians are expected to be approachable, and NMA go to great lengths to be seen as such.

There are areas where Fonarow's account and the evidence uncovered in the NMA case study are not in agreement. Fonarow comments (p.210) that 'indie bands generally do not have long life spans', whereas NMA is an exception to this rule. Her statement (p.241) that 'indie functions to teach youth that, when they become adults, music and emotion say nothing to them about their lives' is very hard to square with the longevity of NMA fan membership, and with fan testimony to the continual value of NMA music in their lives, or indeed to my own experience of their music.

So, are NMA an indie band? On the basis of the research conducted, I would have to say that there are many similarities between NMA and indie ideology. But there is another question, namely: would NMA call themselves an indie band? At the time of writing I

have not asked this question. I suspect I know the answer anyway ... Another question is who has the right to decide what kind of genre-category NMA belongs to or whether they belong to one at all? I submit that theirs is the right, and that academic classifications are just that ... academic.

APPLICATION OF MARKETING THEORY TO NMA

In this section, I consider how marketing and banding terminology might be applied to NMA.

MARKETING

The challenge for the band, back in the 1980s and ever since, has been to find a way to continue making music. It would be unrealistic to expect band members starting out in 1980 to have a conventional education in business studies, or to expect a manager of the band to carefully work out segmentation, targeting and positioning strategies. Marketing theory would suggest that the band should research customer needs, develop an offering which would provide customer benefits, develop and maintain relationships with their customer base, and secure their loyalty in the interest of a profitable return on their investment. This kind of discourse was developed to help mainly larger commercial organisations do their marketing. When it comes to a much smaller, entrepreneurial organisation built around a musical project, a kind of musical 'art firm' (Guillet de Monthoux, 2004), this kind of theory needs to be selectively adapted.

If we attempt to define NMA's 'marketing strategy' in MMM or classical terms[62], there are problems. What is their marketing objective, for example? It is certainly not profit maximisation. This would raise immediate ideological problems. It was put to me by Joolz that she didn't know of anybody less interested in money than Justin Sullivan. What matters to him is the music, and this is entirely consistent with independent ideology. The story is that at times when it looked like NMA was really going to make it, they chose to turn their back on 'fashion' and re-invent themselves – more avant-garde than popular. When the band played its biggest ever gig in Germany before an audience of 75,000+, Justin's voice did not function – was this a coincidental misfortune or a subconscious block? When asked in the eighties how much money he had made from the hit singles and albums, Justin said to the fan concerned 'Enough'. This seems to indicate a desire for privacy, certainly, but also conveys a sense that he was content with sufficiency and not seeking a superabundance of filthy lucre. Of course, as leader of the project, he needs, together with manager Tommy Tee, to work out how the project can be economically sustained and continue to support himself and the other band members and crew. But what is the marketing strategy to achieve even this modest objective of economic survival, of an artistic lifestyle business? I saw no evidence of segmentation. The NMA fan-base is a very broad church. Here, Cova and Cova's idea (2001, 2002) of a tribe and of tribal marketing to a community united by a shared passion make more sense than classical segmentation. Nor was there evidence of consumer targeting, either. The strategy seemed rather to be tied to the usual music industry cycle or rhythm of writing, rehearsing, recording and touring. When it comes to positioning, there is much more to say, both about the benefits provided by NMA as well as their wider cultural or symbolic positioning. I will deal with the former of these now and leave the cultural positioning to the discussion of NMA's 'brand' below. The benefits or consumer value provided by NMA are quite wide-ranging. They include musical pleasure, a social community value, and a sense of heritage. They also offer a

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[62] This may seem a rather banal treatment – however, I am not aware of any other academic work which attempts to do this.

'staging value' (Böhme, 2003). 'Staging values serve the intensification and heightening of life rather than the satisfaction of primary needs', according to Böhme. Amongst NMA's offerings in this respect may include the theatricality of the rock gig, their visual aesthetic, aural aesthetic, performance of emotional intensity and social-experiential gatherings. Additionally, the band provides lyrics with deep psychological meanings and a counter-cultural sensibility which reaches out to the 'lost' and the 'freaks'. It also offers fans a sense of a rounded personhood and a critically aware citizenship of the planet to identify with.

In terms of the marketing mix, what are we to consider as NMA's product? Is it the material artefacts such as the CDs and T-shirts Is it the 'service', as Vargo and Lusch (2004) would have it? We can perhaps point to all of the texts which the band produces as forming a package for the fan, delivering the benefits outlined above. The main products are the song lyrics and sounds which are originated by the band. Their ability to continue to innovate in this way is critical to their survival. Their pricing strategy, whether it comes to gigs, CDs or merchandise is a value for money one. Promotion is a key part of their strategy. Joolz's artwork is a strong influence on NMA's visual aesthetic or 'band identity'. Media relations are important for any understanding of how a band's meaning is communicated, amplified, muffled, distorted or ignored. The conventional understanding about NMA's media relations can be summed up quite easily: NMA has a negative view of the mainstream music media, and the music media has had a mostly negative view of NMA (to the extent that it bothers with them at all). However, this is not quite the full story. At the time of writing, it is fair to say that NMA is able to obtain access to a range of music media and web-sites for the promotion of its work. When touring, for example, it is able to make use of venue promoters' web-sites and independent or alternative online 'magazines'. Sullivan makes himself available to do interviews with journalists attached to these magazines and sites, as well as with fans. And back in the early days of their career, the band enjoyed some media success. In

1983, the legendary John Peel (1939-2004)[63] played the band's debut single *Bittersweet* and then, later the same year, their second single *Great Expectations* on his radio show. Four of the tracks on NMA's *Radio Sessions* album (nos. 5-8) were recorded on Peel's radio show on 14th December 1983. Sullivan has written a warm tribute to Peel on the NMA web-site. In it he says that Peel introduced him to the idea of 'The Underground', and 'the idea that strange people made amazing records made for purely artistic reasons'. He recalls Peel's playing of the band's music as providing validation for what they were doing. And, characteristically, he sees Peel as championing two values 'totally at odds with the modern world':

Firstly, that music is music and the cult of celebrity is something totally irrelevant to it (or to anything else). And secondly, that radio is and always will be a more powerful medium than television because it allows the imagination of the listener to flourish.

It is characteristic of NMA to be anti-celebrity. After all, they are just a group of working musicians, simply artists who believe in their musical and artistic vision. The comment about radio is one often made about this medium, for instance in relation to radio drama, poetry or storytelling. The fact that it 'allows the imagination of the listener to flourish' is particularly important, in so far as it shows the significance Sullivan places on the consumer or fan imagination.

Current touring communications and early media successes aside, NMA has had its share of media or public controversy. In 1985, for their appearance on BBC television's Top of the Pops show, they wore T-shirts with the slogan 'Only Stupid Bastards Use

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[63] http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/johnpeel/

Heroin' - the BBC producer obliged them to cover up the word 'Bastards'. An incident when the band played Glastonbury in the 1980s meant they were not asked back until 2003. In fact, as recently as May 18th 2008 in The Observer, Michael Eavis, the Glastonbury promoter, can be found describing NMA as 'gawky and unattractive" (Mardles, 2008). The band has twice been refused visas to enter the United States for touring purposes, most recently in 2007. The latter incident prompted one fan to comment on the band web-site on the US Government's cultural values: 'f*ing shit! they will let the beckhams in but not new model army?' The truth is that being an 'underground', 'cult' band creates a certain tension in relations with the media. To retain the sense of mystique and subversion, it is smart to stay out of the limelight; however, to be starved of the oxygen of publicity means to risk the end of the project. In the end, Sullivan manages this tension by using interviews with the music media to continually position and re-position the band in relation to other bands as well as to ongoing political, social and music-industry issues and trends. In this way, he aims to put particular meanings about NMA into cultural circulation. As far as people and process is concerned, we have seen how the gig can be read in marketing terms as the key element in the band's marketing mix. However, this process is supported by and dependent on many other processes of creativity and musicianship, as well as a code of inter-professional behaviour which prevails in the music business. The working relationships in the band need to allow for the independent status of each musician as such, and allow the band members to have their own space for side projects. Given the variety of songs originated by the band, it might be considered difficult for them to have a distinctive sound. Sullivan sees each of the musicians in the band, and the sound engineers, as bringing something distinctive to the music. He may make suggestions, but each member of the band and crew has his own professional skill and contribution, which is respected:

each of us has our own sound really, and that kind of makes the New Model Army

... there have been different musicians in the band so the sounds change ... the

sounds from the front of house does change to some extent from engineer to

engineer. Only to some extent because they're only playing from what we give

them, but they can make quite a difference and Paul is - Paul's quite dynamic,

quite clean but quite dynamic, whereas Simon, who did Rock City, is much more a

put-it-all-up-in-there, more chaotic, but that can be quite exciting ... I can go and

say I want delay on here and I don't want delay on that song, but again, as you

say, if you work with really good people, you can't then dictate to them everything

they do, because there's no point in using them ... but what we do is get really

good people and let them interpret.

<div align="center">Interview with author</div>

This account constructs an ethic according to each member of the band and crew has the right to 'interpret', to be an independent artist as well as being part of the group.

BRANDING

To use branding language for a minute, the interviews which band members give are important opportunities to give an account of their musical project, their brand values and their identity. In the above extract, Sullivan constructs some important NMA brand values as (a) unlikely to ever fit into the musical scene; (b) open to diverse musical influences; and (c) striving to offer a variety of 'musical and emotional' experiences. He seeks to trouble any attempt to define NMA by asserting their position as being 'beyond ... style confines'. This interview performance can be read as a kind of 'identity work'. The denial of the band's definability can be seen as an attempt to detach or unfix the band from subcultural meanings or categories which prove to be transient, and to 'de-

categorise' its identity. Musically, over the past roughly 30 years it has produced songs which can be categorised under all of these genres. NMA is keen to avoid any subcultural labels. The band is continually engaged in talk-work of differentiation, protecting its positive distinctiveness, differentiating itself in terms of genre, and, within genre, from other rock bands, and above all from what is fashionable from time to time.

So, it is possible to talk about NMA in the conventional branding or marketing terms above, but, within their art world (Becker, 1992), these discourses are almost entirely redundant. They are not regularly mobilised as part of the band's or fan's sense-making practices. In fact, to many they are unwelcome, and their avoidance may be seen as an ideological accomplishment by the band in doing 'being independent'.

NEW MODEL ARMY AND DURABILITY

NMA has survived for nearly thirty years, and continues to originate and produce its own work without a conventional marketing model or strategy. Their work has proved sufficiently attractive to fans to persuade many of them to continue to buy the band's work, helping to ensure NMA's economic survival. Is this because they are good at marketing, or is there some other explanation for their success? There is a line of thinking in MMM which says that even if an organisation does not practice marketing in the conventional sense, it may still be deemed to have a 'default marketing strategy'. In other words, what such an organisation is 'really' doing is marketing, whether its leaders have the intelligence to realise this or not. This line of thinking seems to be presumptuous, as if the only, the most relevant, and most important discourse which may properly be mobilised is marketing. It ignores the emic perspective, in other words

what accounts the organisation's many stakeholders might wish to give about their project.

I prefer to say that NMA have found a way of solving the day-to-day problems which come with being in a rock band. Explanations for their durability, cultural and economic, lie in this problem-solving ability; their continual origination of new material and its presentation to the market; their adoption of new technology, such as the internet; continual touring; their strong visual identity; the musical pleasure they give; their continual use of media interviews where possible to position and re-position the band in a complex and subtle way in relation to ongoing developments in the music business and beyond; their maintenance of sound working relationships and a professional code of conduct in the industry; complex meanings in the lyrics; the range of texts which are widely circulated and serve as an important representation system for the band and fans; the variety of emotional and cognitive subject positions they offer; the key ritual of the gig - a place for gathering, conversation, singing, dancing, celebration, and intense hedonic experiences; the online community; their critically independent voice of protest against the many problems in the world; and of course the Family and tribe as a resource for fans. In the end, both the band and fans are dependent on each other for the durability of the NMA musical project. As long as it continues to mean enough to the stakeholders involved, the project can be sustained.

RESEARCH METHODS AND 'BOFFIN FANDOM'

I feel that my trust in a holistic, interpretive process has been validated by the range of data acquired, and the story that it tells. I fell that the combination of methods used can lend richness to the analysis of this kind of phenomenon. Looking back reflexively, I realise that this project was undertaken as a way of doing 'being independent' within

the Academy. I constructed for myself a version of the academic world which was dominated by positivist, mainstream managerial marketing scholars, and arts marketers who did not engage with the art which they marketed. I used this rhetorical account in order to legitimise wandering off to study rock music in a cultural studies department. In so doing, I was motivated by a desire to find something more interesting to do with my time as a marketing academic. This has to do with what I call 'boffin fandom'. Unlike many popular music scholars, I did not come to this study as what I would call a fanatic about music in general. Nor was I a fan of New Model Army in particular. I find that through the process of this inquiry, however, I have become a fan of the band, even if a rather academic kind of fan, a 'boffin fan'. 'Boffin' was a term Joolz applied to me when talking about how I might be perceived when doing PO. It carries connotations of this weird scientist who is preoccupied with abstruse matters whose meaning and relevance are not immediately relevant to other people, but who is ok, onside with the project and basically harmless. To put this in academic terms, the research process has helped me to value what Hills (2002:183) calls 'affective reflexivity' or 'impassioned thought' rather than the desiccated 'rationality' of management schools and their soul-degrading RAE-driven production cultures. It has helped me, also, to see how being a fan can add value to life, even the academic life.

CONTRIBUTION

According to Phillips and Pugh (1994), there are fifteen generic ways one can contribute to scholarly knowledge. Drawing from their list, I would submit that this thesis contributes by presenting empirical work that hasn't been done before, taking a particular framework, the circuit of culture, adapting it and applying it in a new area, bringing new evidence to bear on an old issue, being cross-disciplinary, looking at areas

that people in the discipline haven't looked at before, and adding to knowledge in a way that hasn't previously been done before.

My curiosity about the marketing and consumption of popular music was sparked initially by a U2 video, and led by a rather winding path to the present project. I sought by choosing to do a PhD in a cultural studies department to be able to make a contribution to the theory of marketing and consumption of the arts, specifically popular music. This required an engagement with a range of literatures from marketing, consumer studies, popular music studies and cultural studies, and further back into the history of political ideas. The key notions of the 'circuit of culture' and 'text' were adapted to help guide the inquiry, and this was harnessed to a social constructionist, hermeneutico-semiotic and discourse-analytical approach. A range of data collection methods was used, including online and live observation, interviews with band and fans, and videography. Three types of cultural production/consumption site were investigated: cyberspace, museum spaces and gig spaces. The data analysis helped to show how the band and fans together constructed the musical 'art firm', project, community, 'brand', tribe and Family that is New Model Army. A framework of the circuit of popular music culture was developed and illustrated. The implications of the findings were then teased out for the conceptualisation of tribes and brand communities, the use of postmodern sociological theory from Maffesoli, the marketing and branding of popular music groups, and how different literatures fit together to help account for the phenomenon.

This thesis contributes to the development of theory in the areas of arts marketing, arts branding, cultural studies and popular music studies. As far as arts marketing is concerned, it adds complexity and depth to the mainstream arts marketing by drawing on a range of literatures and using interpretive methods to gather data. As far as arts branding is concerned, it opens the way to a way of thinking about art brands that takes

particular account of the role of meanings in the artist-consumer relationship. Within cultural studies, it shows how the circuit of culture can to be adapted to take greater account of the discursive construction of culture in social interaction. And within popular music studies, it opens up a connection to the circuit of culture and to marketing and consumer studies that has not hitherto been so explicitly made. More specifically, it offers a graphic framework for the conceptualisation of popular music brands, which can arguably be applied to any musical 'firm'. The thesis also offers a revised version of the 'art firm', one which takes greater account of the roles within the firm.

Material directly related to this thesis has already been published as follows, and copies of these papers have been placed at Appendix J:

CONCLUSION

This chapter has drawn together the key themes which have emerged from the data analysis and related them back to the academic literature. It has discussed and illustrated the problems with NMA's marketing strategy and brand identity, as well as a range of issues to do with the band's political, historical and musico-ideological heritage. It has also contained an assessment of the limitations and contribution of the thesis. The next Chapter, which is also the final one, links the main findings of the thesis back to analytical constructs outlined in the literature review.

CHAPTER 9 - CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

CHAPTER 9 - CONCLUSION

In this short concluding Chapter, I link the main findings of the thesis back to the analytical constructs outlined in the literature review. As indicated towards the end of Chapter 3, the main ideas which were identified to take forward into the fieldwork were the circuit of popular music culture (incorporating the original circuit of culture and the notion of text, together with other components), social identity theory, religiosity, brand community, and consumer tribe.

The COPMC, particularly when combined with social identity theory, provides something which has been missing from accounts of brand communities and consumer tribes. Of course it relates firstly to the case at hand, but is arguably applicable to other musical and art projects, not to mention mainstream commercial brand communities. It provides an analytical framework which 'fills in' the circuits of internal communication within those groups; it shows how cultural meaning is constructed within them; it shows how the brand-work is done; it makes an important link between the doing of culture, the building of brands, and the making and use of social and individual identities. Arguably, a thorough analysis of the meaning(s) of any band-fan relationship must take account of all of the texts generated by band and fans, and this framework helps to do just this.

The COPMC can be used to show how the NMA 'brand' is constructed. It illustrates how a band mobilises discursive resources into texts which have referents and meanings. NMA mobilises resources in a wide range of ways, and the COPMC model directs the

researcher precisely to that process. The model says, in effect, that since the production and consumption of culture is mutually constitutive, then brand meanings are co-constructed by band and fans, or negotiated in their social interaction. This approach to branding treats brands as cultural 'artefacts' and acts with theoretical consistency by applying cultural studies theory to these cultural artefacts.

The mutual constitutiveness of cultural production and consumption offers an alternative to managerial notions of brand development. The managerial perspective holds that brand managers play the more or most important role in brand development. The culturalist perspective suggests that the fans have a considerable role as co-authors of the brand's core meanings. This is consistent with recent developments in services marketing thinking (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). The idea that popular music brands are co-constructed by bands and their fans attributes greater agency and power to fans than the more managerially-driven versions of brand development by mainstream authors such as Keller and Aaker. As we have seen in Chapter 7, when considering data relating to the walk-off incident, fans have the power to repair or not to repair the damage done by band-fan rupture. In this case, they chose to exercise that power benignly, in the band's favour. It is true that the band has a distinctive role as the provider of the offering; we saw in Chapter 6 how the exhibition conveyed a sense of their separateness as well as promoting the notion of a shared Family sacredness. Yet, the togetherness of the band and fans is the social identity which a fan may 'buy into' if s/he becomes a Family member. It confers a positive distinctiveness on Family members. Because of the wide-ranging nature of the musical offering, and the broad range of texts which are deployed in band-fan interaction, the scope and depth of this social identity is considerable and may affect a fan's political and religious, as well as musical, beliefs or values.

NMA mobilises a wide range of discursive resources to construct its meaning, and a few examples are presented here to illustrate this. The primary interpretative resource mobilised by NMA is the relatively simple notion of the Family. This is presented to the fans in a range of texts, namely the web-based "Some Thoughts" (Denby, 2004), the songs about family, and Justin and Joolz's placing o f the notion into circulation in informal conversation or interviews. The very name of the band mobilises a counter-cultural heritage which is politically and religiously inflected, and in a radical way. Politically, this heritage indexes a left-leaning ideology of collectivism, but one balanced by notions of individual freedom, independence and critique. The lyrics mobilise a large array of discursive resources and communicate with fans about a wide range of referents, political, religious, psychological, musical, social and ecological. Media interviews and the web-site enable NMA to mobilise and present different repertoires for different situations and contexts, and to continually adjust its symbolic positioning to take account of developments within the band, the music business and the wider world. The touring exhibition was an example of an unusual way for an independent band to assert its positive distinctiveness and cultural value. It displayed a rich diversity of art and artefacts (texts) in one space. Each of these texts had its own production and consumption history, referents and meanings. Two meanings which emerged particularly from this show were the separateness of the band and the idea of the Family or Tribe as sacred, as promoted by the altar presentation of the Pictish stone carving symbol. Finally, the live performance is arguably the richest text, for the band and fans are together in real time and interacting within the cultural ritual of a popular music gig. Both fans and band are producing and consuming signifiers, as they engage in performing, dancing, singing, making pyramids and many other symbolic practices. An account of NMA's cultural meaning or brand identity is not thorough or complete if it does not consider all of these kinds of texts in a holistic manner, and if it does not recognise fan agency.

There is some overlap between notions of brand community and consumer tribe and New Model Army, but neither is sufficient to explain the band-fan community. Firstly, they ignore field metaphors which the band or fans may themselves mobilise; secondly, they do not invoke social identity theory; and thirdly, they ignore fundamental issues about the production and consumption of meaning, including what the community means to those within it and how they talk about this.

When the question is asked: "What is the meaning of this band?", or "What does this band mean to its fans", the combination of circuit of culture, text, and social identity theory can be seen to offer a thickly descriptive, richly analytical reply. The circuit of culture enriches SIT, because it sensitises us to all the places in which social identifications are managed and renewed. The richness of the texts produced and consumed in band-fan interaction together with the meanings which those generate, including social identity (the Family), individual identity, and emotional position, is a major part of the enduring power of New Model Army.

So is NMA a brand? The band would say "No!" to any mobilisation of that word if it were to be deployed in a way which suggested that the band had sold out, or become overly concerned with commercial success. This would be antithetical to what the band has stood for over so many years. It is part of their ideological work and accomplishment to make it difficult for people to talk about them as a brand in that commercial way. And yet, in common social parlance, almost anything is now being talked about as a brand, in the sense of a sign or signifier. For bands which wish to be seen as more authentically and credibly independent (as described in Fonarow, 2006), the discursive resource 'brand' is one to be avoided, as it threatens to elide the hard-fought distinction that properly independent bands seek to make and maintain between commerce and art.

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No more with the long goodbye, I can't stand another tear.

I won't wait for the bell to toll - straight on for the days ahead.

Straight on for the days ahead ...

Long Goodbye (Sullivan, 1996)

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