

# How Does it Feel?

The role of popular music in the lives of its fans, from the perspective of fans themselves.

Online Interviews with fans of:

New Order

And

The Happy Mondays

And

The Stone Roses

MSc Social Research

2003/2004

Julie Marie Hutchinson

## **Abstract**

This study aims to explore the ways in which popular music works actively within the lives of its fans, from the perspective of the fans themselves. As a fan of popular music myself, I am certain that my own experiences are in no way passive, yet recognise that there has been little research in to popular music fandom, which has sought fan accounts of the ways in which they use music in their lives. This study, therefore, intends to address this through online qualitative interviews with a small group of fans of three bands, which hailed from Manchester, England (and its surrounding areas): New Order, the Happy Mondays and the Stone Roses. This report will show that, for the group of fans interviewed, fandom is anything but passive and, instead, functions in a number of complex and meaningful ways in their day to day lives.

## Contents

I. Front Cover	1
II. Abstract	2
III. Contents	3
IV. Introduction	4-50
V. Methodology	51-80
VI. Findings	81-106
VII. Conclusion and Summary	107-109
VIII. Appendices	110-115
IX. Bibliography/References	116-125

## **Chapter 1- Introduction**

Popular music works in the lives of its fans in numerous ways. The intention within this study is to explore the uses that fans make of popular music.

Whilst this is an important area for sociological concern, a shift of focus towards fandom as a more active phenomenon, with productive participants, has been fairly recent. In the past, fandom has been largely regarded as passive and defined by media production. The requirement for investigation in to meaningful forms of engagement that fans have, with their selected forms of popular culture, has been further obscured by an overall dismissive perception of fans and an elitist tendency, which awarded little respect to artefacts of popular culture. Following from this, fans have seldom been given the opportunity to speak about the ways in which their fandom works in their lives. All of the above has meant that there has, traditionally, been a lack of enquiry in to the more active possibilities that fandom may offer, and little meaningful engagement with fans themselves.

Although there is now an increasing recognition, within the social sciences, of such active potential, further enquiry is essential because, to simply regard fandom as passive, or in a negative and dismissive manner, is to neglect, fail to recognize or ignore intricate ways in which it functions meaningfully in peoples everyday lives.

The aim of this study is, therefore, to contribute to a growing recognition of the need to award academic attention to the complex nature of popular music fandom, through

research investigation in to the ways in which fans actively use popular music in their everyday lives, that takes in the perspective of the fans themselves. It will become apparent, as we proceed through this chapter, that even though there has been an overall movement towards fandom as active, work in to popular music fandom, which seeks to take in the views of fans themselves, is still in infancy.

At this point it is necessary to critically review what has already been written about popular audiences, in general, and fandom specifically.

### **Critical Review of Literature**

There has been no general standpoint, within the literature surrounding popular audiences, in respect of what it means to be a ‘fan’ of popular music.

For a long time, those who looked at music audiences took a very narrow perspective and concentrated upon young people. The focus in the 1950s was upon the ‘teenager’ but in the 1960s it shifted to problems of ‘youth’, with led to a number of works on ‘youth subcultures’ (Negus 1996:8).

Although there has been a concentration upon the young, in much theoretical work in to youth subcultures, some of which I will return to later, the point must be made at this stage is that any perception of fandom solely as the domain of the young, would be too narrow. Whilst the mention of popular music fans conjures up images of screaming young girls at the concert of their favourite band, or singer, fan attachments must be recognised as potentially enduring and sustained, irrespective of age.

The following comment from Negus (1996) supports this:

“ How could we understand the enduring popularity of Bob Dylan, for example, without reference to the legions of highly intelligent people who have followed him around for years and who have continued to find profound meanings in some of his most banal and wilfully ironic utterances” (Negus 1996:26)

Another important issue for consideration, when endeavouring to explore what it means to be a ‘fan’, is the ways in which ‘fans’ are set apart from ‘audiences’ in general. One way to distinguish fans from wider audiences could be with reference to the level of the relationship to popular culture. Lisa. A. Lewis (1992) made this distinction and referred to fans as the most identifiable and visible of audiences, with fans being the ones who would know all of the intricate details of their favourite film stars life and work or wear their team colours (Lewis: 1992:1). From this perspective, therefore, fans would be easier to identify than wider audience members.

John Fiske (1992) makes a similar distinction between ‘fan’ and wider ‘audience’ member, offering that the difference between fans and audience member is one of degree, with the fan perceived to be an “excessive reader” (Fiske 1992:30)

Whilst the above provide useful means of differentiating the ‘fan’ from the wider audience member, and it would seem a reasonable approach to view fans as investing more energy in to their consumption related practices, than the wider audience member, it may also be the case that fans use their chosen object of popular culture in qualitatively different ways, to the general audience member, even though wider audiences may also be active. This is something I will return to later in this chapter.

It is also necessary, when talking about fandom, to deliberate over the sorts of artefacts commonly associated with 'fans'. Fandom tends to be associated with cultural features that are belittled by the dominant value system. This is something that Fiske (1992) also touched upon in 'The Cultural Economy of Fandom':

“ Fandom is typically associated with cultural forms that the dominant value system denigrates-pop music, romance novels, comics, Hollywood mass-appeal stars . . . .It is thus associated with the cultural tastes of subordinate factions of the people, particularly with those disempowered by any combination of gender, age, class and race” (Fiske 1992:30)

This linking of fandom specifically to forms that are associated with the popular, and which are dismissed by Society's dominant value system, implies that fandom would not be a term used to describe those whom elicit pleasure from artefacts associated with 'high culture'. They would be described as aficionados. Joli Jenson (1992), in 'Fandom as Pathology: The Consequences of Characterisation;', highlights the above distinction which tends to have the negative outcome of the 'fan' being perceived as the 'other':

“ What is the basis for the differences between fans like “them” and aficionados like “us”? There appear to be two crucial aspects-the objects of desire, and the modes of enactment. The objects of an aficionado's desire are usually deemed high culture . . . .Apparently, if the object of desire is popular with the lower or middle class, relatively inexpensive and widely available, it is fandom” (Jenson 1992:19)

Fandom is associated, therefore, with the middle and lower classes. Such stereotyping immediately begins to render fandom in a negative light, due to its association with forms that are frowned upon by the dominant system of values. In addition to the object of desire, Jenson (1992) also suggests that fans are also differentiated from aficionados by their mode of enactment. Fans are perceived to be besotted with their objects and

display emotional and excessive behaviour, whereas aficionados are perceived to demonstrate a rational determination of value and display appreciation in measured ways (Jenson 1992:20).

There is clearly elitism with such assumptions surrounding fandom. Within the distinction between objects of attachment there is what Jenson terms a 'cultural hierarchy':

“ So far we have established that one aspect of the distinction between “them” and “us” involves a cultural hierarchy. At least one key difference, then is that it is normal and therefore safe to be attached to elite, prestige-conferring objects (aficionado hood), but it can be abnormal, and therefore, dangerous, to be attached to popular, mass-mediated objects (fandom)”(Jenson 1992:20)

An 'elitist' opposition to popular culture can be traced back to Matthew Arnold's 'Culture and Anarchy' which was published in 1869 and warned against the accelerating culture of the masses or, what he termed, a 'philistine culture'. Arnold saw this as extending due to wider literacy and democracy. Arnold spoke about the aesthetic barrenness of the culture of the new 'masses', which he felt would not equip them for their political and social roles within a democratic society (Turner 1996:39).

Cultural elitism was also inherent in the works of T.S Eliot and F.R Leavis in the 1940s. Both argued for cultural conservatism. In 'Notes Towards the Definition of Culture' (1948), Eliot championed the role of culture as the saviour of society from the brutality and materialism associated with industrialisation. He saw culture as linked to an 'elite' and felt that this 'elite' should direct public life (Eliot 1948:26). The Elitist view of culture, championed above, is also inherent in the work of F.R Leavis. In 'Mass

Civilisation and Minority Culture' (1930), Leavis asserted that culture could only be appreciated by a very small minority. Leavis argued that only a minority were capable of appreciation and judgement of art and literature (Leavis 1930:3-5). The life furnished by mass culture was perceived to be flimsy and cheap. Within the above perspectives, therefore, popular culture was lamented for its perceived shortcomings (Turner 1996:40).

The denigrating of popular cultural forms, within the dominant value system is steeped within the above traditions and is harmful towards, and has largely detracted from, any meaningful investigation in to fandom as a social and cultural phenomenon, worthy of study. Perspectives, which dismiss popular cultural forms, without any investigation in to the ways they engage their audiences, are ultimately flawed in that they have no empirical grounding. Not only is it deemed to be 'normal' to be attached to elite objects and potentially dangerous to be attached to popular objects associated with fandom and lower classes, class distinction is also apparent in what is deemed to be desirable behaviour. As discussed earlier, fan behaviour is perceived to be emotional and passionate, whilst the behaviour of aficionados is thought to be cool, detached and unemotional. The latter is seen as more worthy behaviour and is associated with the upper classes, whilst the former is deemed to be unworthy behaviour. Joli Jenson (1992) asserts that this division engages ideas, which are rooted in the enlightenment period, where rationality, objectivity and reason were desirable:

“ There culturally loaded categories engage Enlightenment-originated ideas based on rationality. Reason is associated with the objective apprehending of reality, while emotion is associated with the subjective, the imaginative, and the irrational. Emotions, by this logic, lead to a dangerous blurring of the line between fantasy and reality, while rational obsession, apparently does not” (Jenson 1992:21)

The association of fandom with what are deemed to be, potentially, dangerous and obsessive behaviours and what are perceived to be unworthy cultural forms, results in stigmatisation for those who may consider themselves fans (Jenson 1992:23).

Ultimately, therefore, the term 'fan' carries with it negative connotations. Henry Jenkins (1992) also referred to this when talking about fandom. Jenkins suggested that the term 'fan' represents a scandalous category in contemporary culture:

“ Whether viewed as a religious fanatic, a psychopathic killer, a neurotic fantasist, or a lust crazed groupie, the fan remains a 'fanatic' or false worshipper, whose interests are fundamentally alien to the realm of 'normal', cultural experience and whose mentality is dangerously out of touch with reality” (Jenkins 1992:15)

This perception of the 'fan' as deviant is further escalated by the media (Jenkins 1992:13) with frequent news reports of obsessed fans, 'stalkers' trying to make contact with the object of their desire and psychopathic individual loners and crazed and frenzied crowds.

Elitist approaches, which view popular cultural forms, with which fandom are associated, as unworthy, and enlightenment charged ideas that objectivity and reason are worthy modes of enactment, with emotion being frowned upon, have resulted in fandom being stigmatised. This has been further escalated by the media with stories of fans as crazed or obsessive. When one looks behind such assumptions, however, they emerge as little more than stereotypes. They have, however, served to obscure the

necessity to explore the ways in which fandom works in the lives of its fans, from their perspectives.

Another prevailing view of fans is to view them as passive and uncritical. This perception can be traced back to the work of Theodor Adorno and his critique of ‘mass culture’. Adorno, who was one of a group of theorists from the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research, which was established in 1923 and often referred to as the ‘Frankfurt School’, held a pessimistic view of modern culture. Adorno coined the term ‘culture industry’ to express what he saw as a culture imposed from above and characterised by standard products and lack of choice. The principals of Adorno’s argument are captured in ‘Dialectic of Enlightenment’, which was put together by Adorno with fellow Frankfurt school theorist Max Horkheimer. This neo-Marxist position perceives mass culture as uniform and standard and promoted by financial motives. The outcomes, of this perspective, are frowned upon manipulation, and a society alienated from itself (Adorno and Horkheimer 1979:121). Many of Adorno’s writings are characterised by the view of people as objects yielding to capitalist forces and incapable of any revolutionary potential as their thoughts were contaminated as they were routed through the ‘culture industry’ (Adorno and Horkheimer 1979:126). This view, therefore, regards the consumer as passive dupe:

“ Not only does Adorno presume the consumer to be . . . mindlessly victim to the entertainment industry without any way of making his or her own individual use of the products . . . there is no suggestion that these assertions are backed with audience research” (Brooker 1998:20)

The perception of consumers as passive and non critical was prevalent in writings surrounding fans, for many years, with fans deemed as incapable of recognising that

their cultural preferences are being used to exploit them (Grossberg 1992:51). Fandom, therefore, was largely seen to be defined by production. Adorno's rendering of audiences as passive dupes has, therefore, clearly worked against the exploration of active possibilities within audiences in general, or fans in particular, even though, on close inspection, there appears to be no suggestion that his perspective was supported by research into audiences.

The dominant perception of fandom as passive or linked to deviance, in addition to a prevailing elitist tendency to regard artefacts of popular culture as 'unworthy' cultural forms have, therefore, meant that fan practices have, until fairly recently, been seen as unworthy of close scrutiny. Any attention bestowed upon fandom has been largely negative and focused upon pathology (Jenson 1992:26-27).

There is now a growing body of work, which awards attention to the significant ways in which popular cultural forms function in the lives of fans. There has been a clear movement away from a perception of fandom as deviant and defined solely by production. It is at this point that we should take some time to reflect upon what has been said about the active possibilities within fandom and the positive ways in which fans use their chosen mode of popular culture in their lives.

One particular concept, which challenges a view of consumption as entirely passive, is the notion that audiences can introduce their own meanings and actively challenge culture (Harris 1998:42).

The idea that consumers can challenge dominant meanings was visible in the work on youth subcultures carried out within the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. The centre was established at the University of Birmingham in 1964 and included approaches that suggested subordinate groups could resist or challenge dominant culture by giving their own meanings to artefacts of that culture. This approach is clearly illustrated in Dick Hebdige's (1979) 'Subculture: The Meaning of Style'. Hebdige looked at how British youth groups, such as the Teddy boy, mod and punk, created alternative cultures by taking goods from the dominant culture and awarding them with new meanings in an oppositional context. In this approach, youth subcultures were seen to have developed as a way for subordinate groups to challenge Hegemony through style:

“ To turn once more to the examples used in the introduction, to the safety pins and . . . tubes of Vaseline, we can see that such commodities are indeed open to a double infection: to illegitimate as well as 'legitimate' uses. These 'humble objects' can be magically appropriated, 'stolen' by subordinate groups and made to carry 'secret' meanings. Meanings, which express, in code, a form of resistance to the order which guarantees their continued subordination” (Hebdige 1979:17-18)

As young people, from this angle, actively give new meanings to existing artefacts, there was a visible shift from suggestions of complete passivity, and a singular type of consumption (Negus 1996:17).

Whilst this type of approach is useful in that it opens up active possibilities at the level of consumption, it focuses specifically upon subordinate youths and active subcultures. This is limited in two respects. Firstly, as discussed earlier, a concentration solely upon 'youth' ignores the active possibilities within audiences in other age groups. Secondly, through concentrating upon the active subcultural minority, the practices of the

mainstream are ignored and, therefore, notions of passivity are not disturbed, for the majority (Negus 1996:19).

Lawrence Grossberg (1992) talked about the second distinction in the context of his discussion of fans. Grossberg asserted that, for a long time, the notion of an active subcultural minority was the only alternative to the perception of fans as complete cultural dopes, who passively consume artefacts of popular culture (Grossberg 1992:51-52). From the 'subcultural' position, fans can be viewed as an active elite within the wider passive audience (Grossberg 192:52). Grossberg suggests that adopting this point of view potentially limits our understanding of the complex relationship that exists between audiences and forms of popular culture in general (Grossberg 1992:52).

Grossberg goes on to state that, for the major part, there exists an active and productive relationship between popular texts and their audience. From this standpoint, a popular text does not generate fixed effects but, rather, people struggle to make texts mean something with reference to their own lives and experiences. The same popular text will not mean the same to everyone, for different people will interpret it in different ways (Grossberg 1992:52).

The uses made of texts, in Grossberg's argument, are intrinsically linked to audience attempts to make sense of their world and make a slightly better place for themselves in the world (Grossberg 1992:53).

In Grossberg argument it is important not to furnish either the text or the audience with the ultimate power to determine their relationship, however, as even if audiences are

active it does not mean that they are ever in control (Grossberg 1992:53-54).

Grossberg's suggestion, therefore, moves notions of active audiences, away from the narrow focus upon active minority groups and assumed passivity elsewhere and renders audiences as generally active.

It is worth, at this stage, taking a look specifically at the relationship between the 'fan' and 'text' from Grossberg's position. Grossberg argues that the relation of the 'fan' to cultural texts works in the sphere of 'affect' or 'mood' (Grossberg 1992:56). Whilst Grossberg recognises that the relationship between audience and popular texts is largely a productive one, fandom in particular is perceived as an 'affective' relation to cultural texts. For Grossberg 'affect' is linked closely to what he refers to as the 'feeling of life'. The same experience will radically change as one's mood or feeling alters (Grossberg 1992:56). Grossberg suggests:

“ different affective relations inflect meanings and pleasures in very different ways. Affect is what gives 'color' 'tone' or 'texture' to our experiences” (Grossberg 1992:57)

'Affect' is deemed to be the energy invested in different things. It is socially constructed from cultural effects and, for Grossberg, its significance comes from its ability to invest difference. Fans divide the cultural world into 'us' and 'them' through such investments (Grossberg 1992:58). Whilst the audience are unable to remake the conditions of their subordination through consumption, although they may be active, Grossberg asserts that fandom opens up the possibility of empowerment:

“ Empowerment refers to the reciprocal nature of affective investment: that is, because something matters (as it does when one invests energy in it), other investments are made possible. Empowerment refers to the generation of energy and passion, to the construction of possibility” (Grossberg 1992:64)

Unlike consumers, therefore, ‘fans’ get some return on their investment of energy in to certain practices, via a range of empowering relations. Fans can be made to feel they are still alive, feel certain control over their lives or generate further energy from their investments (Grossberg 1992:64-65).

Fans investments in to specific cultural practices and texts enable them to exercise some control over their affective lives:

“ Such empowerment is increasingly important in a world in which pessimism has become common sense, in which people increasingly feel incapable of making a difference. . . .Fandom is, at least potentially, the site for optimism, invigoration and passion which are necessary conditions for any struggle to change one’s life” (Grossberg 1992:65)

The notion of the relationship of the ‘fan’ to cultural texts, as an affective one, and one which opens up the possibility of empowerment, is interesting and something which it is worth exploring further, with a specific group of fans, in this study. Grossberg’s work is important in that it does not regard fans as active to the detriment of wider audience members but, rather, perceives most forms of engagement with cultural texts as active, but still differentiates fans from wider audiences in terms of the nature of the relationship.

In addition to the above recognition of the empowering potential of fandom, there have been other writers whom, also, through their work, have progressed the view of fandom as active. Henry Jenkins (1992), drawing upon Michael de Certeau’s characterisation of active reading (Jenkins 1992:24), when he talks about fans as ‘textual poachers’ who produce their own meanings from texts (Jenkins 1992:23). Jenkins’ work, which

concentrated upon media fans, including fans of star trek and Beauty and the Beast, questions the ability of media producers to regulate the meaning of texts (Jenkins 1992:23).

Poaching, therefore, features the continuous struggle over the control of the meaning of popular texts, between readers and writers. In this model fans borrow mass culture forms for the construction of their social and cultural identity (Jenkins 1992:23). As the popular accounts often do not satisfy, fans struggle with them to express alternative possibilities within the original text and redeem them for their own interests (Jenkins 1992:23). This perception, therefore, moves away from fans as merely consumers, towards fans as producers (Jenkins 1992:23-24).

For Jenkins, meaning production is not an individual process but is a social one. Fan reception is directed by contributions from other fans and is partially motivated by a desire for further interaction with a wider cultural and social community (Jenkins 1992: 75-76). The notion of community is something that I will return to shortly.

Jenkins' work emphasises creativity amongst fans, particularly science fiction fans, with fan artists, musicians, writers and video makers expressing the special interests of the fan community by appropriating the raw materials from the commercial culture and using them to form the basis of their own form of 'folk' culture (Jenkins 1992:279).

The perception of fandom as productive and creative illustrates an important movement away from the assumption of it as a passive and non-critical category. Jenkins' work also indicates some of the ways in which specific fans engage popular culture, which

may also help to distinguish fan practices from wider audience uses of popular cultural texts. This is something I touched upon earlier.

Also, for Jenkins, fandom a certainly involves a close critical element. Television fans, according to Jenkins, view texts with close scrutiny, which involves an emotional closeness and critical distance, and share and debate meanings (Jenkins 1992:271). Jenkins sees organised fandom as an institution of theory and criticism, which puts academic critics to shame (Jenkins 1992:86).

Jenkins, also, argues that fans' use of texts cannot be viewed in isolation from their wider social and cultural commitments. For Jenkins there lies empowerment in what fans do with texts in the process of working them in to their lives and personal experiences (Jenkins 1992:284). Jenkins uses the term 'emotional realism', in his discussion of Star Trek fans, to explain how fans apply the programmes content to real-life circumstances. Aspects of the programme form the basis for enabling them to judge their own social circumstances critically (Jenkins 1992:177).

“ ‘Emotional Realism’ means that the fans’ understanding of their own experiences may be influenced by fictional representations, but the same concept preserves their ability to remain critical of a programs ideology” (Jenkins 1992:116)

Also, according to Jenkins, fans choose specific media texts, in the first place, from all of those available, because they seem to have potential to convey their own pre-existing social commitments:

“ there is always some degree of compatibility between the ideological construction of the text and the ideological commitments of fans” (Jenkins 1992:35)

Whilst there has clearly been a movement towards more active possibilities within fandom, it is important to remember that, whilst fans may actively produce their own meanings, not all such meanings should be assumed as oppositional as they do so in the wider socio-historical, institutional and textual contexts which influence their readings and interpretations. Tulloch and Jenkins (1995) commented upon this:

“ though readers play an active role in interpreting the texts they consume, they nevertheless do so within a socio historical context that shapes their discursive competences, an institutional context which both frames their desires and helps form their readings, and a textual context which may help facilitate or resist the readers interpretive work” (Tulloch and Jenkins 1995:102)

I will go on to comment upon the significance of Jenkins’ work shortly but, at this point, I will spend some time looking at is the role of fandom in the shaping of identity. Within classical social science perspectives, there is a basic argument that there has to be a social foundation to personal identities. Identities have been emphasised, generally, as provided, negotiated and reinforced in firm social conditions, with particular emphasis upon the social contexts provided by family, social classes and neighbourhoods (Harris 1996:177). The argument follows, therefore, that some kind of ‘core’ identity is established in such firm social encounters (Harris 1996:177). Whilst there is no place in this study to outline the differences between the classical social science approaches, it is necessary to make clear the broad theme that social, face to face encounters are seen to be vital for developments in personal identity to occur

(Harris 1996:177). There has been much recent debate, however, in terms of how useful such notions of a unified or core identity are in the current climate.

The issue of identity has been explicit in postmodern discussions, which perceive consumerism as becoming central to identity, with old social constraints declining and identity, therefore, becoming freed from their influence. Harris (1996) broadly outlined this argument:

“ As the old social groups decline and identity is liberated from their influence, it is argued, personal identity becomes tied more and more closely to consumer behaviour. We fix our identities in the goods we purchase, or we use goods we have purchased as signs of our identity in the process of differentiation and solidarity” (Harris 1996:207)

The increasing independence of identities from traditional social constraints such as families or traditional work patterns means people can move freely in and out of different temporary identities, leading to increased differentiation whereby, eventually, they are unable to separate out ‘core’ and ‘peripheral’ identities and live their lives as nomads (Harris 1996:216). Stuart Hall (1996), in discussing this concept, asserts that identity does not articulate a stable ‘core’ of the self but is increasingly fragmented and fractured (Hall 1996:4).

References to ‘difference’ are central to Hall’s discussions of identity, with our identities perceived to be constructed through difference, in other words, we are defined by what we are not (Hall 1996:4).

Tracing this shift in thought surrounding identity, we can see implications for fandom. If we have multiple identities for different situations, which are self constructed through

our practices and playing with images, fan practices become significant in the shaping of identity. This is something I will return to later, when the discussion moves specifically towards popular music fandom but it is necessary, at this stage, to mention that debates surrounding identity are in no way clear cut and, whilst identity may be increasingly a construct, changing depending upon the situation, socialisation may still be an important factor in the formation of identity. Francesca Skirvin, in ‘Lepor Cult disciples of a Stillborn Christ: Richard Edwards as meaningful in his fans’ constructions of their identities’, an online essay on Manic Street Preachers’ (UK Rock band) fans and identity, recognised this and pursued both of the above when embarking upon her research, but perceived socialisation to be the most important factor in identity formation.

David Harris (1996), in ‘A Society of Signs’, also concluded that it would be foolish to completely disregard social constraints upon identity:

“ I can get lost in a video game. . . . but my world is not going to collapse if I fail: losing my job or my family or discovering I have an incurable illness Is quite another matter” (Harris 1996:217)

In my research, therefore, I intend to explore notions of constructed identities, specifically in relation to fandom, whilst retaining awareness that socialisation can still be significant in identity formation.

Still remaining, for a moment, with the concept of identity, particularly identity and difference, I would like to look at work which suggests that certain fan cultures produce a sense of identity through their supposed difference from the ‘mainstream’ (Jancovich 2002:306). Jancovich (2002) uses the work of Sarah Thornton, on club cultures, in his

paper on the cult movie scene. Thornton (1995) in her work on 'club cultures', which included a study of British dance clubs in the in the 1980s and 1990s, argued that the 'clubbers' gained hipness which is a form of 'sub cultural capital' (Thornton 1995:11). This was obtained from the acquiring of media products such as specific records and, also, by their acquiring of insider knowledge (Thornton 1995:11). As Thornton puts it "sub cultural capital is embodied in the form of being in the know" (Thornton 1995:11) and is used as a way of gaining status. For Thornton, the young clubbers measure their alternative cultural value from the level of opposition to the mainstream culture and define 'sub cultural capital' against the " supposed obscene accessibility of mass culture"(Thornton 1995:121). Crucial to this, therefore, is a sense of exclusivity whereby 'selling out' is deemed to be 'selling to outsiders'(Thornton 1995:124).

Thornton's term 'sub cultural capital', therefore, is used to describe the way in which young clubbers differentiated their preferences from other social groups (Negus 1996:21).

Both Thornton, in her work on club cultures, and Jancovich, in his work on the cult movie scene, suggest that differentiated audiences are not spontaneous subcultures but are created by the media (Thornton 1995:162) (Negus 1996:20-21) in the first place:

“ Not only are cult audiences produced through the differential distribution of economic and cultural capital in which these institutions operate and which they act to regulate, but these institutions also provide the very mechanisms, spaces and systems of communication through which a sense of community is produced and maintained” (Jancovich 2002:308)

This contrasts somewhat with the concept of spontaneous subculture, championed by Hebdige, which was discussed earlier (Negus 1996:21). In spite of the above, the sense

of difference from the mainstream is seen as to be necessary in order to provide a “sense of sub cultural authenticity” (Jancovich 2002:315). A sense of distinction and sub cultural superiority is, therefore, generated which means fan cultures produce an identity from their sense of being set apart from the perceived inauthentic ‘mainstream’.

The identification from distinction outlined above can be looked at in terms of popular music fandom, whereby it would be easier to award cultural value to counter cultural musicians, as they acquire such value from their apparent opposition to mainstream culture. Such a distinction could also, arguably, be made by fans of ‘alternative music’ and this is one of the reasons why I have chosen to carry out my research with fans of the three bands that I will go on to discuss shortly. Pierro Scaruffi, in ‘A History of Rock Music’, talks about an alternative as one, which puts creativity before sales and suggests that there is a form of primacy bestowed upon ‘alternative’ music, which both musicians and fans recognise.

In addition to the various arguments surrounding identity and difference, I would also like to spend some time looking at another concept, of sociological importance, which is relevant to within the parameters of this study. This is the notion of community.

There is a growing body of literature which awards attention to the role of fandom in the establishment of communities.

Mark Jancovich, in his work on cult movie fans, which was referred to earlier, argued that cult movie audiences are brought together in a sense of community, but suggested that it is an ‘imagined community’ which is produced and maintained through the media

(Jancovich 2002:318). Whilst this perspective awards a role to the media in the creation of the sub cultural community, Jancovich still recognises that there is a clear sense of community amongst cult movie audiences.

Remaining with the concept of community, I will now return to the work of Henry Jenkins, and his thoughts upon community, which I touched upon earlier.

For Jenkins (1992) media fans actively produce meanings through a social process. As has already been discussed fan reception, as perceived by Jenkins, is shaped by other fans' input. Fandom, therefore, operates as an alternative sub cultural community and involves a "particular set of critical and interpretive practices" (Jenkins 1992:277). Fans learn the preferred reading practices of the community and collaborate in their readings of the programs. Fans, according to Jenkins, respond to community expectations such as "what interpretations are 'legitimate' and what narratives are 'appropriate' for fannish interest" (Jenkins 1992:88).

For Jenkins, not only is the alternative fan community defined through its consumption practices, it offers a possibility of affiliation, friendship and community, which members are seeking (Jenkins 1992:282). Jenkins states that 'fan communities' are a reaction to, often, unfulfilled work lives and a world where traditional community life is evaporating and the majority of social relations are temporary and superficial and our emotional needs are often dominated by material values (Jenkins 1992:282). Fandom, therefore, offers a "weekend only world" (Jenkins 1992:282) which is more open to creativity and accepting of differences (Jenkins 1992:282) and provides a space where

a “commitment to more democratic values may be renewed and fostered” (Jenkins 1992:282).

Whilst Jenkins recognises such possibilities within fandom, he also asserts that no-one can live permanently within the fan community, which is recognised as a ‘utopia’ against the backdrop of mundane life and it is a form of “weekend only world” (Jenkins 1992:282).

The media fan communities, for Jenkins, offer something more than mundane life and superficial relationships (Jenkins 1992:282) in that they are a site for celebration of the pleasures and articulation of their own particular concerns, which can include sexuality, forced conformity, racism and militarism (Jenkins 1992:283), which often arise in fan discussions. Jenkins claims that fandom, therefore, offers empowerment:

“ Fandom contains both negative and positive forms of empowerment. Its institutions allow the expression both of what fans are struggling against and what they are struggling for; its cultural products articulate the fans’ frustration with their everyday lives as well as their fascination with representations that pose alternatives” (Jenkins 1992:283)

Jenkins’ work is important in that it rejects simplistic theories that media audiences are passive recipients, shaped by the media texts, and recognises more active possibilities where spectators can appropriate media texts in to their own lived experiences (Jenkins 1992:287). Jenkins, as has been shown throughout this chapter, puts forward a number of arguments to support the richness of fan cultures, and has documented various ways in which fandom operates meaningfully, with reference to specific groups of media fans. This study will explore whether any of Jenkins’ findings, which are supported by ethnographic research, have any relevance in relation to popular music fans.

It is important to remain, for a moment, with notions of community. If this study is going to explore how popular music fans engage with the notion of community, it is necessary to reflect upon changes in the way that ‘community’ is defined.

Established perceptions of community have tended to focus upon ‘real-life’, social based, interactions. Within Sociology and Community Studies there has traditionally been an association between the term ‘local’ and the idea of a particular space and its closely bound social relationships based upon “strong kinship ties and length of residence” (Featherstone 1995:103). It was usually assumed that members of such localities formed communities (Featherstone 1995:103)

There have been discussions, however, of the changing nature of communities. As we have already discussed previously, Henry Jenkins (1992) saw traditional community life as evaporating and social relations becoming increasingly superficial, with fan communities rising against this backdrop.

Discussions surrounding postmodernism, globalisation and de-traditionalisation have moved us towards new ways of looking at community (Bell 2001:92). Social, economic, political and cultural shifts may have altered the nature of communities. Globalisation, briefly, involves a number of shifts which have moved us towards an increased sense of connectedness between people and places globally, with technical innovations, including developments in transport and communication, shrinking the world (Bell 2001:95). It is argued that we experience this shrinking of the world and reflexivity is noticeably increasing, whereby we re-work our sense of who we are in the

face of the global processes we come in to contact with (Bell 2001:96). Such reflexivity allows us to make choices about our identities, as it is possible to tap in to “global flows of ideas and information” (Bell 2001:96) and, to an extent, choose who we want to be (Bell 2001:96). Whilst we have discussed changes in the discourses surrounding identity specifically in relation to fandom, elsewhere, it is the effect of these wider changes, upon the way we view community, that I wish to focus upon here. Through being able to re-work our sense of who we are in the face of the global, it has been argued that we are able to question and transform the taken for granted, which leads to the opportunity to imagine new forms of community (Bell 2001:96).

The Internet has been central to this process, which has altered the way we think about community:

“ Detraditionalization frees us from old obligations, and lets us give community a postmodern makeover-and again the Internet offers possibilities to substantially re-imagine the very notion of community. Cities have become too big, too fractured, too scary-and the Internet offers a safe space to build new communities in” (Bell 2001:97)

This moves us away from talk of community characterised, largely, by reference to the ‘local’, as globalisation opens the whole world up as a potential source of community and the internet it vital to it (Bell 2001:96).

Such changes in the way we look at community have implications for the notion of ‘fan communities’. Following on from the above argument, the Internet could provide a space within which fan communities can be built and maintained. Nancy K Baym (2000) commented on her own use of the Internet, in connection with her experiences of television fandom, to visit an Internet newsgroup surrounding her favourite soap operas.

She argued that reading and posting fan messages on the site gave her a distinct sense of being part of a community (Baym 2000:1).

Baym (2000) argues that people tend to begin reading discussion groups on line because they have an interest in the subjects being discussed (Baym 2001:119) but, from her own experience of reading rec.arts.tv.soaps (r.a.t.s), she found that, whilst people are initially drawn to the information, discussion and various perspectives on offer, the community aspect soon takes on an important appeal in its own right (Baym 2000:119).

It must be recognised that there are certain negative stereotypes that have been quickly attached to certain forms of Internet use. There already exists an image of “socially inept” net-addicts (Shields 1996:8), even though the Internet is a fairly recent phenomenon. This stereotype has its roots in oversimplifications about how people engage the medium, rather than empirical analysis (Baym 2000:204).

Baym (2000) stated, again from her own experience of the r.a.t.s newsgroup, that the online fan community is characterised by people supporting one another and holds qualities that many geographical communities lack (Baym 2000:207) but it can also be marked by conflicts something that Jenkins (1992) also asserted about fan communities.

Changes in the way that communities are perceived, and the growth of fan communities online, have raised questions about how fans actually engage with the concept of community, in their interactions. This is something that I intend to explore further within this research. Again, looking at the practices of online sets of popular music fans,

presents an opportunity to critique some of the broad stereotypes concerning fandom and, also, Internet use, which have been discussed in this chapter.

Within this section it has become clear that there is no unified position from which to view fandom and fan activity and, whilst many of the commentators drawn upon here, have argued that we must not view fans simply as passive dupes, it has also been demonstrated that, whilst audiences should be seen as active, we should not ignore the wider social and institutional contexts within which fan activity operates.

In addition to the above, this chapter, so far, has looked at notions of productivity, creativity, identity and, of course, community, and their significance within debates, largely, surrounding media fandom. It has also looked what has been said about why audiences form attachments to specific media texts.

I would like to now explore some of the above concepts, which are topics of sociological concern, with reference to one specific form of consumption, popular music fandom.

### **Popular Music Fandom**

I have chosen to concentrate upon popular music fandom specifically as, whilst studies of audiences are now in the ascendancy, the focus has been, largely, on television audiences (Turner 1990:122). Indeed, as Jenkins (1992) pointed out from his own work on specific groups of media fans, some of what he has to say may be applicable to other

groups of fans, but his findings are modest in that they concentrated upon the group of media fans he looked at (Jenkins 1992:2).

Whilst Jenkins work has circulated a number of interesting arguments upon fan activities, the extent to which such findings, from what was clearly ethnographic research, are relevant to other fan groups, and the applicability of such arguments to popular music fandom, are unknown. There is, therefore, somewhat a gap in the literature surrounding the work on fans, although significant progress is being made in recognition of fandom as active.

It must be noted, that popular music consumption involves a range of activities, behaviours and discriminating practices (Negus 1996:32) which, without research, will go largely un-noticed. Also, without further study, it will be difficult to ascertain the extent to which the various perspectives on fandom, many of which have focused upon television fandom generally, or science fiction fandom specifically, have relevance for popular music fandom.

Also, as a fan of popular music myself, I am hoping that I will be able to enhance my understanding of how music works in my own life. Like others preceding me (see Cavicchi 1998:V11 and Jenkins 1992: 5) I am writing about fandom, both, from an academic position and from the position of a fan of much of the music which has been created by 'Manchester bands', three of which will be the focus of this research. I am not, therefore, approaching this study from a position of 'objective' distance and, indeed, my thoughts about my own fandom have marked my research. Self-recognition that my own consumption of popular music is not passive, and my feeling that popular

music plays an important role in my life, were significant factors in my decision to undertake research in to popular music fandom. I will reflect upon my own position in relation to the research, in the following methodology chapter.

Whilst much of the work on fandom has been centred around television fans, there have, nevertheless, been some writers who have looked specifically at the role of popular music in the lives of its fans. Francesca Skirvin, in an online essay, 'Leper Cult Disciples of a Stillborn Christ, on Richard Edwards (Richey James), guitarist and lyricist for the rock band Manic Street Preachers, who disappeared in 1995, looked at the role of Edwards in the construction of fan identities. Skirvin found that the fans she studies went beyond imitation of dress style and collection of memorabilia, to feeling a personal bond with their icon. The icon, therefore, becomes an influential source in the formation of fans' identities, often overriding the traditional socialisers such as peers, school and family. Skirvin found that the vast majority of fans she questioned said that their fandom of the Manic Street Preachers was the most important element of their identity and none of them considered themselves to have a core identity. Skirvin also noted comments made by one fan whom stated that they related to their problems through his songs and described how his lyrics helped them in their grief. She also found that a large number of fans identified that their whole attitude to life was different as a result of being a fan of Manic Street Preachers.

Skirvin stated that Richey Edwards fans' use of him in the construction of their identities, and the general phenomenon of turning to mass media figures for socialisation, is due to dissatisfaction with traditional forms of socialisation, rather than as a result of fragmentation, which we discussed earlier.

Whilst Skirvins work focused specifically upon the fans of Manic Street Preachers and Richey Edwards, I would like to explore some of her findings in relation to fans of three other bands.

Prior to moving on to a discussion of the three bands, I would like to spend a moment contemplating some of the issues mentioned above, with reference to another musical figure. Morrissey, former singer with the seminal 1980s band The Smiths, has been the subject of close fan identification. Indeed, Morrissey himself commented upon this in a recent interview with *New Musical Express*:

“ People always say to me, ‘you changed my life’. And most commonly they say to me, ‘when I was a teenager, you really helped me through the death of my hamster’ or things like that. . . and I just feel a flush of pride. Because I think it’s quite something to help people through their darkest Hours” (Morrissey interviewed in *NME* 17/4/04:23)

Indeed, Tania Sahlander, in her ‘scrutiny of fan made web-pages on popular artist Morrissey’, found that every Morrissey fan page mentions the significance of his lyrics, with many of them specifically mentioning the importance of the lyrics in relation to the way that fans are able to identify with them. One fan in particular was quoted as stating that they started to learn more about themselves, through the music of Morrissey, who managed to articulate their deeply buried feelings. This suggests that some fans appropriate popular music to the specifics of their lives. This study also found that Morrissey had a noticeable influence upon fans producing their own texts, and a couple of web pages called for fans to come up with literary material. The creativity of fans is something we have discussed already with reference to Henry Jenkins (1992) work on

media audiences. It appears, however, from this, that it is a notion that may have relevance within the sphere of popular music fandom also.

It is clear, therefore, that some of the wider issues within the debates surrounding fandom, such as creativity and identity may also have significance with reference to popular music fandom.

I also want to look at the notion of community specifically in relation to music fandom. Daniel Cavicchi's (1998) study of Bruce Springsteen fans found that the fans, from widely different backgrounds, expressed a strong affinity to one another and a "sense of belonging together" which is the sort of connectedness that you would usually expect in a small community (Cavicchi 1998:158-159). Cavicchi stated that he felt this himself, as a Springsteen fan (Cavicchi 1998:158). The notion of community, which has been discussed elsewhere, also seems to have some applicability with some groups of popular music fans.

### **The Soundtrack to a city**

I would now like to turn my attention to the three bands which I have chosen to focus upon for my fan interviews: New Order, the Stone Roses and the Happy Mondays, all of which were part of the rich musical heritage of Manchester.

So why specifically focus upon fans of the above bands? In attempting to respond to this self-imposed question, I would first like to say something about Manchester, England. As Dave Haslam (2000), former DJ at the legendary Hacienda nightclub,

which I will go on to talk about shortly, commented, popular music is an intrinsic part of the fabric of Manchester, so much so that those who write about Manchester, find themselves writing about pop music whilst those who write about pop music, also find themselves writing about Manchester (Haslam 2000:XXIV). Indeed, as Haslam continued, Manchester is recognised worldwide for two of the most conspicuous aspects of popular culture, football and pop music, both of which provide the backdrop to life and work in Manchester and obsess and entertain its people (Haslam 2000:XXV).

What better way, therefore, to serve my interest in the role of popular culture, or more specifically popular music as an aspect of popular culture, in the lives of its fans, than to turn to a city in which popular culture and pop music are ingrained in its fabric and characterise it globally.

Indeed, the musical ‘who’s who’ of Manchester, and its surrounding areas, from the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, reads a list of names from the past twenty-something years, including Buzzcocks, Joy Divison, New Order, the Smiths, the Stone Roses, the Happy Mondays, ‘Madchester’ and Oasis, which have lead many of its inhabitants to proclaim Manchester to be the “the hippest city in the world”(Middles 2002:8-9). Whilst the above lists some of its most visible bands, it certainly does not do justice to the various other bands and musicians that have stemmed from the region and helped place Manchester at the centre of English popular music creativity in the 1970’s 1980’s and 1990s (Haslam 2000: XXV111).

So why has one particular part of England managed to produce, from its own streets, such an array of, as I have already discussed and will further consider shortly, culturally

significant musical figures and bands? Whilst this is a question that I feel is largely beyond the scope of this particular study, I feel it is necessary to touch upon it. Dave Haslam (2000) suggests that it may be something to do with the city itself:

“ The explosion of creativity in pop culture in Manchester is partly because of this impulse to escape and also partly the result of so few other choices, generally, for the young in this part of England (Haslam 2000:XXV11)

The above point could be exemplified by the attendance, at a Sex Pistols gig at the Lesser Free Trade Hall, Manchester, on 20 July 1976, of Ian Curtis, Peter Hook and Bernard Sumner, who would go on to form the nucleus of Joy Division. Deborah Curtis, the widow of the late Ian Curtis, remembered:

“ Seeing the Sex Pistols was confirmation that there was something out there for him other than a career in the Civil Service. Their musical ability was dubious that night, which re-affirmed Ian’s belief that anyone could become a rock star. . . .It seemed as if we had all been issued with instructions and now we were set to embark on a mission” (Curtis 1995:36)

Haslam also asserts that there is a ‘do it yourself’, and entrepreneurial, spirit in Manchester, coupled with a defiant attitude, which can help explain the explosion of pop culture creativity in, and around, Manchester:

“ Perhaps it’s to do with the City’s entrepreneurial spirit; it’s not a question of making things, it’s also one of marketing them, selling them. There’s an attitude too: defiant, determined, cocky, canny” (Haslam 2000:XXV11)

Also, Haslam argues that the City’s pop music is saturated in the boredom, chaos and violence of modern Manchester, with such conditions possibly enhancing the creativity of some of its inhabitants and giving them something to convey (Haslam 2000:XXX). Indeed, Bernard Sumner of New Order, and former member of Joy Division, thought

that some of the darkness of Joy Division's music could be traced back to social upheaval and weakening community in Salford during his own youth (Middles 2002:39).

This draws me back to Jenkins' (1992) discussion of the creative and productive nature of the media fans, he was concentrating upon and, also, the idea that fans would apply the programmes content to real life circumstances and use aspects of it in order to enable them to judge their own social circumstances critically. As we have discussed earlier, Jenkins (1992) also suggested fans were drawn to specific media texts, in the first instance, as they had the potential to articulate their own pre-existing social commitments. Whilst Jenkins' (1992) work focused upon particular sets of media fans, I feel that focusing upon fans of bands that have their origins within the 'do it yourself' spirit of Manchester, and whom may convey a certain attitude, or 'have something to say' in their music, would present me with a clear opportunity to explore some of these concepts within the sphere of popular music fandom.

For instance, would the 'do it yourself' attitude of the bands, or their perceived ability to make things happen for themselves, inspire creativity amongst their fans? Are fans of some of these artists drawn to that particular band because there is some kind of closeness between their own social commitments and the ideology that has surrounded many Manchester musicians that there are other options and you can make your own luck? We have already discussed the suggestion that the music of some of the city's most creative musicians has been coloured by the chaotic and insecure social conditions of the city. Do fans engage with the lyrics, and sounds, coming from some of these bands, in any meaningful way? Do fans use what these bands have said, or are saying

musically, and the defiant and determined attitude of the city and some of its musicians, to enable them to critically look at their own social situations? By interviewing fans of three bands from within the musical backdrop of Manchester I will, hopefully, be able to explore some of these issues.

I will again touch upon the significance of talking to fans of Manchester bands, when exploring these issues, when I talk about the reasons why I have chosen to interview fans of these three bands in particular, out of all of the music that has emerged from Manchester, and its surrounding areas. First, however, I would like to introduce the bands, starting with my own personal favourite, in the hope that the cultural significance of each band will become clear as I progress.

### **New Order**

With the suicide of lead singer Ian Curtis on 18 May 1980, Joy Division came to a sudden end. I feel, however, it would be an injustice to go on to talk about the birth and growth of New Order without mentioning Joy Division and the awesome legacy left behind after the bands premature end. The story of New Order can only ever be told as part of a longer story. A continuation of the story started by Joy Division.

On April 14 1978, Joy Division played at an audition night, which was organised by two independent London record labels (Stiff and Chiswick) and held at Manchester's 'Rafters' club. The night was particularly significant for bringing the band to the eye of Rob Gretton, who would shortly become their manager and a key character behind the ethic of the band. The night was also significant for the verbal abuse that Joy Division's front man Ian Curtis gave to Tony Wilson, a well known Journalist in the region who

had worked on *Granada Reports* and *So it Goes*, for not having put them on his show. Some of The bands that Wilson had previously selected to appear on screen had gone on to become famous (Curtis 2001:61-62). Wilson informed Curtis that they would be the next band he would put on his show and went on to give Joy Division the opportunity to play on the ‘what’s on’ spot during *Granada Reports*, which saw them play ‘Shadowplay’. Wilson later gave them another opportunity to return and film ‘Transmission’ and ‘She’s Lost Control’ (Curtis 2001:61-62).

Joy Division’s local fan base grew at a steady rate during 1978 and they were soon to be taken on by the newly established Factory Records, which had begun life as a weekly night at the ‘Russell Club’ in Hulme. Tony Wilson and local promoter Alan Wise had an agreement with the club to stage a pilot gig there on a Friday night, which would become a regular Friday night occurrence (Middles 2002:94). This Friday transformation became the ‘Factory’ night and Joy Division would frequent it. By the end of 1978, the Factory had become the key venue in Manchester (Haslam 2000:124) and, late in 1978, a Factory Sample EP was released. The recording was financed by Wilson (Curtis 2001:68) and included two tracks by Joy Division, ‘Digital’ and ‘Glass’, which were both produced by Martin Hannett.

1979 would turn out to be Joy Division’s year and by June, with the release of their LP ‘Unknown Pleasures’, the band had clearly established themselves. Their music defined Manchester with its articulation of ‘anxiety and anger’ (Haslam 2000:125) and the sound on the LP was like a “soundtrack to the aftermath of some urban disaster; which was presumably why it connected so strong with life in Manchester, England” (Haslam 2000:126).

The band had cemented themselves and America was beckoning when, on 18 May 1980, their enigmatic lead singer Ian Curtis took his own life in his Manchester home.

Joy Division, during their brief existence, left a huge legacy and are perceived to be one of the most astonishing rock bands ever who created something enduring and bewitching, yet only released two studio albums 'Unknown Pleasures' and 'Closer' (Wilkinson 2001:75).

The remaining three members of Joy Division Peter Hook, Stephen Morris and Bernard Sumner decided to continue recording, with Sumner taking over lead vocal duties and Morris' friend Gillian Gilbert coming in to the band on keyboards. A new name was sought, and finally found in New Order and the next chapter began.

Rob Gretton, who would remain manager of the band until his death on 15 May 1999, both suggested New Order as a name and encouraged Gilbert to join the band (Sawyer 2004:5). The first album 'Movement' marked a transitional period for New Order. The band remained with the Independent Factory records and, in the early 1980s, started experimenting with technology. New Order began to embrace the digital era and began to assert their own agenda, playing with computer-generated sounds, and experimenting with synthesisers, sequencers and drum machines, with outstanding results (Haslam 2000:129). One clear manifestation of this was the single 'Blue Monday, released in 1983, which became Britain's biggest selling 12" single ever (with the alleged loss of 12 pence on each of the copies sold due to its cool but expensive packaging).

The legend of 'Blue Monday' is still untainted today amongst clubbers (Wilkinson 2001:81) and assured New Order respect in the dance world, something that was secured by their investment in Britain's first 'superclub' the Hacienda. The legendary nightclub, an ex yacht showroom in Manchester, which was a joint venture between the band and Factory records, opened in Manchester on 21 May 1982 and led to imitations popping up throughout the country (Sawyer 2004:5). The Hacienda was the arena in which the 'house' music madness of 'Madchester' would find its home in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Sawyer 2004:5).

Drugs and hedonism characterised the 'Madchester' scene generally, and the Hacienda was pivotal to the whole 'acid house' era. Bernard Sumner of New Order remembered, when talking to 'Q' magazine in 2001:

“ The acid house era was incredible. The Hac must have been the wildest place on the planet. I remember being on the balcony watching 2000 people and every one of them was off their tits on E” (Odell 2001:60).

In 1988, New Order spent the summer in Ibiza recording their 'Technique' album, which further refined their electro-rock sound, that had been shaped by the previous albums 'Power Corruption and Lies', 'Low Life' and 'Brotherhood' This would give the band their first UK number one (Wilkinson 2001:82).

Technique was the album where New Order embraced the acid house sounds that were reverberating around the Hacienda and the ecstasy charged atmosphere of Ibiza (Wilkinson 2001:82) as the band lived up to the hedonism surrounding the scene (Wilkinson 2001:82).

New Order, partners in Factory Records which, in the late 1980s, was the coolest independent Manchester record label and home to bands such as Happy Mondays and James, have been regarded by some locals as having saved Manchester twice, as Ben Mortimer suggests in *Mixmag* magazine, first in the early 1980s when they moved the music scene:

“ out of the dregs of punk in to a modern, electronic future, then again in the late 80s, inspiring the ‘Madchester’ explosion of dance loving indie pop bands like the Stone Roses, James and Happy Mondays” (Mortimer 2001:65)

The 1990s saw wholesale changes afoot for New Order, with the collapse of Factory, in 1992 amidst mounting debts, and the bands signing with London Records in 1993 (Neworderstory 1993). The demise of Factory, in a haze of chaos and mismanagement which, arguably, coloured much of its existence, ultimately resulted in a loss of money for New Order (Neworderstory1993), with much of the bands money having been ploughed in to the Hacienda which, whilst it peaked during 1988 and 1989, also went through difficult periods (Neworderstory 1993) and, eventually, would close its doors for good, leaving Manchester’s nightlife without its flagship club (Haslam 2000:265). Tony Wilson disputes the bands claims of lost money (Middles 2002:278) and claimed that the band never fully appreciated the ‘hipness’ they got from their association with the Hacienda (Neworderstory 1993). Whatever the actual facts, which may never be known, Joy Division, New Order, Factory Records and the Hacienda have had an indisputable impact upon the popular culture of Manchester and have helped secure its ‘hip’ reputation .

## Happy Mondays

Happy Mondays were one of the bands that dominated the 'Madchester' era. Shaun Ryder, his brother Paul, Gary Whelan, Mark Day and Paul Davis, took part in a "battle of the bands" contest at the Hacienda in 1984 but were beaten in to last place. They soon found a home with Factory Records, however, and were joined in 1985 by Mark 'Bez' Berry, a friend of Shaun Ryder's who was recruited to the line up as the bands 'freaky dancer' and maraca player, after having jumped on stage one night with the Hacienda who were playing at the Hacienda.

As Tony Wilson, founder of Factory Records asserted, in '24 Hour Party People (2002)', which is his own part fiction, part reality story, Happy Monday's were not simply Shaun Ryder's band, they were, in fact, Shaun Ryder's gang, with the social structure of a teenage gang (Wilson 2002:175).

The title of their debut LP was entitled 'Squirrel and G-Man Twenty Four Hour Party People Plastic Face Carnt Smile(White Out)', and it scored well on the independent survey, with its gloomy industrial song themes and stories of delinquency and drug dependency. It was "the rough edge set to music" (Haslam 1999:177). 'Bez' himself remarked that the fans clearly could hear their own lives reflected in the music:

“ The fans were lads like ourselves, the kind of people who heard their own lives echoed in the slightly left of centre and definitely inside out aspect of the music. They were young, unemployed, angry at the futility of their own existence and subsequently out for laughs, takin drugs and absorbin the music as an antidote to the depression they faced”(Bez 2000:176)

There was an attitude that the language of the songs needed to be doing something different in order to be 'real' (Haslam 2000:177). 'Ghetto Poet' is one term that has been used to describe Shaun Ryder's lyrics (Warburton 2003:V) and, indeed, Tony Wilson was one of the most enthusiastic admirers of Shaun Ryder as a lyricist.

The Happy Mondays became closely linked with the acid house craze that swept over the UK dance scene in the late 1980s, with their 1988 album 'Bummed', complete with its hallucinatory dance rhythms, beckoning the craze (Rees and Crompton 1994:252) and, along with the Stone Roses, they dominated the 'Madchester' era (Haslam 2000:179).

The spirit of the acid house era marked the city of Manchester to such a degree in the late 1980s, the term 'Madchester', a phrase used to describe this period, actually took on a life of its own. The spirit of the age was embraced by the 'smiley face' (Haslam 2000:133) and the extent of the 'Madchester' explosion was highlighted in November 1989 when the Happy Mondays made their BBC TV 'Top of the Pops' debut on the same show as fellow mancunian exponents of 'Madchester', the Stone Roses. This is frequently cited as the cultural moment that acid house was introduced to the UK.

The Happy Mondays quickly gained notoriety for their outlandish behaviour (Haslam 2000: 178) with front man Shaun Ryder earning a reputation as a complete law un to himself (Haslam 2000:XX1X) and Bez emerging as a cultural icon within the chemical era (Warburton 2003:V). Bez, himself, had the following to say about his own status as the chief exponent and icon of this party lifestyle:

“ I’m not condemn and I’m not condoning either, I’m simply relatin an era in which I was blissfully unaware of my catalytic qualities as a full on hedonist: Pleasure for pleasure’s sake was my only maxim. I never asked no-one to adhere to my lifestyle” (Bez 2000: IX-X).

Drugs were strongly associated with the scene in general, and the Mondays in particular (Haslam 2000:178). The Hacienda was clearly the focal point of clubbing life in Manchester and the Mondays had frequented it throughout the 1980s. It was at the Hacienda where the Happy Mondays, and Manchester’s clubbing fraternity, were largely introduced to E (Ecstasy) (Warburton 2003:9).

The Paul Oakenfold and Steve Osbourne produced third album ‘Pills ‘N’ Thrills and Bellyaches’ hit number four in the charts in 1990, and rocketed the band in to mainstream popular culture in Britain.

The Mondays continued to court controversy, however, and relationships between band members began to deteriorate along with the financial security of Factory Records. Factory’s eventual collapse also signposted the demise of the Mondays, and the end pretty much arrived amidst a cloud of complete chaos, with Shaun Ryder walking out of an arranged meeting with EMI, whom with the band were potentially going to sign, to make his way to ‘Kentucky Fried Chicken’ (Bez 2000:333-334). The rest is confined to history, but the Mondays will be remembered as one of the most colourful bands of our time.

## **The Stone Roses**

The other dominant group of the 'Madchester' era were the Stone Roses. The Stone Roses comprised front man Ian Brown, lead guitarist John Squire, bassist Gary 'Mani' Mountfield and drummer Alan 'Reni' Wren.

The bands' debut album 'The Stone Roses' is a classic and was met with critical acclaim, when released in May 1989 on Andrew Lauder's Silverstone Records. Like many other Manchester bands, the Stone Roses gave the distinct impression that they were beholden to no-one (Haslam 2000:179). Brown, like the Happy Mondays, did not give interviewers an easy time and found it difficult to play by the accepted norms of the music business (Haslam 2000:179).

The band, with a string of classic tracks including 'Made of Stone', 'She Bangs the Drums', 'Fools Gold', 'Waterfall', 'I wanna be adored' and 'I am the Resurrection', combined dance, funk and rock with both success and ease. Aside the Happy Mondays, the Stone Roses were the band who had the attitude, swagger and understanding of street culture to pull off the fusion between rock and acid house (Robb 2001:199). The Stone Roses defined the era in remarkable fashion, creating songs that could be danced to and making a significant contribution to UK pop culture with their across the board appeal:

“ For the first time since punk rock everyone felt included in the pop process. They got the council estate kids interested in being in bands again, but they Didn't exclude the students. This, by accident or design, was their singular Key contribution to UK pop culture” (Robb 2001:200)

1989 was a big year for the Stone Roses and Manchester, with the band clearly articulating the mood of the time. Manchester had become synonymous with drugs and good times (Robb 2001:199) and the Manchester scene was suddenly alive with hedonism, sexy swagger and fresh colour (Haslam 2000:181). ‘Madchester’ was at its height in 1989 and bucket hats, bell-bottom flares and floppy fringes became the fashions of the day, as fans mimicked their idols. The Stone Roses and the Happy Mondays, of course, became the focal point of the worldwide media frenzy that surrounded ‘Madchester’ (Haslam 2000:181). ‘Madchester’ was the media version of reality and young people began looking to buy in to it, suddenly setting their sites on the pop charts and “refining their DJ techniques” (Haslam 2000:186).

The hipness of the Stone Roses, along with the Happy Mondays, within British pop culture in the late 1980s was paramount. The summer of 1989 was declared by many as the ‘second summer of love’ (the first being the summer of 1967) and Manchester transformed itself on a tremendous scale:

“ They were crazed times but they were great times, staggering from bar to club to club, chasing the scene, wallowing in the excess and fun. Suddenly a city out did London and was the scene of pop action and all the bands basked in this new warm glow of hipness. Some better than others, of course; The Stone Roses and the Happy Mondays were better placed than the rest of the pack” (Robb 2001:228-229)

The Stone Roses went on to play at Spike Island, Widnes, Cheshire, in 1990, in front of a 30.000 strong fanatical crowd in what was, arguably, the peak of their popularity and it was here that the above cultural shifts, at the cross section between the two decades, were at their most conspicuous. There were hundreds of ‘Reni’ hats, and it saw rock youngsters adopting the acid house look and lifestyle (Robb 2001:254). It was the start of what would be a marked rise in the popularity of drugs, which would accelerate

through the 1990s, and the 'baggy' fashion was the order of the day, a look that would also dominate the 1990s (Robb 2001:254). It was the moment that 'Baggy' went national (Robb 2001:258).

The Stone Roses released their 'Second Coming' LP in 1994 before, finally splitting in 1996, some six months after John Squire had left to form the 'Seahorses' and at least a year after Reni had called it quits (Howe 2001:62).

The Stone Roses may have bowed out in 1996 but they left a huge legacy. They altered the face of British pop and were the key band in the invention of the Brit pop that would follow. The Stone Roses, undoubtedly, touched lives and Ian Brown was a folk hero:

“ Ian Brown . . . was a folk hero . . . and their songs sound tracked a generation growing up with ecstasy and acid house, and the new hope and optimism of the late 1980s” (Robb 2001:357)

John Squire, in a recent interview with the 'Sunday Mirror', reflected upon their role in sound tracking the teenage years of many young people growing up in the late 1980s:

“ That does mean a lot to me-because I know how important my teenage sound track is to me” (John Squire, Interview with Ben Todd, Sunday Mirror, March 21, 2004: 21)

The band may have split but their influence upon British popular culture was clear.

Perhaps the final word should go to John Robb (2001) who summed it all up, in 'The Stone Roses and the Ressurrection of British Pop' when he stated: “The swagger, the clothes and the anthems-in the summer of 1989 the Roses had the lot” (Robb 2001:3).

## **Further Justification-For the Record**

I hope, by having spent some time talking about each of the bands, I have been able to provide a flavour of the enormous popular cultural significance each band had. What better way to explore the role of popular culture in the lives of its fans, than to interview fans of three bands that, each in their own way, had a major influence on British popular culture? The influence is still acknowledged today, decades later, and, indeed, 'Manchester District Music Archive' has recently been established in recognition and celebration of the history and future of music in Greater Manchester. It will establish a museum and exhibition space, devoted to the music of Greater Manchester through the years (Please visit [www.mdmarchive.co.uk](http://www.mdmarchive.co.uk) for further information). Of course the 'Madchester' era and the music of the 1980s and 1990s is only one aspect, but this recognition supports, a point I made earlier, that popular music is ingrained in to the fabric of Manchester and helps to characterise it globally. The story of Anthony H Wilson, Factory Records and the Hacienda, was also recently captured in the 2002 film '24 Hour Party People'.

Whilst New Order are, at the time of writing, working on new material, the Stone Roses and the Happy Mondays are no more, though the legend lives on. This poses an important question that is a premise to the feasibility of this project: Would it be possible to access fans of bands that no longer exist, in order to interview? If the answer to this question was 'no' than this project could not proceed, however, I am certain that the answer to this question is 'yes' and will now explain why.

Advances in technology have meant that interest in bands can continue longer after they cease to be. The Internet has resulted in the explosion of fan sites dedicated to, even some of the most obscure, bands and artists. Many of these sites are devoted to groups that no longer exist and are frequented by large numbers of fans. The three bands I have decided to concentrate upon for my fan interviews each had healthy online fan bases, even though neither the Happy Mondays or the Stone Roses are together as bands anymore.

In addition to this, the noticeable increase in the number of music television channels, through Sky Digital and Cable, has meant that the music and videos of artists are constantly introduced to new audiences, irrespective of whether the artist continues to make music. Also, developments in technology have meant that popular music can now be re-packaged, re-mixed, re-mastered, re-presented or re-issued in different formats. This can introduce artists to new audiences and sustain the interest of existing fans. All of the above has meant that artists can retain fan bases on an ongoing basis. This could include original fans whom were there 'first time around' or newer fans who have been introduced to artists, and their music, later.

I feel that, through interviewing fans of New Order, the Stone Roses and the Happy Mondays, there will be an opportunity to explore some of the general issues that have been awarded attention in the wider literature upon fandom, that were discussed earlier. Some of the specific issues that these three bands, in particular, provide the opportunity to explore are outlined below:

All three bands have demonstrated the 'do it yourself' attitude that was mentioned earlier when I discussed Manchester musicians in general. This will present an opportunity to explore whether fans engage in any particular way with this perceived attitude. It will also present an opportunity to explore whether creativity has been stimulated in any of the fans, as a result of their fandom. In addition to the above, any extent to which the general cockiness and attitude surrounding the Happy Mondays and Stone Roses, as being 'beholding' to no-one, strikes a chord with their fans' lives can be investigated. It will also be possible to explore whether fans engage in any meaningful way to the 'ghetto poet' lyrics of Shaun Ryder or, indeed, the lyrics of either of the other two bands. This study can also investigate whether fans are drawn to New Order, the Stone Roses or the Happy Mondays, in the first instance, due to the strong ideology surrounding these bands, their apparent hedonistic qualities and attitude that you 'make your own luck'. In other words, it will be possible to explore whether the ideology surrounding these bands matches with their own social commitments. Also, returning to the works of Thornton and Jancovich, discussed earlier, this work can also look at whether fans, to any extent, draw any sense of superiority from the apparent 'hipness' bestowed to many Manchester musicians, in general, and also the specifically to these three bands.

Concentrating upon fans of the Stone Roses, the Happy Mondays and New Order, three bands with a strong and clear ideology surrounding them, would render the exploration of these issues, along with some of the other general issues that came out of the literature search, applicable. This, in turn, will hopefully present the opportunity to go on and explore their relevance in the area of popular music fandom.

## **Chapter 2-Methodology**

### **Description of the Method Used**

#### **Research Population**

The research population for this study was fans of three bands that have been central to the music scene in Manchester, England, particularly in the 1980s and early 1990s. Clearly, due to limited resources and time, it would not be possible to attempt to interview fans of all bands, past and present, nor would it be feasible or practical to interview fans of all of the bands and artists, from Manchester and its surrounding areas, that have had a significant impact upon popular culture within Manchester and the UK. So, whilst I am acknowledging at the offset that there have been, and still are, a multitude of bands and artists, across various genres, with dedicated fan bases, many of which have had immense popular cultural impact, the recognition that the research should be focused and that it would not be workable to try and incorporate interviews with fans of an array of bands, and artists, has led the selection of a research population. The selection of a research population is common research practice (Arber 2001:59).

I have discussed already, in the previous chapter, why I have chosen to interview fans of three specific bands, New Order, the Happy Mondays and the Stone Roses, in order to explore the ways in which popular music functions in the lives of its fans. The circumstances surrounding these bands, which I have outlined earlier, clearly render some of the issues emerging from the wider literature, surrounding fandom, open for

exploration in the sphere of popular music fandom. I would, however, like to take this opportunity to explain why I decided against restricting my study of fans of the bands to one geographical area, namely Manchester, but broadened the population of the study to take in fans worldwide.

Whilst the focus upon fans solely from the Manchester area may have been justifiable, due to the impact that its popular music has had upon the lives of its people (Haslam 2000: XXV), It must be noted that Manchester is known world wide for its popular music (Haslam 2000: XXV), as discussed earlier, and, as mentioned in the discussion of the three bands, the 'Madchester' era was certainly not confined to the city of Manchester but was the focus of a global media frenzy at the end of the 1980s (Haslam 2000:181) and clearly became a national phenomena through Britain (Robb 2001:258). I feel, therefore, to concentrate solely upon fans from one geographical area would be to neglect fans throughout the United Kingdom and, indeed, worldwide.

I also observed, when accessing popular music focused Internet 'fan sites', that the various 'fan' message boards were not crammed with fans from one geographical area but, rather, tended to include contributions from throughout the world. As discussed earlier, globalisation in general, with the Internet as a significant technological aspect, has made it possible for people from all over the world to come together. In recognition of the widening scope of fandom, therefore, I decided to open up the fan interviews to anyone, provided they considered themselves a fan of one of the above three bands.

The final point I would like to make about the research population, prior to moving on, is its restriction to online fans, in other words, fans for whom the Internet is used as an aspect of their fandom.

I decided to interview 'online' fans, partly for the above reasons. The Internet has been central to developments that have begun to alter the way we engage with the notion of community. As identified, in the critical review of the wider literature that was carried out in the previous chapter, communities are no longer perceived to be confined to the local and technological developments, such as the Internet, have opened up the whole world as a potential source of community. This realisation, along with the strong suggestion in some of the previous writings on fandom (not least Jenkins' *Textual Poachers* 1992) that fans form communities around media texts, led me to believe that accessing online fans would enable me to explore the significance of the notions of both 'fan communities' and 'online communities' in relation to popular music fandom. Community is a key area of Sociological concern, which has been subject to recent debate and this will provide an opportunity to contribute to this debate. Also, the Internet is still a fairly recent development so we are still in the early stages of understanding what it means, specifically for fan cultures. Whilst work on Internet effects and Internet use have grown, there has still been very little research upon why people use the Internet and their experiences of it (Stromer-Galley 2003: 2-3).

Through interviewing fans, for whom the Internet has a part to play in their fandom, I could also begin to tap in to fans' experiences of the Internet as a new avenue for their fandom, which have been, largely, unexplored.

## **Sampling Procedure**

Having defined the research population, it would still not have been feasible to attempt to interview every online fan of New Order, the Happy Mondays and the Stone Roses. It was, therefore, necessary to draw a sample from the established research population.

There are two broad sampling strategies within social research, one being probability sampling and the other being non-probability (De-Vous 1996:60). Whilst probability sampling is more likely to be representative (De-Vous 1996:61), as each person in the population would have a known chance of being selected (Bryman 2001:85), a non-probability sampling strategy can still provide useful information, although its representative ness to the research population as a whole will be less likely (De-Vous 1991:78). Having chosen to adopt a qualitative research methodology, to address the research problem, I gave consideration to the wider epistemological issues within qualitative research which place less emphasis upon representative ness and more upon a wider understanding of social processes and social interactions and contribution to the generating of theory (Arber 2001:61) and, therefore, selected a purposive sample of online fans of the three bands.

A 'self selecting' sampling technique (Churton 2000:174) was used, therefore, in order to access fans of the band, with the pre-requisite being that the participants had to consider themselves to be a fan of New Order, the Happy Mondays or the Stone Roses. Self-selecting sampling is a non-probability sampling technique and involves making a general request for volunteers to participate in a research project and those who

volunteer are termed a 'self selecting' sample (Chorlton 2000:174). Whilst such non-probability sampling method can make few claims for representative ness to the research population on the whole, non-probability methods are associated with qualitative research.

Having posted a message on four different Internet message boards (please refer to appendix A for message posted), two relating directly to Stone Roses, one relating to New Order and another site frequented by Happy Mondays fans, I was contacted by twenty-two fans who stated that they would be willing to participate. I had, initially, hoped to interview approximately fifteen fans, five of each band. The proposed sample size was also influenced by the principles underpinning qualitative research, which adheres to taking small samples to provide a "vivid, detailed picture of a small sector of social life" (Bryman 1988:104). Although twenty-two people volunteered for the study, the final number that actually took part in the interviews was fourteen. Whilst this is nearer the initial number of participants I was looking for, the factor that eight out of the twenty-two fans who initially volunteered to participate changed their minds, along with those who chose not to respond to the initial request for volunteers, further highlights the limitations of the sample used in this study, in terms of representative ness. The main problem with non-response is that those who agree to participate may differ in various ways from those who do not agree to take part (Bryman 2001:86). Also, I eventually carried out interviews with seven New Order fans, four Stone Roses fans and Three Happy Mondays fans, as those were the numbers, in the final instance, who were willing to participate. Whilst it is important to recognise the limitations associated with the sample used, I have adopted a qualitative methodology for my study

without the intention to make broad generalisations from the findings. Indeed, many qualitative researchers depict quantitative data as superficial (Bryman 1988:103).

### **Preparation for the field**

As mentioned previously, I accessed a number of popular music fan sites, that were linked to the bands that were of interest in this piece of research. I visited various fan sites but decided against posting a message on each and every related site, that had a message board. This decision was borne out of the recognition that I would need to re-visit the sites in order to check my messages were still prominent (a posted message can become removed from immediate view by other topics being initiated or other messages being posted. The more subsequent messages posted, on other topics, the further from immediate view my message would move). In addition to this, I was also concerned with potential access problems, in that ‘webmasters’ or ‘forum moderators’ who are responsible for the sites could potentially have blocked my messages, as ‘gatekeepers’ or prevented me from accessing respondents via their site. Gaining access to participants can be a vital first step in the research process and is a significant problem faced by some qualitative researchers (Yates 2004:160).

The above concerns, coupled with the realisation that I was only looking for a modest number of participants led me to select a small number of fan sites. I, therefore, posted a message on three website message boards, one site specific to New Order, one to Stone Roses and one frequented by Happy Mondays fans. I selected the sites specifically because they appeared to have the most fan activity for each of the bands. The message boards were all extremely popular so I felt this would increase the likelihood of

volunteers coming forward (see appendix A for initial message posted). The message posted on each of the sites was similar but, obviously, the band details were changed. In addition to three message boards upon which I posted the initial messages, I was also contacted by a Webmaster from a second Stone Roses related site, who invited me to post a message upon the site. I, therefore, posted the request for participants upon a second Stone Roses related site. Whilst I have included a copy of each of the messages posted, I have removed the names of the websites visited for ethical reasons, to protect the sites and their members from the possibility of an influx of additional visitors. This is something that Walthers (1999) warned of, in 'Researching Internet Behaviour, Methods Issues and Concerns' (see Mann and Stewart 2000:58).

Once the initial messages were posted, I waited for volunteers to contact me. I was fortunate in that webmasters, who could have potentially acted as 'gatekeepers' and removed my messages (Mann and Stewart 2000:81), allowed them to remain on the boards. In addition to this, two of the webmasters actually facilitated my access to research participants, with one posting their own message encouraging those who wished to take part, to participate and another offering to put a copy of my completed research project on the website. I also ensured that the initial message was open about the purpose and process of the research and invited fans to contact myself, should they have required further information. This was intended to aid the development of a trust and rapport with participants and dispel feelings of caution (Mann and Stewart 2000:136).

A recognition of the importance of establishing an effective research relationship in qualitative research, from the start, informed my decision to initially post messages

asking for volunteers to participate. G Foster (1994), when carrying out research, sent a message, which included research questions, to many online lists he was a member of and met with one moderator who completely blocked his message. In addition to this, one recipient of the message made the point that it would have been more suitable to send a brief message about the study and request people to email and ask for a copy of the survey privately (Foster 1994:96).

Once I had a list of volunteers, I forwarded them a copy of the interview schedule by email. The interview schedule was piloted on three people (including family members and a friend) prior to being issued to participants, in order to check it (Stroh 2000:214) and refine it where necessary.

### **Mode of Data Collection**

As discussed in the previous chapter, the numbers of empirical studies in to audiences are growing, but the focus has been largely upon television audiences. There has still been a relatively small amount of research, although the body of work is increasing, in to the way that popular music fans engage with concepts such as community, creativity and identity. The requirement to uncover unknown commonalities and open up an area that has been seldom explored by previous qualitative enquiry, informed the decision to adopt a qualitative research methodology, with its more discovery based nature, for this study (Hammersley 1990:8).

From within a qualitative framework, having considered the strengths and weaknesses of various qualitative methods, semi-structured interviewing was selected as the mode of data collection for this particular piece of research.

This method was selected as it was a method that would allow for the use of a broad list of questions relating to the issues that have emerged from what has previously been written upon fandom, but provide a great deal of leeway for the interviewee responses (Bryman 2001:314) and remain flexible and allow for prompts and probes (Bryman 2001:315).

Having, therefore, already identified a number of topics of interest, which this study intended to explore specifically in relation to popular music fandom, semi-structured interviewing was the method employed. This would render it possible to address specific areas, whilst allowing for full responses, probes for clarification, elaboration upon answers given and the recording of qualitative information (May 2001:123).

Whilst specific topics had emerged from a previous review of the literature, they have seldom been explored in relation to popular music fandom specifically. Semi-structured interviewing would allow the specific subjects to be addressed, but also provide for a discovery-based approach, which seeks to learn about the social world without structuring the direction of the enquiry rigidly. This is a broad concern within qualitative research (Jones 1985:46) and is important for a study aiming to elicit the perspective of a group of popular music fans on a range of issues.

The term 'qualitative interview' has been used to cover a number of approaches (Jones 1985:45) and all methods of data collection have some degree of structure (Wilson

1996:96). A discovery-based approach does not mean entering the field without any pre-conceptions (Robson and Foster 1989:1).

A semi-structured method of interviewing was adopted, in light of the above. Although there can be varying degrees of structure in qualitative interviewing in general, and semi-structured interviewing in particular (Bryman 2001:314), the method employed in this study was aimed at the 'less structured' end of the semi-structured interview spectrum, in recognition of the need to uncover unknown commonalities.

The semi-structured interviews were carried out online via email. Having received emails from a number of volunteers, I forwarded each a copy of the interview schedule via email attachment. The decision taken to carry out online interviews was informed by recognition that, presumably, the people interviewed would be already comfortable communicating via the internet (Stromer-Galley 2003:12) so it would make sense to conduct the interviews through the channel that the participants are at ease with (Stromer-Galley 2003:12). If interviewees are comfortable communicating in a particular fashion, it would be beneficial to use that mode to carry out interviews, so that they, hopefully, feel comfortable enough to answer fully, openly and honestly.

Also asynchronous environments, such as email, may be a particularly comfortable environment for interview participants, as most Internet users are familiar with email. Email interviews are also private (Stromer-Galley 2003:14).

Whilst the decision to carry out semi-structured interviews online was taken following a consideration of the above, there are specific strengths and weaknesses associated with such an approach, as with any method, which I will reflect upon shortly.

### **The Interview Schedule**

A semi-structured interview schedule was used for this piece of research, as a completely unstructured interview does not exist (Jones 1985:47) and without an interview schedule of some kind, data analysis would be problematic.

The interview schedule that was administered to participants, included sixteen questions and, also, a further three which requested background information such as age, gender and occupation (please see appendix B for interview schedule).

The early questions were included to elicit basic descriptive information (Yates 2004:164). This decision was taken in recognition that rapport should be established, in qualitative interviewing, prior to moving on to more difficult issues (Yates 2004:164). The more difficult or challenging questions were included later in the schedule. The interview schedule was set out with broad questions, which would leave scope to follow up with any necessary probes or supplementary questions which would not be pre-determined but would be initiated, instead, by what participants' answers to the initial questions (Yates 2004:165).

The questions, on the initial schedule were ordered logically to cover the broad themes, which informed the research. This was intended to ensure a smooth transition from

topic to topic (Yates 2004:165). The above techniques facilitated an exploration of how fans of popular music engaged with some of the broader issues discussed in the previous chapter but also, because the questions asked followed a logical order, and any necessary probes and follow up questions would flow from the responses received, the interviews would appear, hopefully, as natural as semi-structured interviews can. Naturalism, or the attempts to collect data in naturally occurring environments and situations, as opposed to artificial ones, is an underlying principle of qualitative research (Bryman 2001:32).

The broad areas of interest were identified from a critical review of the literature surrounding media audiences. The semi-structured interview schedule, which allowed for these issues to be explored, included a number of general questions, which would also enable any unforeseen issues to be addressed or followed up. This was important in order to “glean the ways in which research participants view their social worlds”(Bryman 2001:317).

The schedule did include a small number of questions, which were worded to obtain general information on age, gender and occupation and, also, information upon how long they had been a fan and how much time they devoted to participating in specific music related activities. The recording of such ‘face sheet’ information is usual in qualitative research and is useful in contextualising participants’ answers (Bryman 2001:317).

The main research questions were worded in a way that was open enough to enable interviewees to express issues of concern to themselves, whilst narrow enough to

prevent them from moving too far away from the topics of interest (May 2001:123). Any necessary follow-ups and probes, which would be based upon responses received, would be used to elicit the depth that characterises qualitative interviewing by enabling discovered concerns of participants to be pursued, the context of answers to be elaborated upon and participants' subjective meanings to be explored (Yates 2004:165).

The approach, therefore, ensured that the broad commitments of qualitative research were adhered to by giving participants the opportunity to freely discuss their own experiences of fandom.

The first section of the interview schedule (see appendix B for schedule) included general questions intended to obtain necessary 'facesheet' information. The other questions, as outlined earlier, followed a logical structure and aimed, broadly, at to explore the following in relation to specific popular music fandom:

- Fan investments in popular music: An exploration of the time and energy invested in music related activities and participants' perceptions of the importance of popular music in their lives.
- Fan Communities: An exploration of fan relationships with other fans, both online and offline and to uncover the relevance of notions of 'community' in respect of participants' specific music fandom.
- Day to day lives: To uncover the roles or functions that participants' fandom plays in their everyday lives.
- Fan attachments: The processes through which fans become attached to a particular band or artist initially and through which this is sustained.

- Identity-An exploration of the applicability of popular music fandom in the shaping of identity.
- Creativity: To uncover any creative fan practices that have been stimulated by popular music fandom.

In addition to the above, the flexibility of the schedule will also enable other issues, which may be of concern to participants, to be uncovered.

### **The mode of data analysis**

None of the interviews required transcription due to the fact that responses were forwarded to myself by e-mail, from the respondents. This means that they were pre-transcribed. The scripts were, therefore, complete and immediately available for analysis (Seidman 1991:87). This also meant that a complete record of the original interaction could be retained (Seidman 1991:87).

The scripts of the interviews were then analysed manually to draw out general themes. Each script was analysed and coded individual, with each of the resulting code groups than read and analysed collectively.

Once all of the material, collected from the interviews, that referred to one specific concept or theme, was placed in an individual category, the material within categories was compared to look for variances and nuances in meanings. Comparisons across categories were also made to discover connections between them (Rubin and Rubin 1995:226-227).

This approach to data analysis is linked to ‘grounded theory’, which allows for codes to emerge from the data as opposed to being pre-determined prior to the research being conducted. This may provide for theory, which is fully grounded in the data, to eventually be generated. ‘Grounded theory’ has become the most widely used framework for analysing qualitative data (Bryman 2001:390) and is an approach strongly associated with the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) (see Bryman 2001:390-395).

The findings were then written up and are included in the following chapter, which gives a full account, with the language and notions of the participants themselves (Jones 1985:56).

The data analysis was, also, carried out by the researcher whom was intimately tied up with the shaping of the research and understanding of what was being studied (Stroh 2000:226).

### **Ethical issues**

Each interview schedule distributed to participants included a statement confirming that the information they provided would be treated as confidential by the researcher, and that their anonymity would be protected. The ensuring of anonymity was an ethical decision that was taken in recognition of my responsibility towards the research participants. So, whilst each participant initially made contact via e-mail, often including their name and always their e-mail address, these details were all removed

from the responses. Alternative names were given to participants in order to mask their identities and, therefore, make the contributions anonymous when findings were reported (Yates 2004:159). In addition to this, the statement ensuring the confidential treatment of the information given (Bulmer 2001:51), which would only be shown to my university research project supervisor on request, meant that the data collected would only be used for the purpose of the analysis and the individual would not be identifiable. This would help create an ethically sound context, where participants could feel free to speak 'honestly' and 'truthfully' and express opinions without feeling uncomfortable (Yates 2004:159).

Ensuring confidentiality can become problematic with online research as electronic data can be subject to a number of security risks associated with the medium (Mann and Stewart 2000:57), however, once responses were received by email, they were immediately deleted from the email 'inbox' they had been sent to. This was intended to maximise confidentiality and minimise the possibility of any unwanted intrusion.

As discussed earlier, the websites used to elicit participants are also unidentifiable in the findings of this research. This was also a move to further protect the identity of the participants and, also, protect against any influx of visitors to the specific websites, following this study.

In addition to the above, the informed consent of participants was obtained prior to the interviews taking place (May 2001: 60). The initial message posted upon the websites, whilst carefully constructed so as not to direct volunteers to go on and respond in a certain way, contained details about what the study involved, both in respect of how the

interviews would be carried out and, also, the subject area. It also included an invitation for potential respondents to contact myself for further information, should they have required it. None of the participants took up this invitation and were happy to participate based upon the original email content. This is also an important ethical issue (Yates 2004:160) and, once volunteers made contact, via email, to express that they would be willing to participate, informed consent had been obtained.

Whilst, with online research in to popular music fandom, it would have been possible to visit message boards and collect data as a form of 'covert' observation of the interactions, this was never an option as it would have involved the concealing of my identity as a researcher and would be clear violation of the principle of informed consent (Bulmer 2001:55).

The final ethical issue which arose during the research process, related to non-responses. As previously discussed, twenty two individuals initially made contact, expressing a willingness to participate, but eight of them did not respond once the interview schedule was sent out. This raised the ethical issue of participant withdrawal. A participants right to withdraw from a study, at any time, is paramount (Mann and Stewart 2000:56). This leads, however, to the ethical issue of how many follow-up emails would constitute an unwelcome intrusion or harassment (Mann and Stewart 2000:56) when it is not clear whether the interviewee is still wishing to participate. In light of the above, the decision was taken to send only one reminder, by e-mail, to each person who initially volunteered to participate, but had not returned the completed interview schedule, after three weeks. The time scale was selected in order to ensure participants did not feel they had to give hurried responses to the questions, as detailed

responses were hoped for. It was also recognised, however, that it should not be left too long before reminders were sent out as respondents may have lost their enthusiasm, or willingness to take part, over time.

## **Reflection upon research process**

### **Methodology employed**

As outlined earlier, the broad aims of this research, fit with the fundamental principles of qualitative research, which give primacy to studying the social world from the viewpoint of the actors and adopting a discovery based approach (Hammersley 1990:7-8).

The scarceness, for many years, of empirical research in to popular music fandom, shaped the aims of this study and informed the decision to pay attention to the ways in which popular music works in the lives of its fans, from the perspective of fans themselves. A qualitative methodology would be appropriate to meet the aims of this study and start to address the gaps in research in this area.

Specific previous qualitative studies in to popular audiences also informed the decision to adopt a qualitative methodology here. Previous studies, which have explored the complex nature of audience reception, have largely adopted qualitative research methodologies to understand specific audiences and their practices. Henry Jenkins (1992), whose work we discussed earlier, adopted an ethnographic approach in his

representation of the richness of media fan culture, in 'Textual Poachers', and, whilst recognising that ethnography has not got the power to construct theories, he recognised:

“ It can disprove them, or at least challenge and refine them. . . .I have not drawn upon fandom as a means of developing a new theory of media consumption. I distrust the move which takes concrete, culturally situated studies of popular fan practices, of specific moments in the on going relationships between audience(s) and texts and translates them in to data for the construction of some general theory of media audience”  
(Jenkins 1992:286).

Recognition of the above, and that attempts to create a broad theory of media audience would neglect the specific and complex practices of particular groups of fans, helped frame the decision to undertake a qualitative piece of research.

Melanie Lowe (2003) also adopted a qualitative methodology in her study of adolescent girls and their complex relationship to pop singer Britney Spears. This work was a reaction to mainstream media “effects” research (Lowe 2003:123) and engaged the audience as agents active in the construction of their own culture as opposed to passive recipients of media material (Lowe 2003:123). A qualitative methodology facilitated such an investigation of the complex practices at the level of consumption.

In addition to the above, Daniel Cavicchi (1998) undertook ethnographic fieldwork with Bruce Springsteen fans, in his study of the ways in which people form special, sustained attachments to musical performers or genres (Cavicchi 1998:V11), with the focus placed upon fans, themselves, and their activities and experiences (Cavicchi 1998:V11).

The above methodological directions, in studies, like this one, which aimed to uncover complex practices and experiences at the level of consumption, rather than attempt to

create any kind of general theory of music audiences, added further weight to the decision to adopt a qualitative methodology here.

Though the adoption of a qualitative research methodology has already been justified as necessary for this piece of research, the qualitative and quantitative research methodologies are tied up with opposing epistemologies, or theories of knowledge (Bryman 2001:20). The research method adopted, within the particular methodology, was underpinned by a corresponding philosophy and, therefore, would have had a number of methodological strengths and weaknesses associated with it, which may have had a bearing upon this research and its findings.

The quantitative methodology is based upon a positivistic approach to studying society (Clarke 2001:32). According to the positivist tradition, there is an objective world which exists “independently of human perception”(Clarke 2001:32) that can be quantified. There is an underlying assumption that methods and procedures similar to those used in the natural sciences are appropriate for collecting ‘facts’ within the social sciences, with the social investigator maintaining an ‘objective’ stance (Clarke 2001:32). The ultimate aim, with this approach, is to statistically analyse collected ‘facts’ to “produce explanations about how the social world operates” (Clarke 2001:32).

Qualitative research, however, is underpinned by the principle that human beings are not like objects of the physical science and cannot be quantified (Ackroyd and Hughes 1992:29). This falls within an ‘interpretivist’ tradition (Bryman 2001:20) which rests upon complete different philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality and the researchers role (Clarke 2001:33).

The positivistic assumption of a single objective reality, which can be studied through scientific enquiry, is rejected within this tradition (Clarke 2001:33) as individuals and groups construct their own versions of reality and, therefore, multiple, subjective, realities exist (Clarke 2001:33). Social theory must, therefore, reflect the experiences, meanings and understandings of interactions, rather than identify empirical variables which externally influence behaviour (Layder 1998:17).

Though qualitative research should be recognised as an umbrella term, adhering to a number of different perspectives (Flick 1998:16), all of the positions give primacy to the meanings people attach to things in their lives. Each position, therefore, displays a commitment to participants' interpretations of social reality (Bryman 1998:72).

The adoption of a qualitative methodology has meant that the account, in the following section, is more likely to accurately represent the social phenomena to which it refers in the specific research carried out. This is internal validity and is a characteristic of qualitative research (Taylor and Bogdan 1998:9). Through sacrificing depth in order to focus on what is 'observable' for meaning, quantitative research methodologies lose relevant information and risk a misunderstanding of important features of the cases they are studying (Hammersley 1990:10).

One of the major problems associated with a qualitative research methodology, such as the chosen one for this study, is one of generalisation, which refers to the external validity of the findings (see Bryman 2001:272). This is a feature strongly associated

with quantitative research and will usually be lower with qualitative research, due to the sampling techniques utilised (Hammersley 1990:9).

As discussed earlier, the sampling method that was employed here was non-random and purposive, minimising the possibility of generalising from the findings. Probability, or random, sampling methods, on the other hand, are associated with quantitative research methodologies, and tend to be more representative of the overall research population from which they are drawn (Bryman 2001:92).

As previously mentioned, therefore, the discovery based nature of this study, and the small number of fans, all volunteers, interviewed in order to elicit in-depth information, make the findings of such a qualitative study tentative and impossible to generalise from (Rubin and Rubin 1995:71-72).

Although the above limitations to the findings must be recognised, the point should also be made that there would be little benefit to be gained from generalising findings which were internally open to alternative explanations (Smith 1981:346).

In addition to this, representativeness cannot be assured simply because a study is of a quantitative nature and a probability sample has been drawn. Issues such as low response levels, particularly with postal questionnaires, can affect the representativeness of the findings (McNeil 1990:40). In any instance, findings can only be generalised to the population from which the sample was taken (Bryman 2001:101).

As both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies have associated strengths and weaknesses (Bryman 1998:172) and the perfect methodology does not exist, selection will always involve a trade off between the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches, and this must always be reflected upon in order to avoid unrealistic or over ambitious expectations of findings. For this piece of research, it was of the utmost importance to understand the complex features of the cases under study, so the adoption of a larger scale quantitative piece of research was pre-cluded. The findings, which follow, will hopefully provide a detailed account of the practices and experiences of a small number of fans, in their own words. The extent to which they are representative to other groups, is unknown.

The qualitative, less structured, nature of this piece of research, means that there is less likelihood that the actual research procedure will have had an effect upon those being researched. This ‘procedural reactivity’ tends to be maximised with highly structured research procedures and can threaten the internal validity of the findings (Wilson 1996:119). Procedural reactivity is something that I will return to later, when reflecting upon the actual research method selected from within a qualitative framework.

Whilst the adoption of a qualitative research methodology reduces the likelihood of ‘procedural reactivity’, it must be pointed out that another researcher will be less likely to obtain the same results as those reported in this study, by employing the same method, than they would have, had a quantitative methodology been adopted (Taylor and Bogdan 1998:9). This is the concept of reliability and does not fit comfortably with qualitative research (Rubin and Rubin 1995:85). No attempts were made within this study, however, to overcome this, as attempting to apply reliability to qualitative

research detracts more than it clarifies (Rubin and Rubin 1995:85). It is not possible to achieve perfect reliability when the aim is to produce “meaningful studies of the real world” (Taylor and Bogdan 1998:9).

The flexible and less structured nature of qualitative research in general, and this piece of research in its adoption of such a methodology, means that the information collated, to an extent, will reflect the personal characteristics of the researcher (Hammersley 1990:9). This makes it difficult for another researcher to replicate the procedure in order to check the findings. This has resulted in some suggestions that qualitative research is not scientific but it could, also, be argued that replication is not always possible in natural sciences anyway (Hammersley 1990:10).

It is still necessary to acknowledge the above, however, so that the research does not purport to do something, which is beyond its realms.

It is necessary at this point is to reflect once more upon my own relationship to the research subject. As a ‘fan’ of much of the music of the bands concentrated upon, it is important to acknowledge my own fan status that, as Henry Jenkins (1992) also argued, in his own work, is likely to colour what I say about fandom. Indeed, thoughts that my own fandom is indeed active, complex and meaningful, partly contributed to the decision to undertake research in this area. Jenkins (1992) also raised the point that, whilst there could be a danger of over identification with the research subject, it is not greatly reduced by adopting a more ‘objective’ standpoint:

“ In the past, scholars with little direct knowledge or emotional investment within the fan community have transferred fandom in to a projection of their personal fears, anxieties, and fantasies about the dangers of mass culture” (Jenkins 1992:6)

Jenkins (1992) also makes the important point that, whilst there may be associated risks, the likelihood of gaining the trust of participants is increased through being able to demonstrate a personal commitment to a fan community (Jenkins 1992: 6). Also, writing as a fan increases the level of responsibility and accountability felt towards those being discussed (Jenkins 1992:6). This is certainly something I have found in my own project and is ultimately an ethical issue. Whilst, therefore, I recognise that my own position in relation to the research subject, is not one of ‘objective’ distance, I make no apologies for it and do not believe it has been to the detriment of the findings in the study.

### **Method selected**

The method of research selected for this study, from within a broad qualitative framework, was semi-structured interviewing or, more specifically, online semi-structured interviewing.

Whilst the reasons why online semi-structured interviews were carried out, have been discussed elsewhere, it is necessary here to critically reflect upon this particular method.

In general, with qualitative research, the characteristics of the researcher are more likely to have an effect upon those being researched (Wilson 1996:119) than they would with a quantitative research methodology. This is a problem of personal reactivity.

There are certain qualitative research methods, which would be likely to give lower levels of personal reactivity. Covert participant observation, whereby the researched would not have been aware that they were being observed, would give the lowest level of personal reactivity but was ruled out due to the serious ethical issues it raises (Bryman 1988:112).

Whilst the obtrusive effects of the characteristics of the researcher may be reduced with online interviews, there are problems associated with online interviews in that they could hinder the development of a rapport with participants, something which has traditionally been associated with a “mutual presentation of self” (Mann and Stewart 2000:126).

I would also like to return, at this point, to the risks of procedural reactivity. Whilst participants are less likely to be affected by the actual research procedure, in qualitative research, there are variations between qualitative methods, in respect of this. As semi-structured interviews have more structure than unstructured interviews (Bryman 2001:314), the research procedure could have more of an impact on those being researched, with semi-structured interviews, than other qualitative methods.

As mentioned earlier, when discussing the mode of data collection, the interview schedule was designed in such a way as to try and minimise this. Probes and follow-ups were, also, introduced to increase naturalism.

In addition to the explanation already provided, of why semi-structured interviewing was chosen, as opposed to other forms of individual qualitative interviewing, there were also specific benefits to carrying out individual interviews, as opposed to group interviews for this study.

This piece of research aimed to explore, with individuals, their in-depth experiences of fandom. Interviewing people individually increased the ability to explore interviewees' positions in breadth and depth (Hedges 1985:74). Groups also tend to provide less opportunity to follow through with individuals (Hedges 1985:74). It was also, organisationally, less difficult to arrange individual interviews, than it would have been to get a number of participants to one spot at the same time for a group interview (Hedges 1985:75). It was also possible to ensure confidentiality in individual interviews, and respondents were less prone to being distracted or influenced by the presence of other interviewees (Haralambos and Holborn 1991:736).

Online interviewing is a recent development, so there has been little opportunity for research in to its strengths and weaknesses (Fielding and Thomas 2001:131). It is apparent, however, that there are distinct strengths and weaknesses, associated with this method of conducting interviews, already emerging.

The interviews administered via email had the advantage that the interviewees could respond when convenient and I could return with any necessary probes, whenever I liked (Fielding and Thomas 2001:131). Also, with online interviews, as opposed to face-to-face interviews, cross-national research was made possible with relative ease (Fielding and Thomas 2001:131). This was an important factor with this piece of research, where the research population was global.

Internet message boards, on fan sites related to specific bands or artists, also presented a convenient way of identifying people with similar musical interests (Mann and Stewart 2000:19) in the first place.

There was also attraction of reduced costs associated with online interviewing, although it was not one of the overriding factors in the decision to employ this method. There were none of the usual expenses associated with venue hire, tape recording and transcription costs or time and travel (Mann and Stewart 2000:20-22).

There are, however, disadvantages associated with the online interviewing method which was utilised in this study.

Firstly, the research population was limited to those people who had access to the relevant technology. This means that, unlike conventional research where potential participants could be drawn from anywhere, there is an un-representativeness to current Internet access which remains a problem for data collection (Mann and Stewart 2000:31). Whilst this point cannot be ignored, I have already remarked upon the limitations of the findings, in terms of representativeness, elsewhere.

In addition to the above, there was a lack of opportunity to pick up on non-verbal cues, with online interviews, which can prove as informative as the actual words said (Stromer-Galley 2003:10). This threatens to disadvantage interviewees and researchers who express themselves in different ways (Mann and Stewart 2000:29-30). Some of these problems were reduced with participants' use of emoticons, such as smileys, to replace facial expressions or body language. It must still be recognised, however, that some non-verbal information may also have been lost. Further information may, potentially, have been lost due to the participants having to type their responses. Typing would, for most participants, be slower than speaking meaning that one may not have elicited as much detail from participants as would have been the case had the interviews been carried out in person (Stromer-Galley 2003:11).

It was also impossible, with online interviewing, to verify the declared characteristics of respondents. In other words, you could think you were 'talking' to a woman but really be 'talking' to a man, without having any way of knowing (Fielding and Thomas 1991:131).

If one manages to establish the trust and rapport with respondents, which I believe I was able to do due to my own fan status and openness about the research process, online interviewing is a useful technique, as respondents have time to send considered responses to questions (Mann and Stewart 2000:148). There is also an increased likelihood of high self disclosure (Stromer-Galley 2003:25) due to the potential liberation from being judged (Boshier 1990:50-53).

Whilst the benefits and limitations of internet based methods of social inquiry are not yet fully known, the specific requirements of this research, which included a population with world wide potential and an exploration of recent notions of 'virtual communities', warranted the use of online interviewing. The method chosen should always be evaluated in light of the objectives of the research (Wilson 1996:119).

A pragmatic approach to social research is necessary, whereby particular methods are not dismissed simply because of deeper epistemological issues (Ackroyd and Hughes 1981: 29-30). There should be a constant awareness, and close consideration, of the alternatives in any particular situation. This enables decisions to be made which maximise the quality of the data (Punch 1998:180).

## Chapter 3-Findings

Fourteen fans were interviewed for this study. Their status as fans was self declared, with each having responded to a website message post that requested ‘fans’ of New Order, Happy Mondays and Stone Roses to volunteer for the study.

Thirteen of the fourteen participants were male and varied in ages between eighteen and fifty-three years old and many had been fans during the 1980s and early 1990s, when the bands were at their most popular. This supports a point made earlier that a band or artist need not be still putting out new music in order to retain fans, or make new ones. Indeed, the participants in their late teens and early twenties would have been young children in the 1980s and early 1990s when the bands were at their most popular, so it is unlikely that they would have been fans during that period. This point was supported in some of the comments made. One young fan of the Stone Roses made the following comment about his introduction to the music of the band:

“ Since I was 15/16 when I seen Ian Brown on TOTP singing Dolphins were Monkeys thought he was proper cool and quality song, found out more about Him and bought the Stone Roses first album after that I’ve been hooked”  
(Stephen, Stone Roses fan, 18 year old Male student)

Stephen was clearly introduced to the music of the Stone Roses, in the last few years, through the music of Ian Brown. Becoming a fan of one of the Stone Roses, long after they had split, was shared with Trevor, who had the following to say about his own introduction to the band, four years ago:

“ My two sons were fans. They introduced me”  
(Trevor, Stone Roses fan, Male IT Support Manager, age 53)

The ongoing nature of fandom, and the opportunity for new fans to be introduced to the music of bands which are no longer together, is an issue that was discussed in detail elsewhere, when justification was being made for interviewing fans of three specific bands, two of which are no longer together. The sustained nature of fandom may be, in part, explained by technological developments that have meant that interest in a band or artist can be maintained or stimulated, long after they have ceased to make music. This may also go some way to explaining how new fans can be generated, after a band has split. There are, clearly, other means through which new fans are introduced, however, as Stephen and Trevor’s comments have indicated. The key point, however, from this finding, however, is that people can become, or remain, fans of a band long after it has ceased producing new material.

Whilst two of the fans, involved in the interviews, were teenagers, the majority were, as already discussed, in their mid to late twenties, or thirties. This raises question marks over the works of certain theorists of music audiences, which are concerned solely, or predominantly, with activities of young people, such as the works on ‘teenagers’ and ‘youth subcultures’ which were referred to in Chapter 1 as having, potentially, too narrow a focus. To focus upon young audiences exclusively is, therefore, to fail to account for the practices and experiences of fans covering a broad age range, for a particular band, artist or genre.

Seven of the participants were New Order fans, four were fans of the Stone Roses and three were fans of the Happy Mondays. The higher number of volunteers who were New Order fans may be linked to stimulated interest amongst the bands' fans with the group, at the time of writing, busy working on a new studio album.

In general, the majority of fans interviewed tended to dedicate ten hours or less a week specifically to each of the music related activities they were asked about. Eleven of the fans stated, on average, that they spent ten hours or less a week to listening to music as an activity in itself, with two of them declaring that they never listen to music as an exclusive activity. This number was identical to the average time spent watching music on dvd, video, music television (etc) in a week. When asked about live music, all of the fans that responded stated that they dedicated five or less hours a week to going to see live music. Twelve out of the fourteen participants also asserted that they spend ten hours or less, in an average week, reading music related publications, with ten of them actually remarking that they dedicate five hours or less to this. The only activity where there were clearly high levels of engagement was the listening to music whilst other activities were being undertaken. Eight of the fans stated that they spent eleven hours or more, in an average week, listening to music whilst simultaneously carrying out other activities, with five stating that they spent twenty six or more hours, in an average week, engaging music in this way.

On initial appearance, there appears to be no indication from these findings, that this particular set of fans make participating in the world of popular music a central part of their lives, in terms of the numbers of hours dedicated to music related activities. It must be recognised, however, that whilst large numbers of hours are not dedicated to

individual fan practices, quite a lot of time in an average week will be spent, on music related activities in general, when you accumulate their participation in all of the activities. In addition to this, it is clear that the questions posed were limited, with hindsight, in that they do not explore other ways in which the fans may be investing time and energy in to fandom, such as the collection of memorabilia, rare recordings and other artefacts of fandom. There could also be a large amount of time dedicated to creative practices, related to their fandom, or Internet related fan activities that, whilst they were not added to the above list of questions, were covered in some detail elsewhere. So fans may also be investing heavily in fan activities, additional to those mentioned above.

It was clear from the findings of this research that fans, of all of the bands, in general, saw popular music as an extremely important aspect of their lives. Out of the fourteen fans interviewed, twelve stated that, on a scale of one to ten, with ten being the highest level of importance, music would be given a rating of nine or ten, in terms of importance to themselves. This was also supported in some of the comments made.

Martin made the following remark about the importance of the music to him:

“ Definitely 10 out of 10. Life would be boring without music, and certain tunes can really affect you and mean something to you. They can cheer you up if you're feeling a bit depressed and they can get you 'on one' when you are getting ready to go out” (Martin, Male Happy Mondays fan, self employed, age 27)

Laura, a Stone Roses fan, had similar comments to make about the importance of music in her life:

“ Music forms part of the fabric of my life-it brings back times of life vividly, that mat have been forgotten if I hadn’t listened to the music I loved” (Laura female Stone Roses fan, age and occupation undeclared)

Stephen, like the others, also stressed the paramount importance he awards to music when commenting upon the rating out of ten he would give it:

“ Pretty high a 9 or 10. Dunno how to explain but music is a big part of my life as in a day to day basis you get up put a tune on and it gets you in the mood for the day ahead” (Stephen, Stone Roses fan)

The fans interviewed, therefore, clearly awarded music with central importance in their lives which, in itself, justifies this piece of research as, to ignore the central role that popular music can play in the lives of its fans, on the basis of some form of elitist stereotype, which sees popular forms of unworthy of serious attention, will always result in an immediate failure to understand the experiences, pleasures, activities and attachments of what are, potentially, large sectors within societies.

It also became clear, amongst all of the fans, that their experiences of popular music were anything but passive, with fans describing various ways that they use popular music in their day-to-day lives. From the above comments it is clear that some fans actively use music to help them to reach a desired mood on a day-to-day basis, and for the pure pleasure they get from music that they genuinely enjoy. Other fans also talked

about these particular uses of music. Leo made the following comment about his ‘use’ of New Order’s music:

“ it was/is present when I’m happy or sad, or feeling other feelings because I put their music on to feel better” (Leo, Male New Order fan, public relations worker/musician, age 27).

Jay, made similar ‘use’ of the music in his everyday life:

“ Their music is the soundtrack to my life (as corny as that sounds). For example, on getting ready for a night out, there are certain New Order CD’s I will put on while I’m getting ready, to put me in the mood for a good night. If I have had a bad day at work, I will come home and listen to technique or low-life to cheer myself up. When I’ve split up from past girlfriends I will play Temptation and Special, there’s always a different kind of song which holds special memories or can change my mood” (Jay, Male New Order fan, working in Material Controls, age 29)

Many of the fans specifically stated that the music formed the ‘soundtrack to their life’ and this again demonstrates its centrality in the day-to-day lives of its fans. Many other fans also remarked upon specific ways that they ‘use’ music. Todd reflected upon his ‘use’ of music, like many of the other fans interviewed, to achieve a particular ‘mood’ or ‘emotion’:

“ Music is a way to enhance my emotions. No matter what I’m feeling it can be soothed/enhanced by music” (Todd, Male New Order fan, student, age 19).

Jordan also reflected, in general, upon the affective quality of music:

“ the length of a single song may be enough to move a person to a different emotion, whereas other art forms require a much greater time to accomplish the same effect” (Jordan, Male New Order fan, Student, age 21)

These were just some of the comments that demonstrated the general pleasure the fans elicit from music and the active uses that fans make of the music to enhance mood or invoke a particular emotion, in their day-to-day lives. This immediately renders problematic assumptions of passivity, which have their origins in the works of Theodor Adorno, and 'The Frankfurt School', and their critique of mass culture. Their work, which was discussed earlier, has been challenged by numerous writers.

Adorno's work is, once again, rendered problematic here as, far from passively absorbing the music in a state whereby they are incapable of recognising that their preferences are being used to exploit them, the fans interviewed here were fully capable of reflecting upon the significant uses they make of the music in order to enhance the quality of their day to day lives. As Lawrence Grossberg (1992) stated in his work, which was discussed in the literature review, fandom opens up the possibility of empowerment as fans get return on their investment of energy in to certain practices. Fans can be made to feel that they are still alive and gain control over their affective lives, which is empowering. This is something that came through strongly in the interviews carried out here. The investments of energy in to the music, awards it with the utmost importance in the lives of the fans, whom can clearly exercise control over their affective lives.

### **Community**

There was a strong sense of community, which came out of the fan interviews. Many of the fans saw the social aspect of fandom as extremely important. When asked to explain

the aspects of being a Happy Mondays fan he finds most enjoyable, Tom had the following to say:

“ When you meet another Mondays fan, it’s a family thing. Next thing you know, you’re having a drink and sharing a smoke. Mondays fans know how to embrace life and live it-mad fer it!!!” (Tom, Male Happy Mondays fan, legal clerk/musician/DJ/record label owner)

Tom’s comments mirror something that Daniel Cavicchi (1998) stated about Bruce Springsteen fans. Cavicchi referred to it as the ‘invisible magnet’ that constituted an instant sense of ‘knowing’ between fans. Whilst the people interviewed here, are fans of bands from a different genre to the music fans, that Cavicchi was interested in, there still appears to be an instant affinity with other fans, which is clearly felt. This was brought up by a number of the fans. This demonstrates that Cavicchi’s finding is not confined to Bruce Springsteen fans.

The ‘community’ element of fandom was also felt by a number of other participants, with one of the most significant aspects of the live music experience being the opportunity to get together with other fans. Jay made the following comment, when discussing the aspects of being a New Order fan that he finds most enjoyable:

“ Meeting up with all my pals for live concerts, obviously, to me, no band comes close to New Order, so whenever the band announces dates, several of us start arranging where we are all going to meet up etc. . . .For example, when they played Finsbury in 2002, about 200 of us met in the. . .pub which is just around the corner from Finsbury Park” (Jay, New Order fan)

The social and community aspect, therefore, actually becomes, for a number of the fans, the major attraction of live music. Mark, a New Order fan, asserted:

“ For me, it’s a chance to see everyone again. It’s like with Kraftwerk recently. I mean, I like Kraftwerk, but the recent gigs were more about getting all the New Order crowd together again-an excuse for us all to meet up if you like” (Mark, Male New Order fan, 35, Managerial/Web Development Investment Banking employment)

Fans clearly form communities around the music and use it as a central part of their social lives and interactions. This was seen, by many of the fans, as being one of the most important aspects of fandom. The significance of this is that fandom enables people to engage in meaningful social based interactions and form communities around the music that, in turn, become elements of fandom that are credited with paramount importance. Far from showing fans up to be potentially ill or dangerous and characterised by irrational behaviour, a stereotype which, as discussed earlier, is not grounded in any meaningful interaction with fans themselves and has worked negatively to detract from such enquiry taking place, the above indicates that fandom is a normal cultural phenomena which can have important social functions. This again shows fandom as active in that fans use it as a basis for their social lives.

The notion of fan communities is something that Henry Jenkins (1992) talked about in his own account of media fandom, which he saw as offering the possibility of affiliation, friendship and community. For Jenkins, fan communities offered something more than superficial relationships and mundane life. Jenkins saw it as a site where pleasures could be celebrated and concerns articulated. This is something that was largely present in the accounts of the music fans interviewed in this study, in their articulation of the social aspects of their fandom. Jordan, had the following to say about the New Order fan site:

“ I’ve come to “know” a number of the regulars on the forums (several of whom I’ve had the pleasure of meeting in person), and it is always entertaining to test People’s reactions to things, get opinions from people in different cultures than The US, and learn various bits and pieces about said cultures” (Jordan, New Order fan)

Laura, had the following to say about the reasons why she visits a particular Stone

Roses website:

“ to hear what else the people on there have been up to (many of whom I’ve met, what else they’re listening to (some very knowledgeable people on there) and other topics like film, politics, sport, news, poetry, spirituality are discussed, and you can really learn a lot. Don’t meet many Roses fans where I live, so this is a good place to find them, and communicate” (Laura, Stone Roses fan)

Fans, therefore, discuss a range of issues within the fan community. There is a clear sense of affiliation with other fans, which emerged from the fan accounts with friendships developing within the fan communities, which are anything but superficial but, rather, are prolonged and sustained. Mark, talked specifically about friendships he has made through affiliation with other fans, within the fan community:

“ Some of my closest friends today are lads I met through the music back in the 80’s. It’s like you have an instant rapport with someone simply because you like this one band” (Mark, New Order fan)

This once again touches upon the idea of an instant affinity with other fans, which was discussed earlier in this section. The band appears to be a common bond which draws fans together. Popular music fandom, therefore, also offers a site for the development of close communities and sustained friendships. This supports Jenkins (1992) findings that

recognised this aspect of fandom, and demonstrates that such communities surrounding popular music are anything but ‘imagined’, which is a term that Mark Jancovich (2002) used to describe what he found about cult movie sub cultural audiences.

In addition to the important social aspect of their popular music fandom, in respect of friendships and communities forming around a particular band, there was very strong evidence, from what fans had to say, to suggest that Internet forums are prominent in the development of fan communities. Jack, a New Order fan, stated the following about the New Order fan site:

“ For many years there was no network of New Order fans, we were all in splendid isolation only meeting up for sporadic gigs. This site has brought it all together through the forum” (Jack, Male New Order fan, Civil Service Manager, age 37)

Leo, a New Order fan from South America, also proclaimed the worth of the New Order fan Internet site, in terms of its community aspect:

“ I can discuss and know people like me from all over the world. That makes me feel I am not the only mad fan around! (smiley used at the end of sentence as a non-verbal indicator of humour)” (Leo, a New Order fan).

The value placed upon the Internet fan site was higher amongst the New Order fans, but still clearly enjoyed by fans of the other two bands in terms of community. Tom, had the following to say about the ‘Happy Mondays’ related Internet site he visits:

“ It’s a great community of like minded people who are generally very congenial and humorous” (Tom, Happy Mondays fan).

There were a multitude of similar comments, all supporting the notion of virtual communities. Some fans even made it clear that the online communities can spill over in to real-world fan communities when online members meet up. Jay made the following remark about the New Order Internet fan community:

“ I quickly made friends with several of the people who are known as the hard core fans (people who have seen New Order over 100 times or travelled around the world to see them play live). Its more of a community now, and I have had the pleasure of meeting several of the American onliners when I travelled to New York and Seattle last year (to watch Celtic V Manchester United). I have also met about 50 of the lads and lassies from These shores and it is always a pleasure” (Jay, New Order fan)

The online communities are truly global in nature as this research saw contributions from fans in the UK, as well as fans in North and South America. The sense of community online came out of the majority of the interviews. Jack, made a similar comment about the New Order Internet fan community and its ‘spilling over’ in to face to face interactions:

“ It’s a community in its own right since it ceased being a virtual network and we began to meet up” (Jack, New Order fan)

The importance of the Internet, as a source of community, was certainly not lost on the fans, as clearly illustrated in the above comments. Indeed, for the majority of the fans interviewed, this function was awarded with the utmost importance, when they were talking about the significance of the Internet fan site in general. Indeed Jay articulated how important the New Order fan site is, in community terms, when he added:

“ As I’ve explained above, its our own wee community, when the site was facing closure a couple of years back, there were about 15 of us from the UK who sent money over to the Canadian webmasters to keep the site up and running. It’s an essential part of our lives” (Jay, a New Order fan)

In addition to demonstrating the richness of the fan communities developed, around particular bands, the overwhelming evidence from this research is that, for the fans interviewed, the notion of community does not lend itself simply to real-life interactions, but is also applicable to Internet based interactions, whereby fans from around the world feel a sense of community with people they may not even have met. This is something which has clear sociological significance as traditional notions of community, as we discussed earlier, have been to locate it within ‘real life’, social based interactions, with a local dimension. Fan communities in general, and ‘virtual communities’ in particular, move us away from a one-dimensional view of community. Jenkins (1992) suggested traditional community life was diminishing and fan communities were developing within this back drop. There is clear evidence from within this study that social activities of the fans, online and frequently offline, for them, enabled them to form very real communities surrounding a band. This supports a view that we need to change the way that we think of ‘community’ and there has been a trend in this direction, within the literature, as discussed in Chapter 1, with discussions surrounding postmodernism, detraditionalisation and globalisation. Bell (2001) stated that these wider changes alter the nature of communities, and the Internet is an important aspect of this. Whilst the findings here support, both, the notion that community need not be based in a locality, and, the idea that the whole world is opened up as a potential source of community, further research is clearly necessary in to the Internet and what it means in terms of community. There has been little research in this

area, as the Internet is still a fairly recent development, and the findings in this study have been specific in that they relate to a very small group of music fans' experiences of the Internet. Further research is therefore also necessary in to what the Internet means for fan communities.

Although I do not wish to labour the point, the importance of fan communities, for those fans that felt part of them, again demonstrates the richness of the fan culture of these particular groups of fans. The communities surrounding the specific bands provide affiliation and friendship. This social function, again, rejects grand theories of passivity or stereotypes of irrationality, for these groups of fans. Daniel Cavicchi (1998) also found that he, himself, felt an immediate familiarity and friendship during interviews with complete strangers. I have, indeed, myself felt an affinity with the fans that I have interviewed within this study and a familiarity with much of what was being said.

In addition to the community aspect of fandom, there was also extremely strong evidence emerging from the interviews that many of the participants had actually been inspired creatively by their fandom.

### **Creativity**

Jack, is a singer and guitarist in a Joy Division/New Order tribute band, something that has been directly influenced by his fandom of the band(s) but he is not the only New Order fan whom has found their creativity stimulated by their fandom. Leo, is a musician and had the following to say about New Order's influence on him:

“ Well I got in to electronic instruments because of them and in my academic life I made my degree thesis (public relations degree, by the way) about ‘rock band’s image’ and having New Order as the main character. In fact, I got interested in band’s image after I read about how they constructed Their image pretending they never constructed anything” (Leo, New Order fan)

In fact, Leo’s band were chosen as one of the bands to contribute to a New Order fan tribute CD contest that was initiated on the Internet fan site. The final CD was entitled ‘Community’ which seems quite fitting. Leo added:

“ My musical career had a great impact after I was chosen as one of the bands on the (Website name removed) tribute CD Community, because people all over the world will now know my music” (Leo, New Order fan)

Two other New Order fans, ‘Todd’ and ‘Jordan’, whom I interviewed, also submitted cover versions for consideration in the Community tribute CD contest.

Tom, a Happy Mondays fan, who is also a DJ, Musician and Record Label owner stated that he finds the Mondays to be a constant source of inspiration whilst Stephen, cites the music of the Stone Roses as being a direct influence on the formation of his band:

“ When I was in junior school I was in to Oasis when me mam bought me morning glory for Christmas when I was about 13 or something and always thought of being in a band and when I got in to the Stone Roses and seem Mani on the bass pulling on bass lines like ‘I wanna be adorded’, this is the one I got myself a bass and formed a band” (Stephen, Stone Roses fan)

Others have been inspired to creativity in different ways, as a result of their fandom and Jay wrote a story on the New Order Internet fan site, explaining what the band meant to him and gave me permission to access and make use of this, via the website. Having

read the story, which was about 15,000 words long (a dissertation in itself) it was clear to see the primary importance of New Order in Jay's life, documented in this vivid, comprehensive, and enjoyable to read account.

Indeed, ten out of the fourteen fans interviewed, indicated that they had been inspired creatively, in one form or another, through their fandom of a particular band.

There is a strong indication, from what the fans interviewed have informed me, that their fandom does not render them passive consumers but, rather, they are active producers of, and participants in, their own fan cultures which are profusely creative. Creativity, and productivity, were characteristics of the media fan communities which Jenkins (1992) studied in 'Textual Poachers'.

### **Identity**

There was some indication, coming from a number of participants, during the interviews, that their fandom of a particular band contributed to their sense of who they were. This notion of 'fan identity' was not restricted to fans of any one of the bands in particular, either. Out of the range of artists available, there was an indication that specific artists or bands are used in the construction of their identity as fans. It was apparent that many of the fans felt that there was a level of respect and credibility, which they could draw from being fans of these bands. Stephen had the following to say about his fandom:

“ Playing their music gives you a bit of respect” (Stephen, Stone Roses fan)

The swagger and understanding of street culture, associated with the Stone Roses and Happy Mondays, which was discussed earlier, seems to have been drawn on by the fans in the construction and development of their own fan identities. Martin, a Happy Mondays fan, stated:

“ To me its just nice having a band that means so much to me. The pleasure and enjoyment their music has given me over the years is immense. I cant imagine what my life would have been like, if I had never heard ‘Bummed’. The Mondays were and still are the coolest band ever in my opinion, and have got a reputation for having a good time and not giving a fuck. I think this attitude has rubbed off on the fans (it definitely has on me) and gains them a certain level of respect” (Martin, Happy Mondays fan)

The hedonism, which surrounded the Happy Mondays, along with the associated rowdy behaviour, and law unto himself image of Shaun Ryder has, for this fan, directly influenced how he sees himself. Martin, like Stephen, also saw a certain level of respect attached to the band, due to the above qualities, that instantly gave him a certain ‘cool’ as a fan. The band became a form of role model.

Andy, a Stone Roses fan, awarded the band a direct role in the shaping of the person whom he is:

“ I would say that they have shaped me in to the character that I am today. That for four years they were a massive influence on my life. They enabled me To opt out of the mainstream culture and tap in to a counter culture. They Influenced my clothes, other music I listened to and some of the opinions I had. Oh and my haircut” (Andy, Male Stone Roses fan, Business Sales Consultant, age 27)

For Andy, therefore, the Stone Roses had a clear role in the shaping of his identity. In addition to the ‘signifiers’ such as clothes, music and haircut, used in construction of

identity, Andy also awarded a role to the band in shaping some of his opinions. Indeed, Andy went on to add the following, about his Stone Roses fandom:

“ I would say it changed my life. I would say it is one of the main influences on my life along with one or two other bands, with my parents, with some friends etc. . . . We are shaped constantly by what we let in to our lives. I let Stone Roses in to my life and they influenced me to be the person I am” (Andy, Stone Roses fan).

Whilst Andy saw the Stone Roses as having an important role in the development of who he is, he still recognises traditional social based influences, such as family, as having a role.

There was a distinct impression, from the interviews, that many of the fans saw their fandom almost like a ‘badge’ in that they perceive it as conveying something about themselves to the outside world. Some of the fans perceived their fandom to be an important part of who they are. Others talked more specifically about the influence that a particular band has had upon whom they are as a person and the influence upon their attitudes and opinions. Fans were able to clearly articulate this. Fandom of the bands was, therefore, being used in the formation and presentation of identity and as an aid to them in determining how they are perceived.

The idea that identities are not fixed but, rather, that we fix them to goods we purchase and use them as signs of identity, in the process of differentiation and solidarity, marks a shift in the way identity is conceptualised, in ‘postmodern’ times. These general changes were, also, discussed in the opening chapter and are subject to immense wider sociological debate. Such suggestions mark a movement away from traditional notions of a ‘unified’ or ‘core’ identity. The findings here suggest that fandom has had a role on

the shaping of identity, for many of the fans interviewed, with fans fixing their identity to their musical preferences. There was also a sense that such fan identities are constructed through difference, in other words, defined by difference from non-fans. Again, however, the findings of this study are modest, in that they focus upon a particular group of popular music fans. Also, identity was only one of the broad issues that was being explored here and, whilst there was clear applicability, much further research would be required in order to explore the ways in which popular music fandom works in the construction and shaping of identity. This was beyond the scope of this study, which is exploratory in nature and not focused on one specific aspect of fandom.

The coolness and hipness, which participants clearly attached to being fans of New Order, the Stone Roses and the Happy Mondays, as demonstrated in some of the above comments, support Mark Jancovich's (2002) work on audiences, discussed in Chapter 1. Jancovich (2002) suggested certain fan cultures produce a sense of identity through difference from the mainstream. Jancovich's work drew on the work of Sara Thornton (1995) on club cultures. This work, discussed earlier, suggested that a sense of distinction and cultural superiority is generated, with fan cultures producing an identity from their sense of being set apart from the mainstream, and enabling them to differentiate their preferences. There was a vivid impression, which emerged from the interviews in this study, that a form of cultural superiority was being drawn from the perceived difference of these three bands from the mainstream. Again, this may be something unique to the fans of these three bands, due to their association with 'independence', the hedonism surrounding the bands in the 1980s and early 1990s, the unconventional attitude surrounding them and their apparent lack of 'industry concerns'. These sorts of issues were explicit in a number of the fans' comments. Leo,

had the following to say, when discussing the aspects of being a fan of New Order, which he finds most enjoyable:

“ I love the way they proceeded in both life and careers too. I feel important when I think about it, because I know we’re quite a few around the world but not as many as other bands. So I feel a little more ‘exclusive’ if you will” (Leo, a New Order fan)

Leo elaborated further:

“ The fact that they’re unique making music, they have unique sleeves of their products, they’re independent (which is great in a world and an industry more and more related to money)” (Leo, A new Order fan).

Mark had the following to say about New Order:

“ in the shiny-happy 80s they stood head and shoulders above everyone for that ‘fuck-it’ attitude-No name on record sleeves, moody sods in the live arena. They exuded a certain cool” (Mark, New Order fan)

In addition to the prestige drawn from ‘exclusivity’ and ‘independence’, fans also saw superiority in the music of ‘their’ band. Stephen remarked, about the music of the Stone Roses:

“ You can’t find another band in history who sounded like them they set the standard for brit pop” (Stephen, Stone Roses fan)

Tom, on the other hand, awarded a superiority, not only to the unique independent approach to music making, of the Happy Mondays, but, also, the unconventional attitude of the band towards their music. These two things, for Tom, set the band apart from, and rendered them superior to, other bands around:

“ there’s a huge appeal in the complete acceptance of who and what you are- the Mondays always seemed to say ‘yeah we’re not perfect. Yeah its sloppy did you have a fucking point? Cos when we’re on mate, we’re on’ They took chances no other pop band was, musically. Sure the Roses put a dance beat to ‘Fools Gold’, but no one but the Mondays had the balls to put out indie dance albums. The others that did were luke warm, at best” (Tom, Happy Mondays fan)

Jay, had the following to say about what he felt set New Order apart from other bands and, again, a less conventional attitude to making music and superiority in the music were two key aspects to what he saw as special about the band:

“ When you say New Order-I just think of their attitude, they did what they wanted, when they wanted, their humour was dry, their music was unbelievable. . . . They brought us Black American music, as well as electronic, rock and dance. They never ‘sold out’ was another reason we loved them, and they never mimed on Top of the Pops (today, sadly enough you could argue with both these points” (Jay, a New Order fan)

Remaining with the notion of identity for a moment longer, it is important to recognise that, whilst the findings of this study suggest that many of the fans fix their identities to their cultural preferences, it is not straightforward and socialisation may still play an important part in the formation of identity. Indeed, there was strong evidence, from my discussions with the fans in this study, that they were drawn to the music of a particular band, in the first instance, because they felt they felt they already shared certain characteristics, values, or aspirations. Laura made the following comment, about how she relates to the music of the Stone Roses:

“ the desire to escape the confines of a mundane, unsatisfying, materialistic world that is often inflicted upon us, and escape to a magical heavenly world beyond it. To see a world that exists on another plane, understanding the deeper biblical significance of the second coming. The philosophy of the roses-which includes taking matters in to your hands, having fun freedom and ‘one love’” (Laura, Stone Roses fan)”

Specific aspects of the music, and ideologies surrounding the bands, seem to draw specific fans, in the first instance, as they appear to represent something that the fans connect with their own lives, values and desires. Trevor, exemplified this point:

“ There is a kind of Roses spirit to do with spirituality, morality and self realisation which I think many fans perceive. People feel they are part of something great set in motion by the Roses” (Trevor, Stone Roses fan)

The point that fan attachments are first formed, with a particular band, because there is some sort of correspondence with their own lives was further emphasised in Martin’s comments below:

“ I heard them first on my mates walkman. He was older than me and he was in to all the acid house that was coming out at the time. I was sat on a field with a mate smoking weed and he came over and told me I had to listen to this band. I put the headphones on and the music I heard was like nothing I had ever heard in my life-it really blew my mind. Shaun’s slurred vocals and lyrics just sounded perfect to me. After I’d made a copy of the tape I started to read more about the band in NME and realised that they were more like me than I first thought. They were so different from all the other pretentious bands around at the time, and that was a huge attraction for me” (Martin Happy Mondays fan)

Tom, made similar comments when talking about what first attracted him to the Mondays and their music:

“ I heard W.F.L (Wrote For Luck) blasting at a party and was blown away-heavy ringing guitars ; huge tribal drums; and one mean motherfucker of a bass line. Then Shaun comes in, with that voice and that sense of humour that could belong to no other. . . There was an arrogance that I related to, and when I found out just how debauched the band truly was, I realised just how much I actually did relate to them” (Tom, Happy Mondays fan)

Jack, gave the following explanation why he was initially drawn to New Order:

“ Errors. They are human” (Jack, New Order fan)

The above are just some of the numerous comments fans made about what attracted them to a specific band in the first instance. All of the comments suggested that it is not a truly autonomous choice but, rather, is tied to their own pre-existing social commitments, in no straightforward way. So, whilst fans actively use the music in their lives, their choices are framed by their pre-existing circumstances and the wider social context.

Whilst fans initially become attached to a particular band, because of the compatibility that we have discussed above, fan attachments become sustained, in part, through the various functions the fandom serves, which we have already discussed throughout this section, such as pleasure generated, community and social aspects and the way fans use music on an affective level. There also appears to be ongoing compatibility between the band and the fan, whether this is in terms of an ‘ideology’ surrounding the band, the lyrics and music, or both. Laura made the following remark about her Stone Roses fandom:

“ It sort of made me realise something that was there all the time and provide the meaningful musical, philosophical and cultural backdrop for the spiritual journey which I believe life to be. Also they provided a massive spiritual awakening on another level, but this has been quite recent”(Laura, Stone Roses fan)

The fans interviewed had a clear sense of the ongoing compatibility between the band, and their music, and their own lives. Part of this continued compatibility is related to the

role of fandom in shaping of identity, discussed earlier. As identity can be shaped by a fandom of a particular band, to an extent, the likelihood of ongoing compatibility is increased. Ongoing compatibility works to help sustain the attachment, even though the original message put over may not necessarily have been intended in the way it is ultimately appropriated in to the specifics of the fans life. Todd, commented upon the way that he relates strongly to New Order's music:

“ There hasn't been a single song by them that I haven't been able to relate to lyrically, musically (the way the music makes me feel when I listen to it”  
( Todd, New Order fan)

Indeed, Todd went on to add:

“ Without their music to comfort me. I may not be here today. Just knowing someone understands how I feel just makes the biggest difference”  
(Todd, New Order fan)

There is an ongoing compatibility between what this fan perceives to be the meaning within the music and their own life. The ability to continue to fit the music, and the general ideology surrounding the band, to their own lives, was one important factor in the sustaining of the fan attachment. The others have already been discussed throughout the course of this chapter.

The final comment that I wish to make, which came out of the fan interviews, relates to another empowering principle. A number of the fans interviewed stated that they have actually used their fandom to critically look at their own lives and make changes.

Gavin, when talking about the influence of the attitudes of Joy Division and New Order on his life, stated the following:

“ Joy Division and New Order were a big influence on me becoming a bass player in various bands, although I never played any music that was even similar to New Order, the whole ethic of ‘get up and do it’ even though you might not be the best musician in the world, really encouraged me to persevere” (Gavin, Male New Order fan, writer, age 36)

Martin commented his Happy Mondays fandom made him re-evaluate his own life, which resulted in him establishing three businesses:

“ Before I heard of the Mondays, I was quite a shy person, but they made me think that anything was possible and that I could achieve anything with my life-I think that is an amazing thing and I will always be grateful to the band and their music for that” (Martin, Happy Mondays fan)

It is clear from the findings of this study that, for the fans interviewed, their fandom is in no way passive. The fans actively use the music in their lives and their fandom has a distinct role in the shaping of identity, formation of meaningful and sustained friendships and communities surrounding the music, stimulating creativity and helping them to evaluate aspects of their own lives and make changes. The popular music fandom also had clear affective qualities, within their day-to-day lives, which have an empowering element.

In addition to this, I was somewhat taken aback by the lengthy accounts that fans were able to produce about their experiences of fandom and how it works in their lives. All of the fans were able to reflect upon their fandom and had a clear and deep understanding of what being a fan means to them. This renders defunct accounts which stigmatise fans as passive dupes or dangerous and irrational.

The findings show that fandom, for those interviewed, serves an important social and cultural role and is both active and productive. Whilst the findings are limited, in terms of representativeness to other groups of fans, and many of the issues here should be addressed with further qualitative enquiry, they contribute to a growing body of work which recognises the complex and rich nature of media fandom.

## **Chapter 4: Summary and Conclusions**

The broad aim of this study was to contribute to a growing body of work, which awards attention to the complex ways in which fans use artefacts of popular culture meaningfully, in their day-to-day lives. Traditionally, as discussed in the opening chapter, there has been a distinct lack of enquiry in to the active ways in which fans relate to popular cultural forms. Popular audiences were rendered passive and uncritical, in the works of Theodor Adorno, and the Frankfurt School and this work, added to long standing elitist perceptions that dismissed popular culture as unworthy, and stereotypes of fans as obsessed, crazed and potentially dangerous, has resulted in a distinct lack of close scrutiny in to the way that audiences engage media texts.

As mentioned above, there is now a growing body of work that focuses upon fans, taking in the views and perspectives of the fans themselves. Much of this has been focused upon television fans in general, or science fiction fans specifically. Whilst such works are extremely important to understanding the rich and complex nature of fandom, the applicability of their findings, in relation to popular music fans is still relatively unexplored. This study, therefore, intended to explore some of the broad issues that emerged from the wider literature on fandom, specifically in relation to fans of three bands which emerged from the music scene within Manchester and its surrounding areas.

Three of the major issues that emerged from the wider literature search were those of community, creativity and identity, with fans perceived to engage each of these concepts in an active way. Whilst a semi structured interview schedule was designed, in

order to explore the above issues, along with others that emerged, it included very broad questions that would enable fans to speak in detail about their own lived experiences and raise any other issues that were of specific concern or relevance to themselves, but which may not have emerged from the critical literature review that shaped this study. A qualitative research methodology was adopted in recognition that a discovery-based approach was required, due to limited previous research taking in perspectives of popular music fans themselves. This made a qualitative approach essential for this piece of research.

This study found that for those interviewed, fandom was anything but passive, with fans able to clearly reflect upon the ways in which they actively use music in their day-to-day lives. The majority of participants had been inspired in to creativity by their fandom. The fandom, therefore, appeared to have a key role in the fan culture. Fans also clearly used their popular music fandom in their social based interactions, forming vivid communities, both online and offline, surrounding a particular band and also developing meaningful and ongoing friendships. This was perceived, by many of the participants, to be a very important aspect of being a fan. This finding rejects the stereotypes of fans as potentially crazed, irrational and obsessive that were discussed in the opening chapter, for this group of fans but, rather, shows their fandom as a normal social and cultural phenomenon. The clear evidence that, for many of the participants interviewed, there was a distinct sense of community, online and off is also of sociological significance. Debates surrounding what constitutes a ‘community’ in the postmodern climate continue and the findings here suggest that ‘community’ need not be located in local, face-to-face interactions, as the community spirit online was perceived by a large number of respondents. Online communities were also global in nature.

The findings from this study also contribute to wider sociological debates surrounding identity, which were discussed in the opening chapter. The findings strongly indicated that, for many of the participants within this study, fandom had a significant role to play in the shaping and presentation of identity. However, it was also clear that the fans became attached to a particular band, in the first instance, as the fans felt they shared certain ideals, values or that the specific band and their music reflected their own pre-existing social commitments. There was clearly, therefore, a wider social context for the fans here.

Whilst this work, therefore, contributes to wider sociological debates on community and identity, and the increasing body of work into fan practices, much further research is necessary, as the findings of this study are related to a specific group of popular music fans. Whilst the findings may be applicable to other groups of music fans, they cannot be generalised due to the very small, purposive, sample chosen for this study and its qualitative nature. However, as fan studies, which take in the perspectives of fans themselves, to explore complex practices and the way fans appropriate popular music in to their lives, are still very much in infancy, much further qualitative research is necessary.

**Appendix A**  
**Copy of Initial Question Posted on Fan Sites**

	Topic
	<p data-bbox="619 398 997 432">posted: Apr 01, 2004 - 16:08:55</p> <p data-bbox="1007 387 1118 421"> E-Mail</p> <p data-bbox="619 432 1002 622"></p> <p data-bbox="1007 577 1118 611"> Quote</p> <hr data-bbox="619 638 1428 642"/> <p data-bbox="619 674 687 707">Hello</p> <p data-bbox="619 741 1393 835">I am currently undertaking a Masters Degree in Social Research at the University of Northumbria at Newcastle, looking at popular music fandom, and I need your help!!!</p> <p data-bbox="619 869 1417 992">I am specifically wanting the views of fans of 'Manchester bands', and I am looking for New Order fans who would be willing to participate in an online interview, talking about their fandom.</p> <p data-bbox="619 1025 1385 1126">I want to stress that this project is not just of academic interest, it should also be of general interest to fans, like myself, who love New Orders music.</p> <p data-bbox="619 1160 1417 1283">So, if you are happy to talk about what New Order and their music mean to you, or want further information, drop me an email at the following address, stating where you saw this message:</p> <p data-bbox="619 1317 954 1350">topaz09uk@yahoo.co.uk</p> <p data-bbox="619 1384 722 1417">Cheers,</p> <p data-bbox="619 1451 683 1485">Julie</p>

## **APPENDIX B**

### **QUESTIONS**

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT**

**Please note that all information given will be regarded as confidential and your anonymity is ensured. Transcripts will only be shown to my research supervisor, at the University of Northumbria at Newcastle, on request and will not be shown to any other third party.**

Age:

Gender:

Occupation:

How long have you been a fan of [insert band name]?

- 1) How many hours, in an average week, do you spend participating in the following music related activities?

Listening whilst simultaneously carrying out other activities -

None 1-5hours 6-10hours 11-15hours 16-20hours  
21-25hours 26hours +

Listening as an activity in itself-

None 1-5hours 6-10hours 11-15hours 16-20hours  
21-25hours 26hours+

Watching- (e.g. videos, DVDs, Music TV, etc)

None 1-5hours 6-10hours 11-15hours 16-20hours  
21-25hours 26hours+

Going to see live music-

None 1-5hours 6-10hours 11-15hours 16-20hours  
21-25hours 26hours+

Reading- (e.g. music magazines, books, newspapers etc)

None 1-5hours 6-10hours 11-15hours 16-20hours  
21-25hours 26hours+

2) How important is music to you on a scale of 1 –10?

(Please explain, as fully as you can, why you have given this response)

3) How important is the 'live' music experience to you on a scale of 1-10?

(Please explain, as fully as you can, why you have given this response)

4) Why do you visit [insert website name]?

5) How often do you visit and how do you spend your time whilst logged on to the site? (e.g. posting messages, reading messages, catching up on news, general chat etc)

6) How important is [insert website name] to you on a scale of 1-10?

(Please explain why you have given this response)

7) How important do you feel the site is, on a scale of 1-10, for fans of the band in general?

(Please explain, as fully as you can, why you have given this response)

8) What role do [insert band name] and their music play in your life, if any?

9) What aspects of being a fan of [insert band name] do you find most enjoyable?

10) What first attracted you to the band and their music?

11) What do you feel sets the band and their music apart from other bands, if anything?

12) How do you think other people perceive fans of [insert name]?

13) What do you feel you have in common with other fans of the band, if anything?

14) Do you feel you relate to any aspects of the bands music?  
(If yes, please explain?)

15) Has being a fan of [insert name] influenced you to undertake any particular activities?  
(If yes, please explain)

16) Has being a fan of [insert name] changed your life in any way?  
(If yes, please explain)

**Thank you** for taking time to tell me about your fandom. I may also contact you again with some follow up questions, based upon the information you have provided.

**Regards**

Julie Marie Hutchinson

## Bibliography/References

*A History of Rock Music*. URL <http://www.scaruffi.com/history/cpto.html> [15.08.04]

Scaruffi, P

Ackroyd, S and

Hughes, J (1981) *Data Collection in Context*. Longman

Ackroyd, S and

Hughes, J (1992) *Data Collection in Context*. Second edition  
First published 1981. Longman

Adorno, T and

Horkheimer, M (1979) *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. London  
Verso

Arber, S (2001) Designing Samples in Gilbert, N (ed)  
*Researching Social Life* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition  
First published 2001 by sage publications ltd  
London, p58-82

Bell, D (2001) *An Introduction to Cybercultures*. Routledge  
London

Bez (2000) *Freaky Dancin: Me and the Mondays*. First  
Published 1998 by Pan Books, an imprint of  
Pan Macmillan Ltd. Second edition

Boshier, R (1990) Social Psychological Factors in Electronic  
Networking, *International Journal of Life  
Long Education* 9(1) p49-64

- Boym, N (2000) *Tune in, Log on-Soaps, Fandom, and Online Community* Sage publications Ltd, London
- Brooker, W (1998) *Teach Yourself Cultural Studies*. Hodder Headline PLC
- Bryman, A (1988) *Quality and Quantity in Social Research*. Unwin and Hyman
- Bryman, A (2001) *Social Research Methods*. Oxford University Press
- Bulmer, M (2001) The ethics of Social Research, in Gilbert, N (ed) *Researching Social Life*. Second Edition First published 2001 by Sage Publications Ltd. P45-56
- Cavicchi, D (1998) *Tramps Like Us, Music and Meaning among Springsteen Fans*. Oxford University Press
- Churton, M (2000) *Theory and Method*. Macmillan press Ltd
- Clarke, A (2001) Research and the Policy Making process, in Gilbert, N (ed), *Researching Social Life*. Second edition. First published 2001 by Sage publications Ltd. P28-42
- Curtis, D (2001) *Touching from a Distance-Ian Curtis and Joy Division*. Second edition. First published 1995, Faber and Faber
- De-Vous, DA (1991) *Surveys in Social Research*. Third edition. UCL press. First published in 1985

- De-Vous, DA (1996) *Surveys in Social Research* Fourth edition  
UCL press. First published in 1985
- Eliot, T.S (1948) *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*  
Faber and Faber
- Featherstone, M (1995) *Undoing Culture-Globalisation,  
Postmodernism And Identity*, Sage  
publications ltd
- Fielding, N and  
Thomas, H (1991) Qualitative Interviewing, in Gilbert, N (ed)  
*Researching Social Life*. Second edition.  
First published 2001. Sage publications Ltd  
P124-144
- Fiske, J (1992) The Cultural Economy of Fandom, in Lewis,  
L.A (ed) *The Adoring Audience-Fan Culture  
And Popular Media*. Routledge. P30-49
- Flick, U (1998) *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*.  
Sage publications Ltd
- Foster, G (1994) Fishing with the Net for Research Data, in  
*British Journal of Educational Technology*  
25(2) p91-97
- Grossberg, L (1992) Is there a Fan in the House?: The Affective  
Sensibility of Fandom, in Lewis, L.A (ed)  
*The Adoring Audience-Fan Culture and  
Popular Media*. Routledge. P50-65

- Hall, S (1996) Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'? In Hall, S and Du Gay (eds) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. P 1-17
- Hammersley, M (1990) *Reading Ethnographic Research, a Critical guide*. Longman
- Haralambos, M and Holborn, M (1991) *Sociology. Themes and Perspectives*. Collins Educational
- Harrington, L and Bielby, D (eds) (2001) *Popular Culture-Production and Consumption*. Blackwell publishers ltd
- Harris, C (1998) A Sociology of Television Fandom, in Harris, C and Alexander, A (eds) *Theorising Fandom. Fans, Subculture and Identity*. Hampton press inc.P41-54
- Harris, D (1996) *A Society of Signs?* Routledge
- Haslam, D (2000) *Manchester, England; the story of the Pop cult City*. Fourth Estate, First Published 1999
- Hebdige, D (1979) *Subculture, the meaning of style*. Methuen and Co ltd
- Hedges, A (1985) Group Interviewing; in Walker, R (ed) *Applied Qualitative Research*. Gower Publishing Company Ltd.P71-91

- Howe, R (2001) Barking, in *Q Magazine*. Summer 2001, p62-65
- Jancovich, M (2002) Cult Fictions: Cult Movies, Subcultural Capital and the Production of Cultural Distinction, in *Cultural Studies* 16(2) 2002 306-322
- Jenkins, H (1992) *Textual Poachers-Television Fans And participatory Culture*. Routledge
- Jenson, J (1992) Fandom as Pathology: The Consequences Of Characterisation. In Lewis, L.A (ed) *The Adoring Audience-Fan Culture and Popular Media*. Routledge P9-27
- Jones, S (1985) Depth Interviewing, in Walker, R (ed) *Applied Qualitative Research*. P45-55
- Layder, D (1998) *Sociological practice.Linking theory And Social Research*. Sage publications.
- Leavis, F.R (1930) *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture*. Cambridge, The Minority Press
- Leper Cult Disciples of a Stillborn Christ:Richard Edwards as meaningful in his Fans' Construction of their Identities*. URL <http://www.theory.org.uk/manics.htm> [15.8.04]
- Franchesca Skirvin
- Lewis, L.A (ed) (1992) *The Adoring Audience. Fan Culture and Popular Media*. Routledge

- Lowe, M (2003) Colliding Feminisms: Britney Spears, 'Tweens' and the Politics of Reception, in *Popular Music and Society*. Volume 26, No 2 2003
- Manchester District Music Archive- <http://www.mdmarchive.co.uk> [09/04]
- Mann, C and Stewart, F (2000) *Internet Communication and Qualitative Research. A Handbook for Researching Online*. Sage publications ltd
- May, T (2001) *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process*. Third edition. First published 1993 By Open University Press
- McNeil, P (1990) *Research Methods*. Second edition. Routledge. First published 1985 by Tavistock Publications Ltd
- Middles, M (2002) *From Joy Division to New Order, The true story of Anthony H Wilson and Factory Records*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, First published in 1996 by Virgin Publishing Ltd
- Morrissey, *Rock 'n' Roll has seen many heroes, but one stands quiff and shoulders above them all*: Interview with Alex Needham in *NME Magazine* 17.4.04 p20-23
- Mortimer, B (2001) New Order tell us about the olden days. *Mixmag Magazine*. September 2001, P65-66

- Negus, K (1996) *Popular Music in Theory-An Introduction*  
Polity press in association with Blackwell
- Neworderstory* (1993) Polygram video international limited
- Odell, M (2001) The old Devils, in 'Q' Magazine, November  
2001. P57-60
- Rees, D and  
Crompton, L (1994) *The Guinness Book of Rock Stars. 3<sup>rd</sup>*  
Edition. First published 1989 by Guinness  
Publishing Ltd
- Robb, J (2001) *The Stone Roses and the Resurrection of*  
*Of British Pop. Second Edition. First*  
Published 1997-Random House UK Ltd.
- Robson, S and  
Foster, A (1989) *Qualitative Research in Action. Edward*  
Arnold
- Rubin, H and  
Rubin, I (1995) *Qualitative Interviewing. Sage*
- Sawyer, M (2004) Robert Leo Gretton 1953-1999. In  
*The Observer Music Monthly-Fac 511*  
*'And you Forgotten' . P4-5 . Special Edition,*  
2004

*Scrutiny of fan made web-pages on popular artist Morrissey. URL*

<http://sivut.koti.soon.fi/sahlander/tania/scrutiny.html> [7.01.03]. Sahlander, Tania

- Seidman, I (1991) *Interviewing as Qualitative Research*.  
Columbia University
- Shields, R (1996) Introduction: Virtual Spaces, Real  
Histories and Living Bodies in  
Shields, R (ed) *Cultures of Internet-  
Virtual Spaces, Real Histories, Living  
Bodies*. Sage publications Ltd
- Smith, H.W (1981) *Strategies of social Research*.  
Prentice Hall Inc. Second Edition.  
First published 1975.
- Stroh, M (2000) Computers and Qualitative Data Analysis:  
To use or not to use, in Burton, D (ed)  
*Research Training for Social Scientists*.  
Sage publications ltd, p226-243
- Stroh, M (2000) Qualitative interviewing, in Burton, D (ed)  
*Research Training for Social Scientists*.  
Sage publications ltd, p196-214
- Stromer-Galley, J (2003) *Depth Interviews for the Study of Motives  
And perceptions of internet use*.

<http://www.albany.edu/~jstromer/onlineinterview.pdf>

[1.4.04]

- Taylor, S.J and  
Bogdan, R (1998) *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods. A Guidebook and Resource.* Third edition. John Wiley and Sons inc. First published 1975.
- Thornton, S (1995) *Clubcultures: Music Media and Subcultural Capital.* Cambridge, Polity Press
- Tulloch, J and  
Jenkins, H (1995) *Science Fiction Audiences. Watching Dr Who and Star Trek.* Routledge
- Turner, G (1996) *British Cultural Studies. Second Edition* Published by Routledge. First published 1990 by Unwin Hyman Ltd.
- 24 Hour Party People.* Film, directed by Michael Winterbottom, 2002. Pathe
- Warburton, J (2003) *Hallelujah! The Extraordinary Story of Shaun Ryder and Happy Mondays.* With Shaun Ryder. Second Edition. This edition published by Virgin Books Ltd. First Virgin paperback edition Published 2000 by Virgin Publishing Ltd.
- Wilkinson, R (2001) *Vorsprung Durch Technik in Mojo Magazine.* September 2001. P73-86

- Wilson, M (1996) *Asking Questions*, in Sapsford, R and Jupp, V (eds) *Data Collection and Analysis* Sage publications
- Wilson, T (2002) *24 Hour Party People-What the Sleeve Notes Never Tell-You-Fac 424*. Channel 4 Books  
An imprint of Pan Macmillan Ltd
- Yates, S.J (2004) *Doing Social Science Research*. The Open University, Sage publications ltd

