Narrative, spectacle, performance: a dramaturgical investigation into the relationship between an aesthetic event and the social world in rock and pop culture

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

Stephen I. Gregson

School of Social Sciences & Law

September 2005

Project abstract

On 2 July 2005, the Saturday before a summit of world leaders at Gleaneagles in Scotland, Live8 took place. Organised by Bob Geldof, the event brought together many high profile rock and pop performers to highlight the extreme famine conditions in Africa. Live8, however, was purportedly not in the business of promoting new albums, selling a range of merchandise or even raising charitable funds: indeed, tickets for the Live8 concerts were free. Rather, the event was intended to lead on to a rally in Edinburgh, forty miles from Gleneagles, calling on the summit attendees to cancel debt, double aid packages and remove trade barriers which hinder sustainable development on the African continent. As such, Live8 represents a strategic intent by rock and pop culture to 'engineer' a flow from the concert platform into the everyday. Conscious of the issues Live8 raises, this project looks at the different kinds of aesthetic event, from the contingent to the 'pre-scripted', which have over time become a feature of rock and pop culture. Through three distinctive case studies, whose subjects encompass both performers and their fan culture, concepts of narrative, spectacle and performance are discussed in order to understand, from a dramaturgical perspective, how rock and pop culture deals with representational schisms, particularly where the social world is implicated, and the role an aesthetic event (often a rock or pop concert) plays in the course of redress. Eschewing the limitations of musicology and media studies, which have often beset earlier investigations into rock and pop culture, this project's overarching objective is to offer innovative thinking about the evolving state of the relationship it can, and does, facilitate between the 'staged' and the everyday.

Contents

iv

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introducing a volume of papers from the 76th Burg Wartenstein Symposium into anthropological research, John J. MacAloon says of himself and his fellow contributors,

> We were asked to assume that cultural performances "are more than entertainment, more than didactic or persuasive formulations, and more than cathartic indulgences. They are occasions in which as a culture or society we reflect upon and define ourselves, dramatize our collective myths and history, present ourselves with alternatives, and eventually change in some ways while remaining the same in others." The conferees were asked to consider cultural performances in such a way as to bridge and transcend such conventional dichotomies as oral and written, public and private, doing and thinking, primitive and modern, sacred and secular, "pop" and "high," ludic and tragic. We were challenged to develop typologies and historical sequences of performative genres, to judge the possibility of cross-cultural comparison, to evaluate existing analytical concepts, and to search for new conceptual tools for the investigation of performative events. Finally, we were urged by our conveners to keep in mind the need to relate expressive culture to ongoing emergent processes of social action and relations. (MacAloon 1984: 1 – 2)

The historical and topical debates which are essential in defining the forms and functions of concepts such as 'cultural performance', 'performative event' and 'social action and relations' are discussed later in the literature review. For the time being, however, it is enough to say that the expectations placed upon MacAloon's

1

symposium cohort mirror much of what has preoccupied performance studies during the latter half of the twentieth century: how the processes of modernity have impinged upon a formal (mostly European) model of theatre. A key presence in these debates on the practitioner side of the proscenium arch is the British theatre director Peter Brook, whose distillation of his formative experience of creating a theatrical event was published in the 1968 book *The Empty Space*. What transpires across this book's four chapters is Brook's observation that modernity has largely inhibited a productive and meaningful role for theatre in direct relation to the social world which surrounds it. At the opening of the book, he says,

> I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged. Yet when we talk about theatre this is not quite what we mean. Red curtains, spotlights, blank verse, laughter, darkness, these are all confusedly superimposed in a messy image covered by one all-purpose word. We talk of the cinema killing theatre, and in that phrase we refer to the theatre as it was when the cinema was born, a theatre of box office, foyer, tip-up seats, footlights, scene changes, intervals, music, as though the theatre was by very definition these and little more. (Brook 1990: 11)

In a recent interview, Brook has said of *The Empty Space* that what pleased him most about its reception was that, in the worst days of apartheid in South Africa, the book penetrated through to the townships.

> There were all these people dying to make theatre, but theatre buildings didn't exist... To hear this idea [of taking an empty space etc.] from someone far away with all those supposed advantages - that was useful for them, which is my only criterion. (Peter Brook quoted in Taylor 2004: 4)

What I take from Brook's reflexive critique about the potency of his 1968 thesis is the overwhelming sense in which theatre ought no longer to be envisaged in terms of the formal venues – those 'palaces' of European drama - in which it has historically taken place. Rather, what is demanded is both re-imagination, in terms of the possibilities afforded it by the circumstances of the modern 'lived' experience, and re-discovery of the virtues of more basic (even prehistoric) forms of the theatrical event. One instance where he feels there exists a series of rituals on a level to which contemporary society has particular access is rock and pop culture (1990: 53). This, in turn, provides a useful starting point to introducing the precise motivation behind this project. The 'scene' is the Sherman Theatre in Cardiff, then the leading venue for new playwriting and theatre for young people in Wales, during February 1999. I was there on one of my journalistic assignments for the theatre magazine *Plays International*, attending the world premiere of *Everything Must Go*, the first play by a young Welsh poet called Patrick Jones. Relevant to this production was the fact that Jones was also the older brother of Nicky Wire, the bass player from Wales' most successful rock group Manic Street Preachers (Wire's real name in Nicholas Jones). As well as acting as a co-producer with the Sherman, the group had also consented to the copious (spoken) use of their song lyrics in Jones' playscript, while the staging itself used pre-recorded extracts from the group's commercially available sound recordings. For his part, Jones had performed extracts of his poetry on the group's first album, and his

play's title had been previously used to name another of the group's albums prior to the play's staging. This overt intertextual 'layering' into this event of the play's staging was of particular fascination to me, having drawn attention in various articles I had written for print journalism during much of the previous decade to how mainstream theatre was responding to topical themes emanating from popular culture, such as recreational drug consumption in club culture, virtual reality and computer games. To this extent, there seemed at least a straightforward virtue in considering Jones' play as I was not aware of any previous collaboration between a modern playwright with his first play, a regional theatre and one of Britain's most popular rock groups at the time of staging.

About a group of disenfranchised young people from the former South Wales mining town of Blackwood (incidentally from where Jones and Manic Street Preachers all hail), the play's staging *per se* was not particularly experimental in terms of challenging theatrical process or product. Neither was its use of contemporary popular music: at best, Jones' choice of songs by Manic Street Preachers, as well as other well-known Welsh groups, was similar to the way in which the twentieth century German playwright Bertolt Brecht collaborated with composers such as Kurt Weill on popular music and song which featured as social commentaries to reinforce the agit prop elements in his plays. No, what felt new to me about this relationship between text, context and intertext was its potential to activate other significant 'performances' in the everyday spaces beyond what was happening beneath the Sherman's proscenium arch. These everyday spaces were occupied by Manic Street Preachers' fans, whom I distinguished from the rest of the audience by their wearing of branded clothing or other paraphernalia relating to the group, or by the topics of certain audible conversations in the theatre foyer. Many of these fans could also be seen 'cornering' two

4

members of Manic Street Preachers (one of whom was Jones' brother) who were part of the first night audience, asking for autographs. There were also 'parades' of both young males and females with feather boas draped around their neck and black eyeliner applied to their face, aping costume and make-up styles associated with the group. More discomforting, though, was the presence of a small number of fans who were visibly displaying signs of self-harm: the experience of which has been depicted in the group's lyrics, not least because their lyricist Richey Edwards, who disappeared without trace in 1995, was a known 'sufferer'.

The theme of self-harm is also a key psychological trait of one of the protagonists in Jones' play: indeed, this character, called Cindy closes the first act by dragging a razor blade across her arms and drinking the contents of a bottle of bleach after she witnesses a close friend dying from a heroin overdose. Sometime after the production ended in Cardiff, I spoke with Maria Pride (the actor who portrayed Cindy) about a potent instance of where unreasonable connections between her character's self-harm and Edwards' real-life experience were harrowingly made by a female Manic Street Preachers fan. This fan, Pride informed me, initially came to the attention of the Sherman's management after she bought tickets to sit on the front row for an entire week's worth of performances. Towards the end of that week, the fan climbed onto the stage as the first act was drawing to a close, verbally interrupted the moment when Pride's character cuts herself, then proceeded to physically restrain Pride, insisting that the actor was failing to portray the self-harm narrative with 'legitimacy' (as it related to both Richey Edwards' and the fan's own experience), after which the fan produced an actual razor blade which she used to cut into her own arm.

When the production toured Britain in early 2000, I was also present at its opening night at Manchester's Contact Theatre. An audience 'demographic' similar to the one I observed in Cardiff a year earlier was in attendance. Although none of Manic Street Preachers was present, Jones had by then become more 'prominent' in the group's metatext, having been a supporting act when the group had played a concert at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff on 31 December 1999 (going into 1 January 2000), while he had also released an album of poetry accompanied by instrumental music, some of which had been composed and performed by Manic Street Preachers' guitarist James Dean Bradfield. After the opening night in Manchester, Jones chatted with me in the theatre bar, giving me an ideal vantage point to observe at close quarters how certain fans considered him as being Manic Street Preachers 'by proxy'. One fan after another asked to have their photograph taken with him, with some of them handing him letters addressed either to him or his brother. I also recall, in particular, a young female fan who gave him the gift of a trampled daffodil (a prop which she had collected from the Contact stage at the end of the play). But, it was an incident I witnessed alone during the interval which more profoundly lingers. I was sat at a table drinking coffee when I became aware of a row escalating on the table next to mine between two gangs of young people, dressed and talking in ways which suggested to me they were 'intense' about their fandom of Manic Street Preachers. Trading expletives and raising increasingly hysterical heckles at each other, their dispute appeared to be centred around which gang had the more justification for being fans of the group, and particularly in terms of espousing Richey Edwards' 'values'. A few weeks later, my attention was drawn to something happening on a news and entertainment website for Cardiff. I had by then written several articles about Patrick Jones for print journalism and websites and, in the process, a number of people

had sought to keep me informed about any activity relating to him. As a consequence, I was invited by one of these contacts to possibly add my views to an Internet discussion forum which was debating Jones' familial and creative relationship with Manic Street Preachers. I decided to intervene by questioning the appropriateness of the behaviour shown by those two feuding gangs I had witnessed in Manchester. A day or so after, I was informed by email that my intervention had prompted a response from 'PennyCSB', who wrote,

> I was also drawn into an unpleasant confrontation in the interval... in manchester. it had to do with an individual's attitude to friendship. i received a letter this week saying that an ex-friend had "forgiven your lack of self-esteem" and "you 'sensitives' bang on about your problems and forget other people have them just because you are on medication". i wondered whether this manics fan would have said the same to [Richey Edwards and realised she wouldn't because she finds his iconic status too awesome. a certain writer (who caused the [Manchester] fracas) chose to pick on my mental problems and accuse me of being insensitive to others. i'd say my difficulties make me more aware of others not less. but anyway back to the point... self disgust is indeed self obsession but at least richey made that admission. arrogance is also self-obsessive and all these twats who sit on their lofty thrones of anonymity don't care who they are hurting. i'm probably well off the subject by now but i had my bit to say nonetheless. i don't like the manics because i am depressed and i'm not depressed because i like the manics. i just saw a band i could relate to with brilliant songs. [Original syntax][1]

So, where is all this leading? Certainly, I feel able to assert that a range of narrative structures from rock culture was in place for the

staging of Jones' play; and, as such, it has been possible to identify how this particular aesthetic event might encourage other 'performances' to flow out into the spaces of the everyday.

Developing outwards from this anecdotal foundation, I have chosen to explore in what ways rock and pop culture[2] is useful in offering innovative thinking about the strange spaces of uncertainty between the 'staged' and the everyday. But, what about the existing contributions to this debate from the 'academy'? As far as I can tell, theoretical work in this area has been neglectful in understanding the dramaturgical elements of the live or other kinds of 'performed' event in rock and pop culture. This is certainly one of the strongest points made by Simon Frith in his 1996 book *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music*, that

> in self-consciously studying "performance" [in popular music culture], cultural analysts have paid far more attention to pop videos than to stage shows. (Frith 1996: 224)

Even so, in his evaluation of 'performing' popular music, Frith restricts himself to aural concepts such as sound production, rhythm, technology and the voice, while textual analysis is reduced to the methodological approach to songs 'as texts'. Although Frith comprehensively explains how musical sound is produced and displayed in the live event, his analysis conspicuously avoids discussion about performances which could be said to be 'inscribed' with conventions of theatricality. Despite his protestations, Frith is mostly reinforcing the historical and topical trend in limiting the study of rock and pop culture to the production of sound, how media images are analysed within the context of, for instance, promotional music videos, or the institutionalised discourses relating to the *modus operandi* of the music industry. Many of

these issues will be discussed in subsequent chapters as their relevance arises. However, I contend that ignoring the more opaquely 'theatrical' present in rock and pop culture (of which I would cite the event of Jones' play as an example) is to overlook a potentially rich source of untapped material offering new insights into the kinds of performance which have become a feature of the everyday, and how they might be sustained by, or in relation to, an aesthetic event.[3] For this reason, I feel justified in predicating this project, in the first instance, upon the trajectory of theoretical and methodological work in performance studies described by the performance theorist Marvin Carlson.

> The recognition that all social behavior is to a certain extent 'performed' and that different social relationships can be seen as 'roles' is of course hardly a recent idea… It was not until the twentieth century, however, that an exploration of the actual human activity appeared, directed not towards the creation of an artistic product, but toward the analysis and understanding of social behavior. (Carlson 1996: 34)

Carlson's comments are exciting to me because of their succinct ability to explain performance studies' broader relevance to the specifics of my own project. But, I also identify in them an irresistibly fresh challenge, which I would argue is implicated by the event of Jones' play: namely, how rock and pop culture has the potential to facilitate a flow between the creation of an artistic product in the aesthetic world and 'performing' in the social world. In the next chapter, I will begin to clarify what I mean by this flow by juxtaposing the personal observations I have made so far alongside an introduction to my case studies.

[1] This was found at http://www.virtual-cardiff.co.uk/forum, which I accessed on 30 March 2000 (in the period when the discussion forum was taking place).

[2] The performers who are primarily dealt with in this project's case studies belong to a specific area of the performing arts which I trust is understood by the phrase 'rock and pop culture'. Primarily used by me as a 'catch-all' term, it is also intended to exclude other kinds of performer, even musical ones (for example, classical musicians or opera singers). Whether each case study is strictly 'rock' or 'pop' is irrelevant in my chosen line of enquiry; it is their representational qualities, rather than their musical categorisation, which is the determinant factor.

[3] A formal discussion about defining what is meant by the 'everyday' is contained in Chapter 5. For the time being, I am using the term to draw attention to 'performances' and stories of 'performed' experience which appear in the social world as part of quotidian structures of living.

Chapter 2: Thematic mapping

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I talked about how the event of Patrick Jones' play was an important catalyst behind this project. Before I look more closely at the themes emanating from these specific observations and their broader relevance to my case studies, I am minded to mention a recent interview with the British stage actor Simon Russell Beale about preparations for his performance in the title role in *Macbeth* in John Caird's production at the London's Almeida Theatre. In the interview, he talks about an actor's delivery of soliloquies in the plays of William Shakespeare, insisting that

> You have to adopt a persona when you're doing a soliloquy and you have to give the audience a role, too. (Simon Russell Beale quoted in Taylor 2005: 2)

Although the context of the interview confirms that Russell Beale is referring to a pre-scripted, aesthetic drama taking place in a formal theatre building, his words suggest a contingent relationship between <u>representation</u>, <u>event</u> and <u>audience</u> relevant not just to this, but to many other kinds of performance. I will explore what I mean by 'performance' in Chapter 3, but for now I will use this tripartite structure to identify generic themes from my specific observations made in the Chapter 1 and how they might apply to my case studies.

In terms of representation, it is possible to argue that Jones' familial and creative associations with Manic Street Preachers allow him to

be viewed as being the group 'by proxy' amongst certain audience members, while the scripting and performing of his play are persuasively situated within the group's metatext. This suggests that the starting point for the case studies should be a clear definition of the key representational elements belonging to the performer concerned, and in particular where their aesthetically evaluable performances relate to, or impact upon, the social world.

My introductory observations indicated that the nature of the event is not essentially or exclusively limited to the staging of Jones' play (what would ordinarily be understood as the presentation of a pre-scripted, aesthetic drama). Rather, it would appear to conflate with Manic Street Preachers' metatext and activate processes which make visible other performances taking place beyond the theatre auditorium and into more everyday spaces, such as the theatre foyer and the Internet. For each of the case studies, therefore, it will make sense to establish the nature of the flow between an aesthetic event (such as a live concert) and activities in or concerned with the social world. Naturally, this visibility of other performances is only possible because of the presence of an audience, either in the theatre auditorium or in the form of a wider 'audience' for Manic Street Preachers' metatext. In many ways, the audience is the interlocutor existing in the 'space' between an aesthetic event and the social world. To this extent, it will benefit the case studies greatly if, for instance, I bear in mind that the audience inevitably bring their experience and awareness of the everyday to the event or performance, and how this might impact on those significant instances when they assume, or have imposed upon them, a 'performing' role of their own.

Having identified themes from these specific observations, I will now consider how they might more broadly apply to each of the

case studies, drawn from three different constituencies in rock and pop culture. My first case study deals with <u>Neil Tennant</u>, the singer with the British group Pet Shop Boys whose dominant use of electronic instrumentation and influences from night-clubbing culture mean that their style is generally understood as belonging to 'pop music'. I then follow this with a more in-depth investigation into the pervasive and enduring impact of Manic Street Preachers' lyricist <u>Richey Edwards</u> upon the group's fan culture. I have also chosen this fan culture as a case study on the premise that I can find no other example from rock or pop culture of a performer known to have disappeared without trace (as he did in February 1995). The final case study concerns <u>Bono</u>, the lead singer with the Irish rock group U2. Along with being part of a globally successful group, he has a number of other high profile associations in the public domain, largely (though not exclusively) because of his lobbying of Western governments to secure debt relief for developing nations. More detailed biographical and career information will appear in the case studies themselves. What now follows is a simple discussion of these case studies, thematically mapped in relation to the aforementioned structure of representation, event and audience.

2.2 Representation

When Pet Shop Boys established themselves in the 1980's, their public representation was predicated on effacing recognisable traces of private identity. This was predominantly structured into recordings, live concerts and other kinds of mediation, mostly foregrounding the group's singer Neil Tennant, which reflected 'fluid' codes of gender and sexuality pervasive in everyday Britain at that time. Sustaining this mode of representation was arguably

complicated by one particular 'performance' when Tennant 'transformed' a magazine interview he was giving on behalf of his group into a public announcement that he was homosexual, thereby fixing a key indicator of private social discourse into their representation. A rupture of a different magnitude underpins the case study dealing with Manic Street Preachers and their fan culture. In contrast to Pet Shop Boys, this group's representation has been predominantly structured around the personal experience of self-harm and eating disorders by their lyricist Richey Edwards, which has been made publicly available through (often intentional) mediation. The impact of Edwards' disappearance in 1995, then, is immediate and obvious. In the final case study, I begin by discussing some of the competing ways in which Bono is publicly represented by the circulation of news and newsworthy stories about him in the media. This, I argue, has led to 'excessive' mediation to the extent that his profile has plausibly become familiar in the social world, which in turn undermines his capacity for asserting his primary role as the lead singer of one of the world's most successful rock groups, particularly during U2's concerts.

2.3 Event

The live concert is one of the more obviously aesthetic events where aspects of the representations I have just talked about might be 'performed'. Pet Shop Boys' first concert tour in 1989 featured an overtly theatrical production in which Tennant portrayed a number of on-stage characters in a series of *mises-en-scène*. The effect here was to offer various narrative accounts of market oppression and the liberation of desire, mirroring what was taking place in the everyday, in large part due to the economic policies of

the then Conservative administration of Margaret Thatcher and the impact of the HIV and AIDS crisis upon gender and sexual attitudes and behaviour in the social world. The forms and functions of the live concert are also explored when I consider Pet Shop Boys' representation in the light of Tennant's public announcement about his sexual orientation. More specifically, I look at the group's collaboration with the British video artist and photographer Sam Taylor-Wood on the staging of their *Somewhere* concerts at London's Savoy Theatre in 1997. Incorporating distinctive aspects of her video artistry (the manipulation of space and time, the use of celebrity representations), Taylor-Wood converted this proscenium arch theatre into an 'installation' which allowed the group to 'play' with images of star personae and its Others. Manic Street Preachers' performances strongly contrast with the conventionally theatrical nature in Pet Shop Boys' concerts. Instead, the 'performances' which have come to be mostly associated with Manic Street Preachers' public representation are those events underscored by Richey Edwards' personal experience of self-harm and eating disorders which are circulated in, and by, the media. As a result of this mediation and its impact upon the fan culture, I conclude this case study by explaining how this has enabled the group's three remaining members to create an imaginary 'reunion' with Edwards since he disappeared. As for Bono, the ability to assert his 'authority' as the lead singer with U2 in a live concert is plausibly undermined by the range of roles in which he is copiously reported to have 'performed' in the social world. In considering how Bono has responded to this situation, I will look at one of U2's concerts in Australia from the early 1990's which took the form of an elaborate theatrical event involving his public transformation into an on-stage incarnation known as Mr. Macphisto: a perceptively ideological Other whose function appears to have been one of

disturbing and disrupting many of the images associated with him in the everyday.

2.4 Audience

Flagging up social codes which formed part of the 'lived' experience for many in their audience was an essential strand in the aesthetic choices behind Pet Shop Boys' originating representation, as well as the different and differing narrative accounts featured in the staging of their first tour. Their *Somewhere* concerts, on the other hand, implicated the audience more directly into the event by dint of the multi-media nature of Sam Taylor-Wood's 'installation' stage design. This role for the audience is crucial to understanding how the group appeared to 'reconfigure' their representation during the staging in ways which were reconcilable with Neil Tennant's public confirmation of his sexuality (it was the group's first British concerts since this announcement). In the case of Manic Street Preachers' fan culture, this key constituency of the group's audience has offered stories of 'performed' experience in their own right which appear to 'resuscitate' some of the prominent media events from Richey Edwards' narrative prior to his disappearance. Other kinds of fan testimony are able to demonstrate how the audience at Manic Street Preachers concerts might 'collude' with the group's three remaining members in creating an imaginary 'reunion' with Edwards since his disappearance. Although Bono has to perform in front of various audiences across different social, cultural and political arenas, the role of the audience at the U2 concert I will be analysing in many ways should mirror that identified by Simon Russell Beale, whose comments I quoted at the start of this chapter. In other words, the audience must be aware that they are being presented with disrupted and disturbed images of Bono in

order for them to be 're-awakened' to the possibilities offered by his primary role as lead singer with U2.

In conclusion, this mapping process has sought to begin casting better light upon the relationship between an aesthetic event and the social world pertaining to rock and pop culture, as well as to gain a sense of the 'performances' which might occur in the spaces existing in between. In this vein, I am also aware that thus far I have used the term 'performance' in such a way as to be in danger of suggesting multiple meanings. Therefore, the main objective of the next chapter will be to establish the boundaries, in the course of a literature review, relating to what I mean by 'performance' in terms of appropriateness to my ensuing case studies.

Chapter 3: Literature review

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to discuss key theorists and their concepts appropriate to my investigation into rock and pop culture. As I am predominantly concerned with the relationship between creative product and the everyday, I have also selected some of the key theoretical 'collaborations' between performance studies and the social sciences. Given the ubiquity of the term 'performance' in the preceding chapters, the overarching objective must be to arrive at workable definitions relevant to my case studies.

Until now, I have used 'performance' to talk about instances of self-contained human behaviour with a largely aesthetic quality positioned outside the more routine (mundane) activities of everyday life. I am not talking exclusively here about (typically, 'pre-scripted') aesthetic dramas which have traditionally been presented in (mostly) purpose-built theatre venues. Rather, I am arguing in favour of the view that performance does not have to take place in these kinds of specialised and segregated performance 'space'. Supporting this perspective is Baz Kershaw, who proposes that modern drama is at its most radical where it can be said to be "performance beyond theatre" (1999: 19). Discussing performance in this fashion reflects recent trends in performance studies which have seen the discipline develop, in the view of Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "well beyond the classical ontology of the black box model [i.e. the proscenium arch associated with the staging of modern European drama] to embrace a myriad of performance practices, ranging from stage to festival and

everything in between: film, photography, television, computer simulation, music, "performance art," political demonstrations, health care, cooking, fashion, shamanistic ritual" (1995: 2).

In common with actors on the dramatic stage, those who act in these kinds of performance might call upon "their everyday expressive resources – voice, gesture, movement and so on – to construct a fictional participant in the narrative, a character, which will function as the notional author of the actor's words and actions" (Counsell 1996: 3). Performance, of course, implies the presence of an audience (Carlson 1996: 5 – 6; Goodman 1996: 30). Envisaging the audience's role as an entirely passive one, however, is no longer tenable. Reflecting this assertion, Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst state

> The performer-audience interaction occurs within, or represents, critical areas in which a society is self-reflexive; it provides a kind of window, 'a limited area of transparency', through which an examination of socially and culturally sensitive issues is possible. (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998: 40)

What all this argues for is a conceptualisation of performance which is no longer limited to a strict set of aesthetic 'givens' belonging to European traditions of theatre practice. Instead, as this project seeks to pursue, the aim must be to identify those instances of dramaturgical interest between the 'staged' and the everyday, breaking down many of the traditional barriers between performer and audience in the process. As Stephen Connor suggests, "ours is a culture that is so saturated with and fascinated by techniques of representation and reproduction, that it has become difficult for us to be sure where action ends and performance begins" (1996: 109).

In terms of the parameters I bring to the notions of performance to be used in this project, I refer again to my observations stated in Chapter 1 and propose that I discuss performance in the following three ways, given shared interests they have in both performance studies and the social sciences:

- <u>language as performance</u> - for instance, the story of 'performed' experience as a Manic Street Preachers fan offered up by PennyCSB on the Internet discussion forum;

- <u>social behaviour as performance</u> - for instance, the row I witnessed between competing fans in the theatre foyer at the opening night in Manchester; and,

- <u>culture as performance</u> - for instance, appropriating the ritual of 'going to the theatre' as a way of performing fandom in the theatre foyers in Cardiff and Manchester.

The nature of these three categories will be helpful in tightening up the 'loose' characteristics in my earlier uses of the term 'performance'.

3.2 Language as performance

The theoretical debate about language as performance is dominated by the appropriation of 'performative', a lexical term from an area of linguistic study known as speech-act theory, into performance studies. Introducing the term into discursive parlance during lectures given at Harvard University in 1955 (which were later published in book form as *How To Do Things With Words*), J. L. Austin explained how, in making a performative, the speaker is not

simply making a statement (the traditional focus of linguistic analysis) but performing an action which is, for example, contractual (when someone takes a marriage vow) or declaratory (when a head of state declares war on another nation). As the name suggests, the term is "derived, of course, from 'perform', the usual verb with the noun 'action': it indicates that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action – it is not normally thought of as just saying something" (Austin 1976: 6 – 7). Although Austin made "a pervasive theatricality common to stage and world alike" possible in the evolving state of his work (Parker and Sedgwick 1995: 4), he nonetheless restricted utterances which could be regarded as performative to speech-acts in the social world. Moving away from this narrow interest in specialised speech-acts was the contribution made by John R. Searle, a student of Austin's, who stressed the performance aspect of all language and focused more closely on the intentions of the speaker, the effects on the audience and the particular social context in which the utterance takes place. To this extent, Searle argued,

> The unit of linguistic communication is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol, word or sentence, or even the token of the symbol, word or sentence, but rather the production or issuance of the symbol or word or sentence in the performance of a speech act. (Searle 1969: 16)

Contributing to the debate about the emphasis placed upon social context in speech-act theory is Emile Beneviste, whose 1971 essay "Analytical Philosophy and Language" critiques Austin and concludes that a performative utterance must be made by someone in authority who has the power to effect the act uttered; otherwise, it "is no more than words" (1971: 236 – 238).[1]

Divergent manifestations from Austin's foundational work of this kind are emphasised in Marvin Carlson's remarks about "a conflict that in various forms is very widely manifested in modern thought, and in which "performance" and "language" are both deeply involved", indicated by an influential strand in modern philosophy and linguistics which is historically anti-theatrical (1996: 63). An exploration of this struggle is made by Shoshana Felman's (1993) *The Literary Speech Act: Don Juan with Austin, or Seduction in Two Languages*. Using the work of Austin and Benveniste to explore narratives of truth in literary, linguistic and philosophical texts, Felman concludes that a tension can be found in each of these three kinds of text which appears mistrustful if the communicative aspect of language is slanted towards performance. Carlson says,

> Felman's study is not only a thought-provoking analysis of a major debate in contemporary cultural study, it is also a provocative approach to a major classic drama, which she sees as performing this same debate in theatrical terms. Her work thus provides an important example of how speech-act theory can be utilized in dramatic criticism. Felman is a distinguished but by no means isolated example of such utilization; speech-act theory has become an important analytic tool for a number of modern theorists in the study of both literary texts and theatrical performance. (Carlson 1996: 64 – 65)

Felman, therefore, usefully opens up the study of language as performance in a more dramaturgical fashion, directly challenging Austin's exclusion of literary language in his performative theory.

> For example, if I say 'Go and catch a falling star', it may be quite clear what both the meaning and the force of my

22

utterance is, but still wholly unresolved which of these other kinds of things I may be doing. There are aeriolations, parasitic uses, etc., various 'not serious' and 'not full normal' uses. The normal conditions of reference may be suspended, or ...no attempt to make you do anything, as Walt Whitman [the nineteenth century American poet] does not seriously incite the eagle of liberty to soar [through his poetry].
(Austin 1976: 104)

In his 1988 book *Limited Inc.*, Jacques Derrida contributes to Felman's challenge by referring to his concept of 'citation', whose virtue – that or 'iterability', or the possibility of repetition – is what enables a performative to succeed. Consequently, performatives are performances where an 'iterable model' is essentially possessed with a 'presence' which Dieter Mersch, in his essay on Derrida's work, describes as "an outside-the-text which nonetheless governs its scripting" (2003: 65). How this 'presence' functions in speech-acts in the case of literary language is central to Richard Ohmann's 1971 essay "Speech Acts and the Definition of Literature". While accepting the premise that nothing is essentially realised by such speech-acts in the social world, Ohmann proposes that literary language mirrors actual speech acts, while the reader is invited to provide the intentional force in delivering these speech-acts in order to construct the fictive world in which they occur. Emphasising the distinctions between the work of Austin and Ohmann on ordinary and literary language underpins Mary Louise Pratt's 1977 book *Toward a Speech-Act Theory of Literary Discourse*, in which she argues that literature, like any form of language, "cannot be understood apart from the context in which it occurs and the people who participate in it" (1977: viii). She also draws on William Labov's socio-linguistic investigation into the oral narrative of personal experience: a type of ordinary discourse which is

consciously and aesthetically constructed and whose content Labov characterises as 'tellable'. In conclusion, Pratt proposes that these 'tellable' utterances are not assertions of information, be they speech-acts in everyday life or written literary narratives; rather, they are 'stories' which "represent states of affairs that are held to be unusual, contrary to expectations, or otherwise problematic", and their speaker is

> not only reporting but also verbally *displaying* a state of affairs, inviting his addressee(s) to join him in contemplating it, evaluating it, and responding to it. His point is to produce in his hearers not only belief but also an imaginative and affective involvement in the state of affairs he is representing and an evaluative stance toward it. (Pratt 1977: 136)

Pratt also claims H. P. Grice, another speech-act philosopher, as a key source. In her view, Grice, having presented some notable correctives to Austin's work, emphasised that, far from being "autonomous, self-contained, self-motivating, context-free objects which exist independently from the 'pragmatic' concerns of 'everyday' discourse, literary works take place in a context, and like any other utterance they cannot be described apart from that context" (1977: 115).

Overall, Pratt's contribution to this particular theoretical debate is not only in securing a performative dimension to understanding language as performance where it exists aesthetically, but also in 'framing' the performative qualities of various works of fiction as their authors' elaborate speech-acts. Naturally, authorship as an authoritative voice resides with the original author. However, Julia Kristeva points out that the 'author' both implicates a variety of voices and presents itself as a speaking subject addressing an

imagined reader; at the same time, the actual reading process involves the projection back of a speaking author, so that each new reading involves a new performance by a new set of voices (1980: 75). Describing this process, she evokes not only performance but carnival.

> The scene of the carnival introduces the split speech act: the *actor* and the *crowd* are each in turn simultaneously subject and addressee of the discourse. The carnival is also the bridge between the two split occurrences as well as the place where each of the terms is acknowledged: the author (actor + spectator). (Kristeva 1980: 46)

Until now, then, this section of the literature review has been preoccupied with performative utterances as they appear in both everyday and literary discourse; but, in spite of their dramaturgical allusions, the theoretical debates discussed thus far have neglected the purely theatrical. The occasions where theorists have analysed speech-acts in theatre have worked almost exclusively on the operations of utterances which "call into being, order, and promise, but also inform, affirm, assert, remark, and so on" within the fictive world of the play (Carlson 1996: 60), similar to the work already mentioned which is concerned with ordinary or literary speaking situations.[2] Although Ross Chambers has applied Austin's theories to his own analysis of theatre, he does attempt to construct a comparable juxtaposition of the reader and a literary text with that of an audience member and a performance by positing the 'speaker' in aesthetic drama in the role of someone who is assumed to be a speaker in contact with a specific, known hearer.

> Very quickly cut loose from its ties with its "author," an artistic discourse keeps addressing constantly new hearers

who must interpret it in continually varying contexts. The "performative" underlying aesthetic discourse would be then something like: "I offer myself for your interpretation" or "I invite you to interpret me" – always supposing that such an act could be attributed to the message itself (become its own sender) and that the received designated here as "you" could be conceived as a perfectly indeterminate "to whom it may concern". (Ross Chambers quoted in Carlson 1996: 70)

Umberto Eco, in his 1977 essay "Semiotics of Theatrical Performance", also concluded that an interpretive relationship activated by performative utterances can exist between an audience member and a theatrical performance in the same way as between a reader and a literary text, asserting that actors make speech-acts to each other as 'pseudo-statements' within the fictive world of the play. For their part, the audience, according to Eco, accept the situation as fictive through the presence of another kind of speech-act presented by the performer which engages the theatrical 'frame' around that fictional world: that "through the decision of the performer… we enter the possible world of performance" (1977: 115).

From the theoretical work begun by Austin on the performative aspects of ordinary language through to Eco's interest in language used in performances from aesthetic drama, I have sought to establish where language provides 'cues' as to when a performance might be taking place as opposed to other, more routinised kinds of human activity in everyday life. By systematically looking at the developments made since Austin, what is revealed is an expanding range of ordinary and aesthetic language where the performative is said to be present. As I demonstrate in the case studies, framing devices using aesthetic language which is peculiar to rock and pop

culture (such as song lyrics) are similarly able to draw attention to the fact that a performance is taking place, while 'tellable' narratives from Manic Street Preachers' fan culture come across as performative due to the way in which discourse is 'framed' as stories of 'performed' experience. How something is performed within the context of social behaviour will be discussed in the next part of this literature review.

3.3 Social behaviour as performance

Employing a technical dramaturgical approach to his writings, Erving Goffman has been one of the most influential theorists associated with the analysis and understanding of role-playing in the social world. His theoretical work began while researching in Scotland between 1949 and 1951, where he had originally intended to investigate the general structures governing the Shetland Islands' communities. Instead, he turned his attention to the micro-sociology of everyday life in an attempt to trace the meanings behind various ways of acting in different social situations. First published in 1959 as *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, his findings outline six dramaturgical principles: 'performances', 'teams', 'regions', 'discrepant roles', 'communication out of character', and 'arts of impression management'.

Goffman defines performance as "all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers" (1990: 32). Within a performance, Goffman identifies a number of component parts: the 'front', 'dramatic realization', 'idealization', 'expressive control', 'misrepresentation' and 'mystification'. The 'front' includes physical props (such as

furniture) as well as personal expressive equipment (such as official insignia, clothing, gestures, and sex, age and racial characteristics), which serve to define the performance for observers. 'Dramatic realization' is the way in which individuals use signs in interactions to avoid obscuring important facts, while 'idealization' is "the tendency for performers to offer their observers an impression that is idealized in several different ways" even though they will "have to forgo or conceal action which is inconsistent with these standards" (1990: 44, 50). Audience segregation is particularly important to the concept of 'idealization' where the individual has a contrasting range of social selves which are performed separately according to the particular opinion they wish to convey to the distinct group they are performing in front of. Performers rely on 'expressive control' to prevent unintended elements from disrupting or destabilising the performance. Meanwhile, 'misrepresentation' refers to those aspects of performance which are enlivened with appropriate expressions in order to disguise feelings such as shame, guilt or fear. Finally, 'mystification' involves the maintenance of social distance in the performer-audience dynamic.

Goffman's concept of 'teams' refers to a set of individuals whose social interaction ensures that what is taking place is a performance. These performances often divide the social space into two: the 'front region' is where the performance proper takes place, while the 'back region' equates with a backstage area "where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course" (1990: 144). 'Discrepant roles' result from instances when the same individual occupies roles which place them in the audience in one moment and in the performers' back region in the other. 'Communication out of character' involves expressing sentiments which indicate that the performance might be just a 'show' and occurs in the 'back region' amongst the 'team':

treatment of the absent, staging talk and team collusion are given by Goffman as examples of this (1990: 168). Similar to a theatrical aside, 'realigning actions' involve a performer speaking out of character with the intention of being heard by the audience, without openly threatening the integrity or social distance between them. Goffman defines 'arts of impression management' as performers' attributes and practices which are intended to prevent embarrassment and disruption in social interaction; in response, the audience have their own 'protective practices' which involve the audience keeping out of the performer's secret areas, avoiding the use of contradictions in the performance, and pretending not to notice any discrepancy between the performer's fostered impression and their disclosed reality.

In the context of this work, Goffman describes the self as being composed of two distinct parts, 'character' and 'performer', which when combined posits the self as being a 'performed character'. Fashioning themselves in much the same way as they would a character in a theatrical production, he suggests that individuals are not entirely determined by society due to a capacity for manipulating social situations and how they are perceived to suit their own purposes.

> A correctly staged and performed scene leads the audience to impute a self to a performed character, but this imputation – this self – is a *product* of a scene that comes off, and is not a *cause* of it. The self, then, as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and to die; it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern, is

whether it will be credited or discredited. (Goffman 1990: 244 – 245)

The self-as-performer, therefore, does not represent the self as such, but rather a basic impulse which motivates an individual to engage in performances focused on achieving selfhood. The organisation and management of the roles (or characters) assumed by the self-as-performer are Goffman's main concern and "his deployment of the vocabulary of drama is well suited to explore the assumptions, advantages and limitations of such a view" (Williams 1998: 155).

Goffman's dramaturgical style of analysing social situations is taken further in his 1961 book *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Hospital Patients and Other Inmates*. This was the result of a three-year study carried out in the 1950's into the life of psychiatric inmates at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington DC which he carried out in the 1950's. Although social interactions are more specialised in this study than in his earlier focus upon everyday life, the central depiction of performance remains consistent. Typical of this is Goffman's description of a mental patient as being

> viewed as a performer, a harried fabricator of impressions involved in the all-too-human task of staging a performance; he was viewed as a character, a figure, a typically fine one, whose spirit, strength and other fine qualities the performance was intended to evoke. The attributes of a performer and the attributes of a character are of different order, quite basically so, yet both sets have their meaning in terms of the show that must go on. (Goffman 1961: 244)

Although an individual in a mental institution might be engaged in performance without being aware of it, Goffman is still able to conceive types of social behaviour which are possessed with an essential quality of performance due to their ability to suggest a performer-audience relationship. As a result, his definition of performance here appears more concerned with how social interaction is recognised by its functionality within society itself. This would appear to be true when considering Goffman's 1974 book *Frame Analysis*, itself a development of Gregory Bateson's 1954 essay entitled "A Theory of Play and Fantasy". In this essay, Bateson (2004) examines the interdependent roles of play and communication and identifies the psychological notion of the 'frame' in which 'true' worlds and actions are allowed to become 'false' because they are 'framed' within the context of play. In Goffman's appropriation of the term, the 'frame' represents an organising principle for setting apart social interactions, especially where they take on a different relationship to the everyday due to having undergone a transformative process (1974: 157). Developing his initial model of performance, Goffman points to a framing arrangement which places a specific sequence of activity before an audience whose duty is to observe at length the activities of the performer without directly participating in those activities (1974: 124 – 125). This later model has characteristics which are not inconsistent with a conventional definition of theatre,

> where actors, even though they submit themselves to an
> external production apparatus to provide their "framing," are
> very much aware of the operations of their activity. Still less
> does the model represent modern performance, where
> performers often control much of the production apparatus
> that establishes their frame. Important as the audience
> function is, therefore, we must also necessarily consider the

conscious contributions to the performance process of the performer. (Carlson 1996: 41)

To this extent, it could appear that Goffman is less interested in the audience's role than "the attributes that are required of a performer for the work of successfully staging a character" and "the very obligation and profitability of appearing always in a steady moral light, of being a socialized character, [which] forces one to be the sort of person who is practised in the ways of the stage", even though they are located within a social context (1990: 201, 244). Some general characteristics of performance include

> activity oriented towards communication; the front behind which the routine is presented is also likely to be suitable for other, somewhat different routines and so is likely not to fit completely any particular routine; sufficient self-control is exerted so as to maintain a working consensus; and idealized impression is offered by accentuating certain facts and concealing others; expressive coherence is maintained by the performer taking more care to guard against minor disharmonies than the stated purpose of the performance might lead to the audience to think was warranted. (Goffman 1990: 72)

By way of illustration, Goffman considers these general characteristics as being 'interaction constraints' which impact on the role-playing individual, rather than the audience, in order to transform an activity into a performance, thereby placing the responsibility of performance, and its agency, upon the performer in the social space (1990: 72). Criticism of this dramaturgical style of analysing social behaviour as performance has, however, been voiced by the phenomenologist Bruce Wilshire, whose 1982 book

Role Playing and Identity argues that Goffman's theatrical analogies reduces the self to a 'repertoire' of performances taking place in and across specific social locations. This risks a consequent blurring of the distinction between 'on-stage' and 'off-stage' activities, thereby eroding the performer's ethical or existential responsibility. While Wilshire does not deny the existence of social roles, he rather concludes that creative and spontaneous 'acts' should not be viewed in the same context as social roles which are 'played out' precisely because the latter belongs to 'repeatable' or 'enactable' patterns. Wilshire has more recently sought to clarify the division between 'on-stage' and 'off-stage' activities in his 1990 essay "The Concept of the Paratheatrical", expressing the view that,

> because there is an element of performance in all human skills and professions, the performers who are most vital will tend to push out the limits of their performances into borderline areas in order to test for increasing ability in the outlying actual world: to test, confirm and constitute their very selves. (Wilshire 1990: 171)

The implication here, though, is that for activities in the social world to be accepted as performances, no matter how 'extreme', the individual concerned must convince, and be convinced, that what they are doing has a clearly identifiable aesthetic value, as opposed to being borne out of a psychological deterioration of some kind because "in the end we must bound and limit activities which count as paratheatrical" (Wilshire 1990: 177- 178). This, I would suggest, indicates that performance is a 'transformative' event when it directly involves a social situation. For his part, however, Goffman instead tends to view performance as serving a specific social function. One concept where Goffman does indeed acknowledge a transformative effect is that of 'keying', which he

33

introduces in his discussion of 'strips of experience' in *Frame Analysis*.

> The term 'strip' will be used to refer to any arbitrary slice or cut from the stream of ongoing [human] activity, including here sequences of happenings, real or fictive, as seen from the perspective of those subjectively involved in sustaining an interest in them. A strip is not meant to reflect a natural division made by the subjects of inquiry or an analytical division made by students who inquire; it will be used only to refer to any raw batch of occurrences (of whatever status in reality) that one wants to draw attention to as a starting point for analysis. (Goffman 1974: 10)

Strips of behaviour are prone to replication and transformation in the social world by one of two methods; these are: 'fabrication' which takes place when an instance of social interaction is 'managed' by individuals in such a way as to give others a false idea of what is going on; and 'keying', which equates more closely to what is normally thought of as performance, and is a social occasion already meaningful at some level and then transformed by re-contextualisation into something with a further meaning. According to Goffman, examples where 'keying' takes place in the social world include 'make-believe', contests, ceremonies or other ritualistic duties, and theatrical rehearsals, while Marvin Carlson extends the list by counting psycho-dynamic treatments such as "the reenacted behavior of psychodrama or behavior therapy" (1996: 51).

Goffman's 'strip of experience' has gone on to inform the performance theorist Richard Schechner in his concept known as a 'strip of behaviour', which is central to his 1985 book *Between Theater and Anthropology*. Taking the functional notion of the

'strip' away from the analysis of social behaviour and towards the study of performance as a cultural manifestation, Schechner says that strips of behaviour

> can be rearranged or reconstructed; they are independent of the causal systems (social, psychological, technological) that brought them into existence. They have a life of their own. The original "truth" or "source" of the behavior may be lost, ignored, or contradicted – even while this truth or source is apparently being honored and observed. How the strip of behavior was made, found, or developed may be unknown or concealed; elaborated; distorted by myth and tradition. Originating as a process, used in the process of rehearsal to make a new process, a performance, the strips of behavior are not themselves process but things, items, "material." (Schechner 1985: 35)

This noticeably moves away from Goffman's emphasis on transformation during social performance ('keying') to organised (often ritualised) sequences of human activity which are possessed with a 'trace' of original human behaviour, however much it has been corrupted over time. From the point of view of the performer, Schechner goes on to explain the distinction between on-stage and off-stage identities which appear in the social world in terms of

> "me behaving as if I am someone else" or "as if I am 'beside myself,' or 'not myself,'" as when in trance. But this "someone else" may also be "me in another state of feeling/being," as if there were multiple "me's" in each person. (Schechner 1985: 37)

Although Schechner is professionally associated with the development of a strain of performance theory, the interdisciplinary nature of his theoretical work is in part explained by the pervasive influence of Goffman's dramaturgical approach to the social sciences. This approach is also helpful in separating out the 'staged' from the everyday in the social world. Defining the strange spaces of uncertainty which exist in the flow between these two points will be central to next section in this literature review.

3.4 Culture as performance

The formal study of culture as performance appears to have begun with the anthropologist Milton Singer in his introduction to a collection of essays about Indian culture called *Traditional India: Structure and Change*, which he edited in 1959. Analysing the performances and communicative media which sustained the cultural structure of a tradition, Singer felt, cast "much light on the ways in which cultural themes and values are communicated as well as on processes of social and cultural change" (1972: 77). Furthermore, in a micro reflection of all peoples, he argued that South Asians thought of their culture as being located in segregated or specialised events exhibited to themselves and others which he called 'cultural performances', citing examples such as traditional theatre and dance, concerts, recitations, religious festivals and weddings. In his view, all such cultural performances consisted of "a definitely limited time span, a beginning and an end, an organized program of activity, a set of performers, an audience, and a place and occasion of performance" (1959: xiii).

It is possible to see how these characteristics of cultural performance approximate to a (mostly) European concept of

36

theatre; for this reason, Singer has influenced subsequent convergences between anthropological and performance theorising. This is certainly true of the anthropologist Victor Turner, whose work begins from Singer's premise on cultural performance,

> but only if it is realized that cultural performances are not simple reflectors or expressions of culture or even of changing culture but may themselves be active agencies of change, representing the eye by which culture sees itself and the drawing board on which creative actors sketch out what they believe to be more apt or interesting "designs for living". (Turner 1986: 24)

Turner's contribution to this debate began with his book *Schism and Continuity in an African Society*, which was originally published in 1957. This study of the village life of the Ndembu people from north-western Zambia introduces, in embryonic form, his 'social drama' model as a tool for explaining cultural processes in the social world. In his preface to the 1968 edition of this book, Turner says that applying a dramaturgical analysis to the activities of the Ndembu people revealed a society which "represented a complex interaction between the normative patterns laid down in the course of deep regularities of conditioning and social experience, and the immediate aspirations, ambitions and other conscious goals and strivings of individuals and groups in the here and now" (1996: xxii). However, as Turner later concedes in his 1982 book *From Ritual to Theatre*, the social drama model was based upon Arnold Van Gennep's research into small-scale societies published in French as *Rites de Passage* in 1908. What Van Gennep contributed to anthropological theory was to formatively propose that "the concept of boundary was central to human and social experience" and to subsequently explore "the symbolism, the emotionality and

the practical difficulties presented in the transition through and across boundaries" (Jenks 2003: 42). As such, his work predominantly focused on actions at the periphery of the social world, crossings of the threshold, entries and exits to social categories and statuses, along with the symbolic apparatus which both accompanies and enables these crossings. As Mary Douglas explains, Van Gennep envisaged society

> as a house with rooms and corridors in which passage from one to another is dangerous. Danger lies in transitional states; simply because transition is neither one state or the next, it is undefinable. The person who must pass from one to another is himself in danger and emanates danger to others. The danger is controlled by ritual which precisely separates him from his old status, segregates him for a time and then publicly declares his entry into a new status. (Douglas 1966: 116)

Douglas is symbolically describing the processual nature of Van Gennep's 'rites of passage', rituals which accompany the change in social status experienced by one or more individuals and are encountered in

> ceremonies of birth, childhood, social puberty, betrothal, marriage, pregnancy, fatherhood, initiation into religious societies, and funerals... The universe itself is governed by a periodicity which has repercussion on human life, with stages and transitions, movements forward and periods of relative inactivity. (Arnold Van Gennep quoted in Jenks 2003: 43)

Accordingly, these 'rites of passage' operate in three phases across social space and through social time, with the symbolic narrative

running continuously from one ordered world to the next, bookended by a 'separation' (where sacred space and time is distinguished from profane or secular space and time) and an 'incorporation' (in which symbolic apparatus is used to represent the return of ritual subjects to their newly defined position in the heart of the social world). Between these two positions is an intervening space of 'transition', which Van Gennep calls 'limen' (meaning 'threshold' in Latin), an 'in-between' stage with limitless possibilities. From this, Turner developed his own theory of 'liminality', whose function as a place of transition between two states of cultural activity, roles or orders translates into an image of performance as a "sort of social limbo which has few (though sometimes these are most crucial) of the attributes of either the preceding or subsequent profane social statuses or cultural states" (1982: 24).

Turner's deployment of dramaturgical metaphors to cultural performances located outside formal theatre practice continues with his 1974 book *Drama, Fields, and Metaphors*. By extending the analytical strategy from the Ndembu people towards a wider variety of such activity across history, he consolidates his social drama model through such diverse examples as the conflict between King Henry II of England and his Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas à Becket or the Hidalgo Insurrection during the Mexican Revolution of Independence (from Spanish colonial rule) in the early nineteenth century. In each of these social dramas, Turner identifies the same pattern and, in the process, claimed that his metaphorical choices from the cultural form of stage drama was universally valid: first, a breach occurs in an established and accepted norm (a situation which schisms a social unit – family, work group, village, community, nation etc.); this develops into a mounting crisis or precipitating event where factions are formed which must be dealt

with; following this is a process of redress to overcome the crisis, as formal and informal mechanisms of crisis resolution are employed; and, finally, a reintegration is made, either involving an adjustment of the original cultural situation or a recognition of the permanence of the schism (1974: 37).

Richard Schechner has taken a prominent role in developing performance theory in reference to, and in collaboration with, Turner and his anthropological work. Indeed, a formal working relationship was forged when Schechner invited Turner to collaborate on a workshop exploring the interface between ritual and theatre, social and aesthetic drama, and the social sciences and the performing arts. Of this workshop, Turner says, "That experiment persuaded me that cooperation between anthropological and theatrical people was not only possible but also could become a major teaching tool for both sets of partners" (1982: 91). Schechner was essentially interested in Turner's social drama model, arguing that its four-stage structure was also visible in all theatre, as well as the social world. That said, Schechner argued important differences between aesthetic and social dramas did exist in terms of their respective performance and cultural contexts. These differences were addressed in his 1977 essay "Selective Inattention".

> The visible actions of a given social drama are informed... by underlying aesthetic principles and specific theatrical/rhetorical techniques. Reciprocally, a culture's visible aesthetic theater is informed... by underlying processes of social interaction. The politician, activist, militant, terrorist all use techniques of the theater (staging) to support social action – events that are consequential, that is, designed to change the social order or to maintain it. The theater artist

uses the consequential actions of social life as the underlying themes, frames, and/or rhythms of her/his art. The theater is designed to entertain and sometimes to effect changes in perception, viewpoint, attitude: in other words, to make spectators react to the world of social drama in new ways. (Schechner 1988: 190).

In response, Turner disagreed that aesthetic drama normally mirrors the four-stage structure of his social drama model. Nevertheless, his later writings do acknowledge the virtues of Schechner's appropriation which "has the merit of pointing up the dynamical relation between social drama and expressive cultural genres" (1982: 74). Turner also continued to develop his theory of liminality, and eventually juxtaposed it with a related concept he called the 'liminoid'. While liminality refers to the instances of 'sacred space-time' in which cultural performance is enacted through rite, myth, song, secret language and various non-verbal symbolic genres such as dancing or painting (1982: 24, 27), Turner's definition of the liminoid emphasises it as a domain of creative activity taking place in neutral or privileged spaces which are separate from the mainstream of productive or political events.

> Universities, institutes, colleges, etc.. are "liminoid" settings for all kinds of freewheeling, experimental cognitive behaviour as well as forms of symbolic action, resembling some found in tribal society, like "rushing" and "pledging" ceremonies in American college fraternity and society houses, for example. (Turner 1982: 33)

The pivotal difference between liminal and liminoid performance is that the former, while seeming to challenge the established order, instead ultimately reaffirms it. Turner feels, however, that in

complex, modern industrialised societies, these kinds of cultural affirmation are no longer tenable, hence his motives behind defining what he calls liminoid activities, which are more limited and individualistic, devoted to play, sport, leisure or art, and outside the 'regular' cultural activity of work or business. Liminoid activities are also resistant to the established order, but by being more playful and contingent; however, as they may consciously or otherwise be exploring (real) alternatives to the status quo, they are also more likely to be subversive than liminal activities. Consequently, the potential for liminoid activities to facilitate social and cultural resistance, and the exploration of alternative possibilities, is productive to any study of performance which exists beyond the more culture-bound structures of formal theatre institutions and industries.

By way of concluding this section, it is worth mentioning Colin Turnbull's work in taking forward Turner's areas of explored interest. In his 1990 essay "Liminality: A Synthesis of Subjective and Objective Experience", Turnbull radically developed Turner's application of a theatrical model to certain phenomena in a culture under analysis by viewing its potential relevance to the process of analysis itself (1990: 50). The effect here is to show how recent theoretical trends in cultural performance have moved away from a preoccupation with the performer and their performative acts to a consideration of who is watching the performance, who is reporting on it, and what the social, cultural and political implications of these other social interactions are upon the process. Underpinning this theoretical paradigm is a clear emphasis upon participation (by both performer and audience) in a performance. This has been made even more pervasive due to technical innovations such as the Internet, enabling all kinds of cultural performance which can, and do, circulate with relative ease around the world. In turn, this has

led to complex, interlocking patterns of contact with other cultures or cultural performances.

Therefore, now having reviewed some of the broad theoretical debates which overlap performance studies and the social sciences, I will return to a mapping process in the next chapter to establish how these performance concepts of language, social behaviour and culture relate more precisely to the specific nuances of my case studies.

---

[1] In many ways, Emile Benveniste's conditional approval of Austin stated here is similar to that found in the 1974 book entitled *La Révolution du langue poétique* by Julia Kristeva, who finds Austin's description based on symbolic convention and, therefore, fails to grasp fully that the performative 'scene' involves shifting and negotiated meanings between the speaker and their audience (see Carlson 1996: 62). Although Kristeva's specialised emphasis derives from her role as a literary theorist, she nonetheless draws attention to the contingent nature of a performative utterance when considered in a social context and in turn structured not symbolically, but viewed as performance.

[2] Shakespeare's plays appear to dominate this particular analytical trend. Examples of these include: Joseph A. Porter, who applied Austin's theories to Shakespeare's history plays in his 1979 book *The Drama of Speech Acts*, arguing that while the drama is a world based on speech-acts, speech-act theory could not in fact be applied to the drama as a whole, because there was "no single speaker who is the doer of the action" (1979: 161); Stanley Fish, whose 1980 book *Is There a Text in This Class?* analyses speech acts in *Coriolanus* with the intention of showing how speech-act theory to the drama-audience relationship by showing how the speech acts within Shakespeare's play can also be found in our own social world; and, Herbert H. Clark and Thomas B. Carlson, whose 1982 essay "Hearers and Speech Acts" analyses *Othello* to show how speech-acts in the play are not only directed primarily at addressees but also at "hearers" in the conversation (although this latter distinction is strictly limited to the context of the drama's fictive world and ignores a more important set of hearers, namely the actual audience in the theatre).

Chapter 4: Theoretical mapping

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, I thematically mapped my case studies according to
the broader performance issues emanating from the 'localised'
example of Patrick Jones' play and its opening nights in Cardiff and
Manchester. As my observations suggest a relationship between an
aesthetic event and the social world, this mapping exercise enabled
me to identify three clear categories of theory relating to
performance – language, social behaviour and culture - which are,
in turn, appropriate to my particular investigation into rock and pop
culture. I now return to the mapping process, but this time in order
to apply the findings from my theoretical discussion to the specifics
of my case studies.

4.2 Performative map

Unlike other types of artistic performance (for instance, stage and
film acting or opera singers in character), the semiotic conventions
which confirm that rock and pop performers are engaged in
performance are rarely aided by formal cues (such as the rise of a
stage curtain, a film's opening credits on a cinema screen or the
initial movement of a conductor's baton). Neither can the public
'character' of a rock or pop performer be comparable to the way an
actor portrays a dramatic character, as the 'essence' of the former's
star persona is likely to remain the same whether on-stage or off-
stage, in a formal performance venue or not. A concern for modes
of verbal, sometimes aided by paralinguistic forms of,
communication is one important way in which to identify those

instances where a performative frame is activated by a rock or pop performer.

This is certainly true with regard to Pet Shop Boys' embrace of 'fluid' codes of gender and sexuality. As this particular case study reveals, the group's promotional interviews with the media (mostly conducted with the singer Neil Tennant) have played an important role in their strategy of creating discursive distance between their public representation (what is inside the frame) and their private identity (what lies outside). Activating the frame in this way was crucial if it was to be understood that Tennant publicly confirmed his sexual orientation in the context of being a pop performer (he did so as part of a media interview promoting Pet Shop Boys); whereas, in his private life, he would more likely inform his friends and family in an informal setting.

Understanding language as performance is a pivotal factor in investigating the precise nature of Richey Edwards' representation. This is not merely to state that, as the lyricist with Manic Street Preachers, his most significant performances were structured in and around the (written or sung) word. Rather, I would suggest that in this particular case study, song lyrics can be one way of drawing attention to narrative structures relevant to Edwards' personal experience of self-harm and eating disorders, which in turn signal what is intentionally being made available for public mediation. Other performances by Edwards which are less language-based or language-dominant will be shown to be 'resuscitated' by stories of 'performed' experience about self-harm and eating disorders coming out of Manic Street Preachers' fan culture, 'tellable' utterances which have appeared in the media and on the Internet particularly following his disappearance.

Performative modes of language use are one way in which I will show how Bono can be shown to rein in the myriad representations he has in the public domain. Take, for instance, his address to the Harvard University graduating year of 2001, when he introduced himself accordingly: "My name is Bono, and I'm a rock star."[1] Although his speech mostly dealt with his political lobbying of Western governments to secure debt relief for developing nations, I would argue that the performative function of this utterance is to simultaneously acknowledge the presence of multiple 'Bonos' while disengaging himself from any institutionalised associations outside of rock culture which could undermine his authority as the lead singer with one of the world's most successful rock groups. How Bono 'rounds up' these multiple 'Bonos' forms the basis of my analysis of a U2 concert in the case study proper, and in which I will draw attention to the sequence of performative frames being engaged as he enters, shifts different registers in, and then returns from the fictive world of (dramatic) play, enabled by his on-stage portrayal of Mr. Macphisto.

As rock and pop culture does not operate using traditional practices of, or adhere to, established theories from pure theatre, the intention of this particular map has been to highlight ways in which performances might be taking place in forms other than demonstrating musicianship and the like. For this reason, identifying the engagement of performative frames becomes a useful component in this project's 'toolkit'.

4.3 Social behaviour map

As I have emphasised at various points in this project so far, the main interest in rock and pop culture for me is its relative

uniqueness in being able to facilitate a flow between the aesthetic event and the social world. Part of this is explained by the suggestion that the subjects in my case studies are essentially concerned with their capacity for 'manipulating' social situations, and how they might perceptively confront their particular representational schism. In the previous section, of course, I looked at how language was used in terms of giving an audience 'cues' as to when the performer in question is perceptively engaged in performance. Once these frames have been established, Erving Goffman's work in dramaturgically analysing what happens within the sites of performance is helpful, particularly his discussion about the front and back regions.

Dividing the site of performance between the front and back regions is crucial to my analysis of the Pet Shop Boys' first British concerts which pursued Neil Tennant making public his sexual orientation. In the case study, I will discuss how Sam Taylor-Wood's 'installation' design – which was site-specific within a purpose-built proscenium arch theatre - for the group's *Somewhere* concerts played with connotative images of 'back-stage' and 'on-stage'. The efficacy of this event to reconfigure Pet Shop Boys' mode of representation in the light of 'fixing' Tennant's sexual orientation in the public domain will be shown to be dependent on shifts between front and back regions being recognised and understood by the audience.

The distinctions between the front and back regions in terms of Richey Edwards' personal experience of self-harm and eating disorders can be categorised by what was publicly mediated, and what was not. In other words, his significant contribution to Manic Street Preachers' metatext would seem to be about transforming activities or issues normally regarded as private into aesthetically evaluable acts due to their (mostly) intentional mediation for public

consumption; conversely, the 'secret' areas where Edwards' psychological dysfunction dominates axiomatically remain 'out of bounds' to the group's fan culture.

As a result of the various roles and responsibilities he is associated with, the potential for 'excessive' mediation of Bono's public profile should mean that he may be required to move in and out of different front and back regions in the same slice of social space and time. To this extent, as intimated by his introductory comment made at Harvard University, there appears to be an intention on his part to rein in the multiple 'Bonos' which proliferate in the everyday. Rather like Pet Shop Boys, his use of an aesthetic event serves to challenge these problematics in representation by a process of 'keying' in the form of allying his transformation into, and subsequent portrayal of, Mr. Macphisto with distinctively theatrical images of backstage and on-stage activity. That's to say, the 'cues' Bono employs each provide a 'key' to indicate that Mr. Macphisto is intended to be a less familiar incarnation of the rock performer.

Viewing the case studies within a broader understanding of social behaviour as performance is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, they are not dealing with examples from formal theatre practice. At the same time, the case studies will systematically show how each interaction, to varying degrees, takes place between the social world and an aesthetic event which might, nonetheless, resort to overtly theatrical techniques such as dramatic characterisation, musical performance, creative writing and stage design. With this in mind, I now wish to consider how my case studies might be posited around instances of social drama, as identified by Victor Turner in his work on cultural performance.

4.4 Social drama map

Although many of the performances I refer to in my case studies
deploy semiotic conventions or actual techniques related to a
conventional understanding of theatre in their 'staging', the driving
interest of my project remains the flow between an aesthetic event
and the social world. Of course, Turner's concept of liminality is
useful in explaining where thresholds might exist, and what
'performances' take place there. Furthermore, in the case of Manic
Street Preachers' fan culture, it is also possible to identify the
presence of liminoid activities, given the stories of 'performed'
experience referred to in the case study which pervade everyday
(leisure) activities such as exchanging discourse on the Internet.
Applying Turner's 'social drama' model to my case studies is
particularly useful, not least because each one has to deal with an
evolving narrative underpinned by different kinds of
representational schism, with redress to deal with the relevant
schism taking place at the interface between rock and pop culture
and the social world. As I will now explain, every one of the four
stages of the model can be seen to unfold in a different dramatic
mode within the context of the case study concerned, each rivalling
the last in pushing the limits of 'theatricality'.

Resisting fixed, traditional or institutionalised concepts of gender
and sexuality (even stardom and nationhood) represents the breach
in Pet Shop Boys' public representation, with their originating
preference instead for reflecting fluid social codes in the everyday
Britain of the 1980's. For Manic Street Preachers, the breach can
be found in instances where Richey Edwards made publicly available
images relating to his personal experience of issues usually
regarded as private, mostly through intentional mediation. In
Bono's case, the breach is essentially concerned with the view that

his 'presence' found in different and differing social, cultural and political arenas has meant that his public representation has transcended its origins in rock culture and now pervades the everyday in the form of news and newsworthy stories reported in, and circulated by, the media.

The crisis for Pet Shop Boys took place when Neil Tennant publicly confirmed that he was homosexual during a media interview which was arranged to promote his group, thereby undermining the group's capacity for persuasively effacing recognisable traces of private identity from their public representation. Richey Edwards' disappearance has inevitably developed into a crisis for Manic Street Preachers, given how far their public representation, and much of its attraction for the fan culture, is significantly embedded in Edwards' 'performances' which dealt with his experience of self-harm and eating disorders. In turn, fan testimony can show the strength of desire for this mode of representation to persist, and for the fan culture to sustain it by proxy in Edwards' absence. Meanwhile, as Bono is no longer limited exclusively or predominantly to rock culture, the crisis for him is that his authority as the lead singer with U2 becomes lost under the welter of other competing discourses in the social world.

The redressive action in all three case studies intentionally hones in on an obvious performance event in rock and pop culture: the concert, and its role in overcoming the particular crisis pertaining to each. Following Tennant's announcement about his sexual orientation, one significant value of Pet Shop Boys' collaboration with Sam Taylor-Wood on their *Somewhere* concerts was its capacity to reconcile the representational implications of this announcement with the prevalence of his group's originating representation. Since Edwards' disappearance, Manic Street

Preachers' fan culture has been actively contributing discourse in the form of stories of 'performed' experience which appear to 'resuscitate' notable episodes from Edwards' mediated narrative. Furthermore, I argue that this form of social relations also allows Manic Street Preachers' three remaining members to continue drawing on Edwards' role in the group in his absence. What type of redressive action Bono takes is shown by my analysis of his performance during one of U2's concerts from the early 1990's, in which he appropriates a series of actorly techniques to take apart, manipulate and re-assemble his on-stage persona as a way to rein in many of familiar images relating to his myriad representations in the public domain.

Reintegration for Pet Shop Boys is realised in the staging for their *Somewhere* concerts by enabling their corporeal selves and their video alternates (seen in Sam Taylor-Wood's video footage which forms part of her installation design) to interact with each other and, ultimately, the audience in the theatre auditorium. The effect is to emphasise their public profile (when their star story is 'on') by making available to the audience images which draw attention to its Others ('off' activities, such as socialising with friends), thereby eliding a public representation which is dependent on resisting aspects of private identity. For constituent parts of Manic Street Preachers' fan culture, the phase of reintegration is embedded in performances which inscribe Edwards' iconic status with religious (Christian) connotations of resurrection and rebirth, mostly in response to the lack of certainty surrounding Edwards' plight. As for Manic Street Preachers' three remaining members, this and other manifestations of social relations in the fan culture have allowed them to create an imaginary 'reunion' with Edwards in their concerts since his disappearance. For Bono, the process of reintegration is tied to the trajectory of his transformation into, and

his portrayal of, Mr. Macphisto during the U2 concert I analyse. As I will show, the increasingly elaborate nature of this theatrical event persuasively appears to disturb and disrupt any familiar assumptions (including his creative associations with U2) his audience may have. Ultimately, though, this performance appears to enable Bono's primary (preferred) role as the lead singer with U2 to be re-asserted with increased authority on returning from his transformed state.

In his book *The Anthropology of Performance*, Victor Turner states that

> if the contrivers of cultural performances, where these are recognized as "individual" authors," or whether they are representatives of a collective tradition, geniuses or elders, "hold the mirror up to nature," they do this with "magic mirrors" which make ugly or beautiful events or relationships which cannot be recognized as such in the continuous flow of quotidian life in which we are embedded. (Turner 1986: 22)

I am quoting Turner at this point because of his reference to the structures of everyday life as they relate to instances of cultural performance. At several points in this project, I have made reference to the juxtaposition of the 'staged' with the everyday in rock and pop culture, beginning with my observations in Cardiff, Manchester and the Internet surrounding the event of Patrick Jones' play. Offering a productive description of the flow between an aesthetic event and the social world is Richard Schechner, who talks about cultural performances which when 'acted out' inform the everyday of social action, and how social actions 'acted out' in the everyday affects the staging of these cultural performances (1985: 37). With this in mind, I now wish to 'round off' the broad

theoretical discussion in advance of my case studies by looking at a selection of appropriate discussions about everyday life, including the forms and functions of the 'theatrical' in dealing with its more problematic aspects.

---

[1] See http://www.u2.com/homepage/news110601_1_detail.html.

Chapter 5: Everyday life, the performative society and 'making strange'

At various points in this project, and with varying degrees of emphasis, I have acknowledged the potential for a flow to exist between an aesthetic event and the social world within rock and pop culture. Supported by appropriate theoretical concepts discussed in Chapter 3, I have implicitly sought to establish the view that the diversity of performance definitions in this project acknowledges the spaces, structures and routines of everyday life. Before beginning my case studies, however, I now intend to bring greater clarification to what I mean by everyday life relevant to my case studies by looking at some of the historical and topical debates on this topic.

As my intention is for the concept of everyday life to be viewed as a potential site for different kinds of performance, a useful starting point is Raymond Williams' inaugural lecture as Professor of Drama at Cambridge University in 1974 entitled "Drama in a Dramatized Society" and published in his 1983 book *Writing in Society.* What Williams suggests is that drama *per se* is no longer restricted to the orthodoxies of formal theatrical institutions because, in modern society, more people than ever have frequent access to diverse modes of dramatic narratives through film, television and radio. At a deeper level, Williams also feels that more general modes of dramatisation and fictionalisation increasingly permeate social and cultural conventions to the extent that drama has become inexorably structured into the 'lived' experience of the everyday. In response, Williams points to an obvious problematic for the ways in which society observes and interprets itself.

Actions of a kind and scale that attract dramatic comparisons
are being played out in ways that leave us continually
uncertain whether we are spectators or participants. The
specific vocabulary of the dramatic mode – drama itself, and
then tragedy, scenario, situation, actors, performances, roles,
images – is continually and conventionally appropriated for
these immense actions. It would moreover be easier, one can
now often feel, if only actors acted, and only dramatists wrote
scenarios. But we are far past that. On what is called the
public stage, or in the public eye, improbable but plausible
figures continually appear to represent us. Specific men are
magnified to temporary universality, and so active and
complex is this process that we are often invited to see them
rehearsing their roles, or discussing their scenarios. (Williams
1983: 17)

It persuasively seems to me that Williams is rehearsing, at a macro
level, the stories of 'performed' experience in everyday life which
can now be found on the Internet, for instance, as a micro feature
of Manic Street Preachers' fan culture. But, how is the 'everyday'
defined in theoretical debates? What I find is a discussion about a
concept which signifies more than mere protocol or etiquette rooted
in the mundane or the quotidian; at the same time, neither is
everyday life simply characterised by singular, individual acts or an
overarching structure common to a large group of people. To this
extent, Ben Highmore points to the difficulty in reaching a
satisfactory appreciation of what everyday life (definitively,
unambiguously) means.

As the notion of 'everyday life' circulates in Western cultures
under its many guises (*Alltagsleben*, *la vie quotidienne*, run-
of-the-mill and so on) one difficulty becomes immediately

apparent: 'everyday life' signifies ambivalently. On the one hand, it points (without judging) to those most repeated actions, those most travelled journeys, those most inhabited spaces that make up, literally, the day to day. This is the landscape closest to us, the world most immediately met. But with this quantifiable meaning creeps another, never far behind: the everyday as value and quality – everydayness. Here the most travelled journey can become the dead weight of boredom, the most inhabited space a prison, the most repeated action an oppressive routine. Here the everydayness of everyday life might be experienced as a sanctuary, or it may bewilder or give pleasure, it may delight or depress. Or its special quality might be its lack of qualities. It might be, precisely, the unnoticed, the inconspicuous, the unobtrusive. (Highmore 2002a: 1)

The ambivalence which Highmore expresses is, presumably, indicative of the effects of modernity upon everyday life, of which the impact of the media is a most significant concern. Henri Lefebvre goes further by insisting that modern society now exists in "the mediatised everyday", in the sense that daily rituals and routines are organised around the media's invasive presence at certain points throughout the day and night, such as the time when a regular television programme is broadcast regulating meal-times (2004: 50). Another theoretical contribution about the increasingly dominant impact of the media in this fashion is to be found in Guy Debord's 1967 book, *The Society of the Spectacle*. Debord argued that the nature of 'cultural industries', where they are founded upon and sustained by mass media technology (such as Hollywood), is to organise society around the consumption of images and commodities. In the process, the 'lived' experience is debased to the extent that an individual comes to define their self through this

mode of consumption. Of course, the realisation of Debord's critique could be said to apply to some of my observations made in Chapter 1, where images from Manic Street Preachers' metatext appear to be circulated between an aesthetic event and everyday spaces occupied by constituents in the group's fan culture. Applying the Debordian 'spectacle' to my line of inquiry will therefore be a key role in Chapter 7, as it deals in a more in-depth way with this particular fan culture. Specifically, I discuss how issues of self-harm and eating disorders, images of which were made publicly available by Richey Edwards, have been commodified by the media. Since he disappeared without trace in 1995, a spectacle has been reliably constructed due to social relations being forged around the circulation of these images in mediated 'spaces', particularly in the form of stories of 'performed' experience which appear to 'resuscitate' significant events from Edwards' mediated narrative. As such, it is feasible for the group's remaining members to continue premising their public representation on Edwards' self-reflexive discourse and, consequent on this, they are able to create an imaginary 'reunion' with him in their concerts since he disappeared.

A different perspective on the 'colonisation' of everyday life is discussed by Baz Kershaw in his 1994 essay "Framing the audience for theatre". Kershaw believes that a pervasive 'theatricalisation' can be found in almost every sphere of activity in Western(ised) developed countries, particularly those with service sector economies, to the extent that "our day-to-day encounters, our leisure activities, our politics, and much more, increasingly are framed as quasi-theatre": examples include the development of the heritage and tourist industries towards costume drama, the proliferation of name badges worn by shop assistants reflecting a demand to 'perform' a corporate identity, or the creation of 'shrines'

at fatal accident or murder sites (1994: 166). This, Kershaw argues, has produced "the 'performative society', in which human transactions are complexly structured through the growing use of performative modes and frames"; and, as the commodification of theatre and performance becomes more commonplace in the everyday, his disquiet is that

> Where performance may once have provided the site for a subversion of its own context... it is slowly being robbed of its power to provoke authority, radical or otherwise, in its audiences. (Kershaw 1994: 183)

If this state of affairs has been reached, I suggest that it results from ritualistic or routinised characteristics of the performative society having become familiar or 'second nature': what Highmore describes as the "absorption of the most revolutionary of inventions into the landscape of the mundane" (2002a: 2). In the process, everyday life becomes more than an 'ordinary' culture readily available for scrutiny, it also refers to those features of the everyday which lie hidden. The challenge is to sufficiently disturb and disrupt these features with the unfamiliar; and, to this extent, everyday life studies has much to learn from the theatrical and its capacity for 'making strange'. A rich resource is the work of the twentieth century German theatre practitioner Bertolt Brecht, who could be said to have anticipated many of the problematic aspects which would beset the performative society, and the conservative instincts Kershaw believes it sustains. For his part, Brecht considered mainstream theatre as 'culinary', with his main target being naturalist drama. Originating in Europe in the late nineteenth century, naturalist drama sought to deal with the sources of life, the effects of heredity, and increasing demands for political and social change initiated by the likes of Charles Darwin, Sigmund Freud and

Karl Marx. A 'movement' led predominantly by the Scandinavian playwrights August Strindberg and Henrik Ibsen, the intention was to present a psychological truth on stage, something which purportedly reflected 'real life'. In Brecht's view, this form of theatre over time 'coerced' a gullible audience into feeling empathy for certain characters, instead of being (made) aware of the ideologies being represented on stage and how they related to the audience's own reality (1964: 89). To subvert such pacifying techniques, Brecht's form of didactic entertainment deployed a range of 'interruptive' strategies (such as film, cabaret and live music) whose purpose was to 'make strange' what was happening on stage. As Frederic Jameson puts it in his book about Brecht's method, "the theory of estrangement, which always takes off from the numbness and familiarity of everyday life, must always estrange us from the everyday" (1998: 84). In practice, this method had the objective of providing social and political resonances to make the invisible visible to the audience in terms of their 'lived' own experience in the social world. As Highmore says, Brecht's theoretical work offers the study of everyday life "a vehicle more able to contain the multiple strands and complex interweavings of the everyday, while framing them in a way that acknowledges their constructedness and revivifies material that is continually slipping out of view" (2002b: 24).

By considering this historical precedent from theatre practice in this way, it becomes tenable to advocate an 'applied Brechtianism', seeking out performances which understand the relationship between the 'staged' and the everyday and which possess the qualities Brecht demanded of his own performers and productions: to achieve what he called an 'alienation effect' whose objective

consists in turning the object of which one is to be
made aware, to which one's attention is to be drawn,
from something peculiar, striking and unexpected.
What is obvious is in a certain sense made
incomprehensible, but this is only in order that it may
then be made all the easier to comprehend. Before
familiarity can turn into awareness the familiar must
be stripped of its inconspicuousness; we must give up
assuming that the object in question needs no
explanation. However frequently recurrent, modest,
vulgar it may be it will now be labelled as something
unusual. (Brecht 1964: 143 - 144)

The specific expectations which Brecht had for his audience should
also be taken into account. As Alan Read recognises, an audience's
ability to exert critical expertise when watching a performance is
vital "because good theatre has an invaluable role to play in
disarming the tyrannies of the everyday" (1993: 2). Read's own
experience of developing theory through practice is also useful to
my discussion. From 1983 to 1991, as the Director of the
Rotherhithe Theatre Workshop in the Docklands area of London, he
developed practice as research which responded to the rapidly
changing neighbourhood while examining performance practices
resulting from social changes and conditions. This work led to his
1993 book *Theatre and Everyday Life: An Ethics of Performance*,
which argues that the analysis and practice of everyday life should
be of major concern to performance studies, given that theatrical
narratives are essential in the social world because they "always
offer alternative realities and insights to the everyday" (1993: 6).
This interpretation of theatre is predicated on the assumption that,
as theatrical modes and practices stretch the limits and challenge
the boundaries of an aesthetic event, the everyday will feature

more prominently as the mainstream is deserted in preference for celebrating the 'neglected' and 'undocumented' narratives in the social world. In many ways, what Read is talking about has parallels with the precedent set by Peter Brook's dramaturgical paradigm which I mentioned in Chapter 2, due to a shared desire to envisage theatre existing outside the 'black box' (proscenium arch) model and rediscovering its role in effecting social and political change. In an interview given in 1972, four years after the original publication of *The Empty Space*, Brook discussed how he saw the relationship between the 'staged' and the everyday.

> In the theatre of illusion, the curtain goes up and supposedly there is the world of imagination, and then the curtain goes down and we are all back in the everyday world, as though the everyday world has no imagination and the imaginary world has no everyday. This is both untrue and unhealthy, and must be rejected. The healthy relationship is the co-existing one. (Peter Brook quoted in Croydon 1974: 278)

Through the ensuing case studies, I consider that the overarching purpose of this project is to re-envisage Brook's generic model in the context of rock and pop culture, not least because, as my observations relating to Patrick Jones' play attest, the 'empty space' can also be a place of the everyday.

Chapter 6: Case study 1 - Neil Tennant of Pet Shop Boys

6.1 Abstract

Effacing recognisable traces of private identity has been central to how Pet Shop Boys represented themselves through mediation in the public domain from their inception in the 1980's. Their approach was manifest in 'performances' (on audio and video recordings, interviews with the media and during their concerts) mostly by the group's singer Neil Tennant, which appeared to 'glide' in and out of varying subject positions. At the same time, these performances mirrored many of the broader cultural, social and political narratives relating to changing attitudes towards gender and sexuality codes in the 'lived' experience of everyday Britain at that time. For their first concert tour in 1989, the group further embedded this mode of representation in a highly theatrical presentation in which (mostly) Tennant portrayed various on-stage characters in an account of market oppression and the liberation of desire within the context of the enterprise culture of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government and the impact of the HIV and AIDS crisis upon morality discourses. In contrast to this stance was Tennant's decision to transform a magazine interview he gave in 1994 to promote Pet Shop Boys' product into a public announcement that he was homosexual, thereby positing a key strain of his own private, 'lived' experience firmly inside his group's frame. It is argued that Tennant's action here necessitated a re-alignment in how the group subsequently 'perform' in the public domain. In addressing this problematic, it is relevant to consider their collaboration with the British artist Sam Taylor-Wood on a series of concerts at London's Savoy Theatre in 1997 (their first

British concerts since Tennant publicly disclosed his sexual orientation). Applying the distinctive aspects of her video artistry (such as the manipulation of space and time, the use of star stories), Taylor-Wood created an 'installation' stage design for this purpose-built proscenium arch theatre which consisted of a screen on either side of the stage showing 'real time' footage with Pet Shop Boys performing in a 'module' between these screens. In the course of the performance, which also openly 'engineered' audience interaction, the group manipulated images of being 'on-stage' and 'off-stage', with the overall effect of acknowledging to their audience that the group had a private life, but that this would remain outside their public, 'performing' frame.

6.2 Introduction

Neil Tennant is the singer of the British pop group Pet Shop Boys; the other member of this two-piece is the keyboard player Chris Lowe. As Tennant gives the overwhelming majority of Pet Shop Boys' interviews alone, the large part of my critique pertains to how their representation has come to be mostly structured around Tennant's words and actions.

Tennant was born in 1954 in the Northumbrian town of North Shields and raised in the nearby city of Newcastle, where in his teenage years he sang and played guitar with a local rock group called Dust. In 1972, however, he moved to London to study for a History degree at the North London Polytechnic. On graduating in 1975, he became the British editor of the American magazine publishing company Marvel Comics, anglicising spellings and deciding whether animations featuring women were 'tasteful' enough for the company's British editions. He subsequently worked at Macdonald Educational Publishing, ITV Books and, in June 1982, he joined the magazine *Smash Hits*, a British-based pop music magazine whose main audience group was (remains) the young teenage market.

In 1981, Lowe[1] was in London on a 12-month work placement as part of his degree course with Liverpool University at the architectural practice Michael Aukett Associates.   According to Pet Shop Boys' website, it was in August 1981 that Lowe first met Tennant by chance in a London musical instrument shop. Discovering they had shared musical interests, they decided to write songs together which they went on to record privately at a recording studio. Although they had no plans to perform any concerts at this early stage, they decided to call themselves West

End. However, this was later changed to Pet Shop Boys, supposedly a name 'inspired' by the nickname they had given to some friends of theirs who worked in an actual pet shop.

Two years after their first meeting, Tennant was sent to New York by *Smash Hits* magazine to interview the British rock group The Police.   Around this time, however, Tennant and Lowe were 'fans' of a number of dance records by a New York-based music producer Bobby Orlando. While in New York, Tennant arranged a meeting with Orlando who offered to produce Pet Shop Boys' first single called "West End Girls". Released by the producer's Bobcat record label in April 1984, it was widely played in the nightclubs of Los Angeles and San Francisco, as well as enjoying minor commercial success in France and Belgium. This in turn brought them to the attention of the entrepreneur Tom Watkins with whom they signed a management contract in 1984. One of Watkins' first initiatives was to arrange their first stage appearance in October 1984 at the Brixton Fridge nightclub in London (although they 'performed' only with pre-recorded tapes), followed by his negotiation of a recording contract for them with Parlophone Records in early 1985 (once Orlando had agreed to relinquish his contractual rights over them in return for a substantial royalty on future record sales).

Tennant, by now, had decided to leave *Smash Hits* to concentrate on 'promoting' the group on a full-time basis, with them playing their first concert, in which they actually performed with musical instruments and sung live, at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts in August 1985. Two months later, they released a brand new version of "West End Girls" which quickly reached the number one position in the British and American sales charts. When their first album *Please* was released in March 1986, the group announced a tour of Europe and North America but cancelled it shortly afterwards

on the grounds that their choice of using a creative team from the English National Opera while playing fairly small venues would prove prohibitive in terms of cost.

In June 1987, Pet Shop Boys released the single "It's A Sin", prior to its inclusion on their next album *Actually* (which came out in September 1987). Tennant says of the song,

> It's about being brought up as a Catholic. When I went to school you were taught that everything was a sin. I suppose particularly your sex life and stuff. You were taught that thinking about it was just as bad as doing it – of course that leaves you thinking that maybe you should just do it anyway. (Neil Tennant quoted in Heath 1988: 10)

When the single reached the number one position in Britain, *War Cry* (the magazine published by the British branch of the Salvation Army) used the group's picture as the cover image for one of its issues with the statement, "It's interesting that someone's raised the concept of sin in our modern life again". Tennant was also asked to appear with Cardinal Hume, the leading Roman Catholic representative in England, in a press advertisement for the Third World charity CAFOD. Tennant declined, however.

Such was Pet Shop Boys' commercial success following the release of *Actually* that, in November 1987, the group were able to make the feature film *It Couldn't Happen Here* with the director Jack Bond. Set in London and the English seaside resort of Clacton, the film was released in the summer of 1988 to a mostly negative critical reception, although it did receive an award at the Houston Film Festival. Also that summer, the British classical actor Ian McKellen invited them to perform at an event called *Before The Act*

at London's Piccadilly Theatre. The event was to raise funds for a campaign calling for the repeal of Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1986, which was brought into law by the Conservative government under the premiership of Margaret Thatcher. The consequences of Section 28 were that a local government authority could neither "intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality" nor "promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship".[2] They agreed to perform at the event, although around this time they generally received much criticism for their persistent refusal to publicly state their sexual orientation.

As earlier stated, Pet Shop Boys had cancelled previous plans for a concert tour on grounds of cost. However, after receiving a significant investment from a Japanese concert promoter, which would enable them to stage concerts as they had wished, they embarked on their first tour on 29 June 1989, visiting Hong Kong, Japan and Britain. The tour was given the name of *MCMLXXXIX* ('1989' in Roman numerals), while the staging's artistic director was the British film-maker Derek Jarman, who also made films which were projected on a screen at the back of the stage during the concert. (This staging will be analysed in more detail later on in this chapter.) For their next tour entitled *Performance*, which began in March 1991 to promote their album *Behaviour*, the staging was conceived in conjunction with the director David Alden and the set and costume designer David Fielding, both of the English National Opera. In the short-term following this tour, though, Pet Shop Boys tended to make 'one off' live performances rather than embark on a prolonged itinerary of concert appearances. Many of these occasional performances were political in scope. In October 1993, they appeared at the London Palladium as part of *The Equality*

Show, a benefit concert to raise funds for the British gay and lesbian rights lobby group Stonewall in their campaign for the age of consent in the United Kingdom for homosexual acts to be equalised in line with that for heterosexuals. Pet Shop Boys again made an appearance at *The Equality Show* in 1997 at London's Royal Albert Hall, while in the same year they also performed at *Gay Pride*, an annual all-day event held on London's Clapham Common to promote the positive representation of gay and lesbian people in society and culture. Meanwhile, in February 1994, they performed at the "Brit Awards", the British music industry's most high-profile annual awards ceremony, with Tennant and Lowe both dressed as coal miners and supported by a Welsh male voice choir. They had originally conceived this staging idea as a protest against a wave of coal pit closures under the Thatcher government when they had been asked to perform at *The Royal Variety Show* of 1992 in the presence of members of the British royal family (in the end, Pet Shop Boys chose not to perform at this event). Also in 1994 they embarked on a 'virtual' tour when a 'hi-tech' amusement ride using computer-generated versions of themselves toured around Britain's major towns and cities. Of perhaps more significance that year was Tennant's decision to announce he was homosexual during an interview arranged to promote Pet Shop Boys' product with the gay 'lifestyle' magazine *Attitude* (Lowe has yet to make a public announcement of this kind).

In 1997, Pet Shop Boys became the first rock or pop act to perform a season in London's West End theatre district when they undertook a series of concerts over a two-week period at the Savoy Theatre. For this event, the group performed in the midst of an on-stage video art 'installation', which had been designed by the British artist Sam Taylor-Wood (this staging will also be analysed in the course of this chapter). Two years later, they embarked on another world

tour with a stage design by the Iranian-born architect Zaha Hadid and costumes created by Ian MacNeil, who has worked extensively at the Royal National Theatre of Great Britain in London. While on the North American part of this tour in 2000, Pet Shop Boys also appeared at the *Equality Rocks* benefit concert in Washington D.C. to raise funds for a campaign against hate crimes against members of the American gay and lesbian community.

Pet Shop Boys have also collaborated with the British playwright Jonathan Harvey on the musical *Closer To Heaven.*[3] Premiering in May 2001 at the Arts Theatre in London, the musical takes place in and around a London nightclub with a mostly gay clientele and concerns a young man from Belfast nicknamed 'Straight Dave' from Belfast who is subsequently 'inducted' into a culture of recreational drugs. In the process he becomes part of a 'love triangle' between his girlfriend (and his employer's daughter) and a male drug dealer. Other collaborations have included writing songs and producing albums for Liza Minnelli, Dusty Springfield and Tina Turner, while they have also composed a contemporary score for Sergei Eisenstein's 1925 film *Battleship Potemkin* which they performed live with the Dresden Sinfoniker at a screening in London's Trafalgar Square in September 2004. They have also been the subject of the arts programme *The South Bank Show* on British television.

6.3 Pet Shop Boys' public representation in 1980's Britain and its social, cultural and political contexts

This part of the chapter juxtaposes Pet Shop Boys' originating public representation with the social, political and cultural contexts existing in Britain during the 1980's. As will become evident, their

representation tends to be structured around Neil Tennant's actions and words: this is either because he conducts most media interviews on the group's behalf, or because his role as the singer means that he has a *de facto* higher profile than Chris Lowe. More broadly, as I will argue, the performance of these words and actions persuasively appear to draw on topical stories of 'lived' experience which could then be found in the everyday.

Dominating the political landscape during the 1980's was the Conservative government led by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. As an advocate of the privatisation of state-owned industry, trade union reform and a reduction in the welfare state, Thatcher introduced legislation promoting individualism and private enterprise in order to 'expose' British society to the force of free-market economics. However, as she also represented the more reactionary element in her political party towards social policy, her administration's espousal of an enterprise culture came into conflict with the moralising instincts of her 'constituency'. Indeed, it was during the early part of her tenure as Prime Minister that HIV and AIDS crisis arose. AIDS, or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, refers to the systematic erosion of a person's immune system by the Human Immuno-deficiency Virus, or HIV. This virus came to light in 1981 when an increasingly large number of deaths were reported (overwhelmingly) in the male homosexual community resulting from a fatal deterioration of the body's immune system. As initially very little was known about transmission, public anxiety grew mostly due to a variety of 'panic' stories in the American media (one newspaper referred to AIDS as the "gay-related immune deficiency" and another described it as "gay cancer"); even reports in the medical journal *The Lancet* called it the "gay compromise syndrome".[4] When, in December 1982, an American baby who had received multiple transfusions of blood products died

from an AIDS-related infection, this case caused additional concerns about the safety of national blood supplies, exacerbated by American medical institutions reporting instances of possible mother-to-child transmission. By the end of 1982, it was anticipated that a much wider group of people than gay men was going to be affected when it was discovered that the HIV could also be passed on through heterosexual intercourse.

In Britain, confirmation of the first AIDS-related deaths was accompanied by media stories, with varying degrees of responsibility and informedness, on the subject of a 'gay plague' (a label predicated on the misconception that the spread of HIV was entirely due to the promiscuous lifestyle of unprotected sex amongst homosexual men), as well as allegations that 'killer blood' was being used unknowingly by the National Health Service. Against this background, the Thatcher administration introduced the Local Government Bill 1988, which included the Section 28 clause preventing a local government authority from 'promoting' homosexuality as a tolerable lifestyle choice.   This kind of reactionary response, it was felt, reflected disquiet in the government about the implications for personal (sexual) morality resulted from the random nature of the free market, because "the needs people seek to have serviced may not be conducive to the moral order – the market is essentially anarchic – and so Thatcherism has also meant calling on churches and schools to be vigilant, to somehow police desire" (Simon Frith quoted in Heath 1989: 19).

What Section 28's enactment in law plausibly drew on, therefore, was an institutionalised 'fear' that, if all needs can be met in the marketplace, then sexuality is only limited by what's available.

As I noted in the introduction to this chapter, Pet Shop Boys have throughout their career participated in a number of events to lobby for equal treatment for gays and lesbians in society, such as performing at concerts supporting campaigns demanding the repeal of Section 28. At the same time, however, this level of activism has been accompanied by a systematic refusal to publicly state their sexual orientation. For the queer theorist John Gill, this invites comparison with the British actor, playwright and composer Noel Coward "who got away with murder in his work while maintaining a vigorously straitlaced public visage" (1995: 9). Born in Teddington, Middlesex, in 1899, Coward's theatrical career began with the London production of *I Leave It To You* which he wrote and starred in when he was just eighteen-years-old. This was followed by a prolific series of plays and musicals about the English middle and upper classes (again, in which he often wrote and starred) in London and New York. By the late 1930's, his popularity was such that he accepted the British government's invitation to put together 'entertainments' for Allied troops during the Second World War, as well as writing and starring in wartime 'moral boosting' films such as *In Which We Serve*. After the war, Coward's style of drama gave way to a 'new wave' of British playwriting spearheaded by John Osborne's play *Look Back In Anger* – set in a one-room Midlands flat, it is a polemic against the 'chimera' of post-war contentment in Britain – which opened at the Royal Court in London during May 1956. His credibility amongst this much younger breed of playwrights was, presumably, further eroded when the Queen knighted Coward in 1970 (three years before his death). It is such links with the British establishment, particularly in the shape of his long-standing personal friendship with the late Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, which form the basis of Gill's comparative critique. This is because, within the upper echelons of the British social system, Coward's homosexuality was privately tolerated, while in

public it was concealed due to the fact that sexual acts between consenting adult males remained criminalised throughout most of his lifetime.[5] Being both celebrated and denied is, for Gill, symptomatic of Coward's embrace of "the bourgeois English tradition of discreet perversion and collusion with the establishment" (1995: 9).[6]

Even taking into account shifting attitudes towards deference in British society over time, Pet Shop Boys have not had the same degree of 'intimate' contact with the British establishment as Coward did. Tennant, a known supporter of the Labour Party, did accept an invitation from Prime Minister Tony Blair to attend a reception for high-profile members from Britain's cultural industries at 10 Downing Street, shortly after the 1997 General Election; Lowe's political affiliations are noticeably more discreet. However, when they were invited to perform at the 1992 "Royal Variety Show" in the presence of members of the British royal family, they declined (after 'toying' with the idea of performing dressed as coal miners and accompanied by a Welsh male voice choir to draw attention to a wave of coal pit closures under the Thatcher government). Rather, it is Gill's reference to the historical precedence of Coward's privileging of social 'protocol' above being 'public' about (and tolerated for) his private sexuality which is the thrust of his Pet Shop Boys critique. In other words, he is using 'Coward' to support the argument that insistent denials about sexual orientation made as part of Pet Shop Boys' public representation have the indirect potential to condone and reinforce the ideological basis of discriminatory legislation such as Section 28, which seeks to 'authorise' the view that homosexuality is less than acceptable.[7] It is from this perspective that Gill insists Pet Shop Boys

have managed to position themselves in such a way that their sympathies are unambiguous... but they still do not intend to actually commit themselves verbally in a way that might set the hounds of Fleet Street on their trail. The act is akin to someone sidling themselves around the back of a school photograph, escaping one position to appear in another. (Gill 1995: 3)

Tennant, in response, has argued that the performative modes Pet Shop Boys adopted during the 1980's sought to actively resist fixed (binary) codes of gender and sexuality as defined by 'institutions' or 'tradition'.

If [Pet Shop Boys' product is] not about the two of us personally, it becomes sort of less real, which is what we like... Our work has a very strong gay subtext, if you like, but we don't make a big deal of it because we've always hated being categorized. (Neil Tennant quoted in Closs 1993)

In addition, what I consider to be curiously absent from Gill's comparisons between Coward and Pet Shop Boys is the relationship between discourses of gender and sexuality and notions of nationhood (especially in times of war). By that, I am referring to the fact that, around the time Tennant and Lowe first met, British armed forces were about to become embroiled in the Falklands War following Argentina's invasion of the British dependency. Situated in the South Atlantic Ocean, British sovereignty over these islands has been disputed for over 150 years by the Argentines. Meanwhile, in 1982, Argentina was in the grip of a military dictatorship, which had brought the country to the brink of economic collapse and, as a means of diverting the population's attention away from this crisis, it launched an invasion of the

Falklands. In response, supported by the British parliament, the Thatcher government ordered a military task force to be assembled in the South Atlantic Ocean to liberate them and restore British rule. In total, Britain sent over 100 ships and 27,000 military personnel to take part in the liberation. The conflict, which resulted in 913 deaths (655 Argentine troops, 255 British troops and three Falkland Islanders) ended when Argentine forces formally surrendered on 14 June 1982. After the conflict, this swift and decisive military victory for the British appeared to contribute to an upsurge in Thatcher's political credibility, with her popular appeal amongst British voters swinging from record lows before the Falklands War to such an extent that she won the 1983 General Election with an overwhelming mandate and remained as Prime Minister until 1990.

Given how Pet Shop Boys' public representation has also been associated with 'acting out' traits of nationhood, this renascent British patriotism could be perceived as problematising for Pet Shop Boys. Stan Hawkins articulates this as being

> Visible through the mannerisms of polite yet insincere restraint, witty eccentricity and an acute sense of cynicism, the expanse of Pet Shop Boys' iconography is typically English. (Hawkins 1997: 131)

Resolving their (presumably, *contra*) positioning in relation to 'institutionalised' images of Englishness is, I would contend, central to any understanding of the performative modes adopted in their 1988 feature film *It Couldn't Happen Here*. Within the film, the group's songs only appear as background music, rather than being performed by the group as they would, say, in promotional music videos. At the same time, their characters' history and dramatic purpose in the film are never fully revealed. Instead, Tennant and

Lowe appear as 'ciphers' in an allegorical narrative which deals with escaping from symbolic representations of authority figures: these include a maternal figure (family, nation), a priest (organised religion) and a swindler (law and order). With the filming mostly done in the English seaside resort of Clacton, this setting infers a nostalgic (sentimentalised) portrait of an England which is plausibly no longer recognisable.[8] As such, the image of the increasingly decrepit state of the English seaside resort, set amidst the post-industrial legacy of the Thatcher government, has the potential to allude to a cultural 'malaise' lurking beneath the surface of a (superficially proud) national psyche. According to the film's director Jack Bond, it depicts a journey which is

> physically a journey across England, but which England? In a sense it's a dreamworld of England, almost a journey through the psyche of England, which is very varied and strange... A particular thing I was thinking about was how in England you have this curious dichotomy. It's a country that is both adventurous and extraordinary and radical in imagination in some ways... and yet on the other hand has this repressive, almost restrictive side. That's what I saw the Pet Shop Boys travelling through – the repressive side... For me, the Pet Shop Boys represent a vulnerable creativity that got through. (Jack Bond quoted in Heath 1988: 42, 44)

Therefore, what is overt about this film is how it functions as a 'text' which manages to reconcile Pet Shop Boys' innate cultural Englishness with a simultaneous rejection of the cultural imperialism which Englishness once represented. This reconciliation is achieved through the juxtaposition in the film between Tennant's role and the character of a Roman Catholic priest. In Bond's view, the priest is

derived quite directly from [Tennant's] strong Catholic upbringing though it's obviously exaggerated. The priest comes back as a murderer and we know it's the same man – I suppose I do regard that kind of upbringing as dangerous; I think I see all authoritarian moves as dreadful and dangerous whether it be in education or government. (Jack Bond quoted in Heath 1988: 44)

One of the effects of using symbols of this kind is its capacity to foreground Tennant's own experience of a Roman Catholic education. On the other hand, his publicly mediated statements on the matter would seem to indicate that he is more interested in using it as a 'springboard' to a much broader commentary about personal morality and social control around sexuality in the everyday as one of many responses to the HIV and AIDS crisis. For instance, Tennant has said that

When I was a boy, I always wanted to be a priest. My parents insisted that I go to school, and that if I still wanted to be a priest at the end of it, then that would be OK with them. And of course by the time I was eighteen I didn't want to be a priest anymore. I stopped believing in all that when I was about sixteen. I think you do at that age. It's a contest between religion and sex... Religion invariably loses out. (Neil Tennant quoted in Burston 1994)

By locating the English Roman Catholic experience in a wider historical context, this also allows Tennant to justify his group's (apparent) paradoxical positioning towards nationhood. For since 1534, when King Henry VIII confirmed himself as the Supreme Head of the Church of England following the Act of Supremacy, the Roman Catholic Church has had no official role in this country's

state business (other than by invitation to royal functions), while Roman Catholics were not permitted to organise themselves into a full hierarchy of bishops, archbishops and cardinals in Britain until 1850. By association, then, Tennant's reflexive 'nod' to a Roman Catholic upbringing can also be understood as firmly identifying himself as the Other to the British religious (and, by implication, cultural, social and political) hegemony.

Similar Roman Catholic imagery is used in the promotional music video for Pet Shop Boys' single "It's a Sin", which was released in June 1987. In the video, Tennant and Lowe play prisoner and jailer respectively in an 'historicised' narrative which deals with themes of guilt and punishment. About the video, Tennant says

> I'm being hauled before the Inquisition[9] for some unnamed crime or sin like heresy and at the end I'm being led to my execution. I'm at the death cell and Chris [Lowe] is the jailer assigned to me but we share the same food because the jailer is in jail too. Then there's the Inquisition scene and I'm led off. The monks are the jury and every time I sing [the chorus] you see one of the seven deadly sins.[10] (Neil Tennant quoted in Heath 1988: 12)

Once again, the notion of the Other to state elites is intertextually reinforced by the overt reference to an institutionalised process by which certain nation-states have historically imposed mono-culturalism upon their society by excessively authoritarian means. When these different personal and historical threads are pulled together, the role of Tennant's Roman Catholic is posited inside Pet Shop Boys' frame precisely because it can be a way of 'performing' Englishness of which he is simultaneously a part and alienated by. Added to this line of argument is the observation that the setting for

this video is a derelict London warehouse.[11] This, in my opinion, draws attention to how the Thatcher government's economic policies witnessed a persistent and serious decline in British's manufacturing and exporting industries, which led to many such warehouses being converted into 'up-market' residential properties and leisure facilities used by those who benefited most in terms of personal affluence from these policies. It seems to me, therefore, that the juxtaposition of a historicised narrative about how human desire is perceived as a threat to the moral order with an everyday depiction of the modern British industrial landscape 'rounds up' how I wish Pet Shop Boys' public representation during the 1980's to be understood. With these issues in mind, I will next analyse a Pet Shop Boys concert from their first tour in 1989. The purpose here is to demonstrate how live performance was able to embed these broad, often ambivalent or contradictory, concepts of sexuality and gender (even stardom) more emphatically in their representation by presenting a 'pageant' of topical stories from the everyday which emanate from Britain's new enterprise culture and the consequences of the HIV and AIDS crisis.

6.4 The *MCMLXXXIX* concert: everyday stories of market oppression and the liberation of desire

On June 29 1989, Pet Shop Boys began their first tour – given the name of *MCMLXXXIX* ('1989' in Roman numerals) – which visited Hong Kong, Japan and Britain, performing fourteen concerts in all. The staging was undertaken by the film-maker Derek Jarman, who had first worked with the group as the director on the promotional music video for their single "It's A Sin". Jarman was born in London in 1942 into a military family. After completing a degree in History,

English and Art at King's College at the University of London, he then studied painting at London's Slade Art School between 1963 and 1967. This led to his work being exhibited at the *Young Contemporaries* exhibition, which was held at London's Tate Gallery in 1967. He then moved into costume and set design, initially for the Royal Ballet in London and then for the English National Opera. Although he continued to design intermittently for ballet and opera, he eventually embarked on a film career, which started when he became the production designer for Ken Russell's 1970 film *The Devils*. By 1976 he was directing the first in a series of films such as *Caravaggio* (about the life and work of the late Renaissance artist), *Jubilee* (which imagined what Britain would be like if exposed to unfettered anarchy at the time of Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee) and a film dramatisation of Benjamin Britten's anti-war choral work *War Requiem*. In 1986, however, he was diagnosed as HIV positive and died of an AIDS-related illness in 1994. After his death, the openly homosexual Jarman was ranked in ninth place in a poll to decide 'The Top 500 Lesbian and Gay Heroes' conducted by the gay and lesbian newspaper *The Pink Paper* to mark its five-hundredth issue in September 1997.

This Pet Shop Boys tour was the first live popular music event Jarman had directed (although in 1973 he had worked on an aborted theatrical production with the American rock performer Alice Cooper, intended for a season in New York's Broadway theatre district[12]; he had also directed the modern Italian opera *Inspiration* by Silvano Bussotti in Florence). As the artistic director, not only was he responsible for the staging (which included multiple costume changes, six dancers and four other singers) but he also made several short films which were projected on a screen at the back of the concert platform. In the following analysis, I will be considering a selection of scenes from this staging to demonstrate how its

concepts of sexuality and desire are negotiated in order to embed Pet Shop Boys' public representation firmly within the aesthetic event, but this is done in such a fashion as to reflect the everyday experiences of their (wider) audience in the social world. To do so, I will make reference to a commercially available video cassette (Jarman 1992) which features edited highlights from performances on the tour given at London's Wembley Arena on 20 and 21 July 1989. For greater accuracy, I have also taken into account Chris Heath's (1990: 11 – 16) first hand account of the tour's staging during one of the its dress rehearsals. I have aimed to exercise the minimum use of adjectives and adverbs in my descriptions to ensure the highest degree of objectivity. The timings refer to the location of the relevant scene on the video cassette within reasonable exactness while assuming any slight differences in the speed and precision between different models of video cassette player. The scenes are discussed in the order, according to Heath, in which they appeared during the concert. Lastly, while I will acknowledge the role of Chris Lowe (who spends most of the concert playing a keyboard at one side of the stage), the bulk of this analysis is concentrated upon Tennant's (more prominent) involvement in the staging's more theatrical elements.

6.4.1 Scene 1: Pet Shop Boys' appearance at the start of the concert

(This commentary is based on Chris Heath's 1990 account of the tour's dress rehearsal, as it does not appear on the video cassette)

As the musical introduction to the first song begins, four singers appear and move to a rostrum at the back of stage right, from where they provide choral support to the instrumentation. Following shortly behind them are six dancers (three male, three female) who dance around the stage, while monochrome images of

81

city housing projects are projected onto the screen at the back of the stage. Next Tennant and Lowe arrive on stage from either side of the wings. Tennant, who is wearing a long overcoat, enters from stage right and moves to the centre of the stage. Lowe, who is dressed in a black leather motorcyclist's jacket and trousers and wearing a ruby-studded motorcyclist's helmet, enters from stage left and stands in front and begins to play a keyboard positioned there. During the opening songs, Tennant emphasises certain words in the lyrics with hand gestures, while Lowe mostly looks down towards the keyboard avoiding eye contact with the audience (unlike Tennant). At the start of the second song, Tennant removes his overcoat to reveal a black dinner jacket and trousers, a formal white shirt and bow-tie. As he walks towards the backing singers' rostrum, one of the singers grabs a piece of cloth protruding out of Tennant's trouser back-pocket. When Tennant walks away, a string of four large handkerchiefs designed to look like huge American dollar bills stream behind him. When this second song ends, two of the dancers position themselves at either side of the stage. One of them is dressed as a symphony orchestra conductor and carries a baton; the other is dressed in a khaki military-style outfit and beret: the allusions here are to the French classical composer Claude Debussy and the South American revolutionary leader Che Guevara, both of whom are referenced in the lyrics to the third song. As the musical introduction to this song begins, these two costumed dancers start to dance, at which point Tennant appears on-stage again in a turquoise and green dressing gown with pink pyjamas showing underneath.

The entrance onto a concert platform is an unambiguous example of where a rock or pop performer crosses the threshold from the privacy of the 'back region' into the performative world, replete with its own willing (often paying) spectators. As I have earlier

suggested, though, Pet Shop Boys are likely to be in the business of telling everyday stories (the 'lived' experience, as it were, for many in the concert audience), as opposed to their own star stories as would ordinarily be the case at a rock or pop concert. As such, the opening scene appears to serve as 'scene-setting': bringing on stage the 'toolkit' of identities which Tennant, Lowe and their cohort of singers and dancers will use to interpret the characters in the stories they are to tell. Of course, neither Tennant nor Lowe is actually 'stepping out' of his individually distinctive Pet Shop Boys persona. Indeed, the contrast between Tennant's highly mannered appearance, centre stage, and Lowe's more subdued demeanour corresponds in essence to Stan Hawkins' general observation about the group.

> Constrained gestures within fashionable oversize suits, stylish jackets and designer clothes soon became a camp trademark of the unsmiling Pet Shop Boys in the 1980s, with their sullenness, seriousness and sobriety in attitude blending in with the new face of the 1980s man, irrespective of sexual orientation. (Hawkins 1997: 123)

Of course, this is also a more formal performance event, which has its own set of (theatrical) design codes. As images of city housing projects are projected onto the screen at the back of the stage, this provides a visual 'cue' to a generic contemporary urban landscape where the everyday stories being told in the concert were likely 'lived' in late 1980's Britain. Put another way, this event is not simply a theatricalised representation of the contemporary urban landscape; rather, it signifies a social phenomenon which 'knows' its own reflexively dramatic mode, when considered in terms of what the social historian Frank Mort says about the relationship between 'performance' and 'society' during this period.

> Exaggerated movements, extravagant gestures, hype, are all
> part of the repertoire... Maybe it's as much in the non-verbal
> things – the spaces, gestures, looks and glances – that
> identities are staked out. (Mort 1988: 205, 218)

In my estimation, the iconographic allusions to desire (symphonic music), subversiveness (Communist revolution), consumerism (American dollar bills) and sexuality (Tennant's brightly coloured bedroom attire) are crucial to the overarching narrative strand found in Tennant's ensuing *mises-en-scène*: namely, how the juxtaposition of an enterprise culture with a repressive moral order effectively 'blurred the line' between sexual and financial arrangements in Britain during the 1980's. How these stories are developed can be seen in the next concert extract to be discussed.

6.4.2 Scene 2: 'Performing' everyday stories of desire and the 'masquerade' of manliness

(Video cassette timings: approximately 21 minutes and 20 seconds to 26 minutes and 8 seconds)

As the musical introduction to the song "Rent" begins, Tennant returns to the front of the stage wearing a full-length white fur coat. (Lowe remains stage left playing at the keyboard, although by now he is wearing a baseball cap instead of the motorcyclist's helmet.) Behind Tennant, three male/female couples are dressed as ballroom dancers and dancing in a choreographed routine. As this is taking place, the screen at the back of the stage is showing excerpts from the Derek Jarman-directed promotional music video for the "Rent" single. The video excerpts initially show a blonde-haired woman sat at a large dining table amid an overtly affluent household. The dining table is set ready for a dinner party, complete with white linen table clothes, silver cutlery, crystal wine glasses and the like.

At first, the blonde-haired woman in the video appears to be looking at someone (unseen) on the opposite side of the table, blowing them a kiss and smiling. Midway through the song, however, the woman appears angered, slamming the dining table and causing some of the wine glasses to break. On stage, Tennant has by now removed his white fur coat to reveal a white shirt, bow tie and a formal waistcoat. He holds his coat with his left hand while singing from the centre of the stage. The woman in the video is then shown running down an ornate, interior staircase, after which she gets into a luxury car. As the song reaches its instrumental middle section, Tennant moves towards one of the female backing singers, kisses her on her left cheek and puts the white fur coat over her shoulders. He then returns to centre of the stage to finish the song.

What I observe from this scene is its capacity to simultaneously tell two different narratives belonging to the social world: one presents an account of 'liberated' desire; the other shows how market oppression has disrupted stereotypical codes of gender and sexuality.

The first narrative is structured around the intertextual use of the promotional music video for the single "Rent". About this video, Tennant says,

> Derek Jarman… had this idea: the classic '60s thing is that
> you come from the deprived North and go to Swinging London
> so in this video it's the opposite way round – you leave for the
> Swinging North. [In the video, Chris Lowe] plays someone
> who is coming down from Scotland to King's Cross to pick up
> Margi Clarke[13] … I'm the chauffeur and Margi Clarke's the
> kept woman running away from the rich life she's taken up.
> She's like a political hostess type of thing. Her husband is

one of the people at the dinner party at the beginning [of the "Rent" video] – they're meant to be publishers, Conservative politicians, bankers, people who are chairmen of the opera, those sorts of people. Powerful, rich, slightly decadent people. (Neil Tennant quoted in Heath 1988: 36)

With this in mind, it seems to me that Tennant's 'performance' at this point in the concert is an interpreting one, narrating the everyday story from the perspective of the woman in the video. Visually, it would seem that her moment of 'emancipation' arrives when she rejects her 'market value', which she has so far accepted as the 'price' of financial security provided by (dependent upon) her husband's wealth. At a wider level, this rejection also incurs the (higher) social and political class she has married into, which seemingly demanded that her working class 'needs' (at least, on an emotional and sexual level) ought to be suppressed in favour of her husband's elitist standing.

At the same time, the costume design for Tennant's on-stage incarnation clearly categorises him as a male. When juxtaposed with the layers of meaning associated with the video, however, I propose that his performance also has the potential to draw attention to the 'toy boy' phenomenon. The vernacular for a woman's younger male sexual partner, Frank Mort argues that the toy boy was a distinctive social consequence during the 1980's due to evidence that a number of women were sufficiently empowered by the enterprise culture, resulting from increases in earning potential and job status compared to their counterparts in earlier decades, that they were able to 'go against' convention and 'date' men younger than themselves (1998: 205). Adopting a non-traditional representation of manliness, therefore, allows Tennant to symbolically refer to the kinds of 'masquerade' which have

historically underpinned the experience of femininity. Describing this feminine masquerade, Stephen Heath says,

> In the masquerade the woman mimics an authentic – genuine – womanliness but the authentic womanliness is such a mimicry, *is* the masquerade ('they are the same thing'): to be a woman is to dissimulate a fundamental masculinity, femininity is that dissimulation. The masquerade shows what she does not have... by showing the adornment, the putting on of something else. (Heath 1986: 49)

By comparison with Tennant's performance, this historical analogy is persuasive because it is possible to see how, through his conflation of all these different modes of gender and sexuality, he is able to 'perform' a similar 'masquerade' of manliness rising out of the gender implications of a pervasive enterprise culture in 1980's Britain. Furthermore, there is also much here which resonates with Peggy Phelan's analysis of male transvestite balls in New York

> Driving the mechanism of these performed identities is a notion of 'the real'... Underneath the image of these visible women is a man, but it is extremely difficult to say what a man is. Underneath the film there is a performance but it is extremely difficult to say what the performance 'means'. (Phelan 1993: 96, 102)

My reason for referring to this 'site specific' case of these men-performing-as-women is its capacity for 'flagging up' the complexity of Tennant's performance: this is not simply to state that he is performing as a man and as a woman at the same time; rather, it is that his 'embodiment' of multiple discourses of gender and sexuality (in common with masquerade or transvestism) requires gestures

which are both false (in that they are only being 'put on' for the occasion) and true (in that they are appropriate to the emotions or rhetoric being described, expressed or invoked). Of course, a link can be made between Tennant's performance seeking to express real erotic desires (and invoke real erotic responses) and how such expression (and invocation) might also have an economic value in the 'market place'. This narrative theme is further developed in the next scene, again referencing the "Rent" video, as well as through Chris Lowe's participation in both on-stage and on-screen roles.

6.4.3 Scene 3: The intervention of Chris Lowe and the 'market value' of desire and sexuality in 1980's Britain

(Video cassette timings: approximately 26 minutes and 9 seconds to 31 minutes and 0 seconds)

This scene features the Pet Shop Boys song "King's Cross". Tennant is wearing a motorcyclist's black leather jacket and is sitting next to Lowe, who is still at the keyboard situated stage left. Lowe, by now, is dressed in a denim jacket and jeans, a green t-shirt, a straw hat and sunglasses. As the song's musical introduction begins, a black and white film starts on the screen at the back of the stage. This film opens with images of industrial landscapes blended with those of a commercial district in an unspecified town or city. A train is then shown pulling into a major railway station. Next is footage of a fight between two men in a London Underground station. The camera then pans up a staircase in the same station, giving the viewer the same eye-level perspective as the camera holder. Overlaid onto this footage are electrical signs for fast food outlets and betting shops. The Underground station is then revealed as that of King's Cross. Onto the film appears Lowe in a light jacket

and jeans, a woollen hat and with a duffle bag over his shoulder. He appears to be walking around aimlessly. The film then moves on to show the King's Cross mainline railway platforms from where 'intercity' trains are seen leaving. The camera now gives the perspective of a passenger on a train as it travels northward out of London (it passes the landmark of Alexandra Palace, which appears on the left-hand side of the train as it would do if taking this route). Again Lowe appears on film, this time having just alighted from a mainline train. He walks down the station platform with the other passengers disembarking from the same train. He does not appear to be meeting anyone. As the song ends, the film closes with a moving image of a fairground carousel.

As I've earlier stated, and as this concert analysis further indicates, the 'performed' dimension of Pet Shop Boys' representation in the public domain is largely conveyed through Tennant's more prominent role in the group. (To this extent, it is worth noting that the group's most significant representational schism relates to one of Tennant's individual 'performances' within the group's frame.) However, I wish to discuss this scene in which the 'spotlight' falls more closely upon Chris Lowe as he provides a supporting role to Tennant's more sustained interpretation of stories from the everyday. At an immediate level, his musician persona remains uninterrupted during this scene, such that the mannered introspection he displayed when stepping onto the concert platform is consistent with how he wishes to be publicly perceived in a general sense.

> I've never sought fame or public recognition. I think one of the qualities many pop stars have, which is why they are what they are, is because they have huge egos, whereas I'm

actually against the whole concept of ego. (Chris Lowe quoted in Skrufff 2004)

By anchoring this demeanour firmly to his musician persona, he allows for his star persona to become attached to his celluloid alternate instead. As such, it is clear then that Lowe's character on the screen (given the narrative structures of the "Rent" video) infers that he is the person who has travelled from Scotland to London to 'bring home' the blonde-haired woman. At the same time, the staging does not establish a complete arc between what is on-stage and what is on-screen (not least because "Rent" and "King's Cross" are not performed one immediately after the other in the running order of the concert). As a consequence, in common with Tennant's depiction of a toy boy, the journey which Lowe's celluloid character has likely taken may be offering an alternative narrative to that concerned with familial love and support. Rather, Lowe's character may just as well have travelled down from Scotland out of economic 'necessity', and not desire. In other words, Lowe's on-screen performance is suggestive of impulses as defined by Frank Mort when he states that

> Mean and moody looks on inner-city streetscapes reference, albeit in a sanitized and glamourized form, unemployment, making one's way in a world in which the young – and now unusually young men – are short on the crucial element it takes to get by in a capitalist society – money. (Mort 1988: 199)

Wayne Studer, a fan-scholar of Pet Shop Boys, has suggested that the song "Rent" may also be a reference to 'rent boys' (slang for homosexual prostitutes), while he also makes the point that "King's Cross" is a 'known area' for prostitution in its myriad forms (Studer

2000). Although Studer's comments are (at least) premised on personal assumption, the social and political landscape of the time would be sufficient to posit Lowe's screen alternate in a complementary role to Tennant's account of market oppression in relation to sexuality and desire. After all, prostitution is an obvious 'service' which an unfettered free-market should be able to satisfy to a large extent.

For John Gill, however, these kinds of performance from Pet Shop Boys demonstrate complicity with "a new conservatism, post-Clause-28,[14] post-Thatcher, in the era of AIDS" because effacing recognisable traces of their own sexuality – or, indeed, any other aspect of their 'lived' experience - reinforces the view that they have 'masked' their own reality behind a secretive discourse of deniability (1995: 9). At the other end of the discursive spectrum sits the view that theirs is a resistance to binary codes of gender and sexuality being reflexively imposed upon their public selves. Instead,

> By disrupting stereotypical codes of gender and sexuality through a parody of artifice and masquerade that challenges patriarchy, these artists remind us that music can function as a key vehicle in deconstructing fixed notions of gendered identity in everyday life. (Hawkins 1997: 118)

In this sense, the late 1980's should be viewed as a time when Pet Shop Boys public representation represents a 'catch-all' term to their performance of stories from the everyday as 'lived' by the Other (the concert audience, wider society). Creative choices up until this point, therefore, were made in relation to a 'swirl' of experiences underpinned by gender, sexuality and nationhood in the face of market oppression, the HIV and AIDS crisis, and war in

91

the South Atlantic Ocean. In contrast, then, is a unique performance where Tennant not only made available an everyday story of his own, but did so within the group's performative frame. The performance I am referring to took place when Tennant requested to be interviewed by the gay and lesbian lifestyle magazine *Attitude* in 1994. Although this interview was formally arranged to talk about Pet Shop Boys' product, he instead transformed it into confirmation that he was homosexual, thereby fixing a key aspect of private social discourse (Tennant's personally 'lived' experience) in the group's public representation.

6.5 Some issues concerning Neil Tennant's public confirmation of his sexual orientation

When Tennant confirmed his sexual orientation, the immediate problematic for Pet Shop Boys was that, after adopting various subject positions at the start of their career, Tennant's action had in contrast imposed a binary definition upon his sexuality in the public domain where previously this was not the case. From the outset, public disclosure of private sexuality by either Tennant or Lowe was never intended to feature inside the group's performative frame. As Tennant said during an interview he gave to the British music magazine *New Musical Express* in 1986, Pet Shop Boys have

> never said anything about our sex lives to the newspapers or to magazines. And we don't intend to. (Neil Tennant quoted in Barber 1994: 43)

Stressing the difference between what either Tennant or Lowe might do in their private life, and what they are prepared to say in

public, do not entirely represent both sides of the equation. Of larger concern is the issue that Pet Shop Boys were able to juxtapose an inflexible stance towards confirming their sexual orientation in public with their willingness to appear at events which directly promote gay and lesbian rights. It was highly inconsistent, then, that not only did Tennant publicly confirm his homosexuality when interviewed by *Attitude* magazine in 1994, but that he did so within the context of talking about Pet Shop Boys' creative output.

> I do think that we have contributed, through our music and also through our videos and the general way we've presented things, rather a lot to what you might call 'gay culture'. I could spend several pages discussing the notion of 'gay culture', but for the sake of argument, I would just say that we have contributed a lot. And the simple reason for this is that I have written songs from my own point of view. What I'm actually saying is, I am gay, and I have written songs from that point of view. So, I mean, I'm being surprisingly honest with you here, but those are the facts of the matter. (Neil Tennant quoted in Burston 1994)

Indeed, it was in another media interview a year later that Tennant embedded his decision to publicly disclose his sexual orientation further in revelations about his 'lived' experience when he stated that, with regard to the 1994 *Attitude* article, "the reason I did it was because I'd just been in a relationship with someone and it was the first homosexual relationship I'd ever been in" (Neil Tennant quoted in Bracewell 1995: 17). Therefore, by arguing that these matters represented a schism for the group in the public domain, my next step is to consider what kinds of redressive action the group decided to take in the ensuing period. In order to address this issue, I shall be looking at the work of the British video artist

93

Sam Taylor-Wood, with whom Pet Shop Boys collaborated in their concerts at London's Savoy Theatre in 1997 (their first in Britain following Tennant's 1994 announcement). In the process, I will show how the group participated in an aesthetic event whose effect was to reconfigure their performative frame in terms of establishing the boundaries between on-stage with off-stage 'states', instead of a public representation which actively effaces the trace of private identity.

6.6 Space, time, everyday situations and celebrity discourse: Sam Taylor-Wood and the contextualisation of her work in the history of video art

This section discusses the British video artist Sam Taylor-Wood, with whom Pet Shop Boys collaborated on their Savoy Theatre concerts in 1997. It begins with a brief biographical and career overview of Taylor-Wood, followed by a contextualisation of her work in the history of video art. The section concludes by focusing on distinctive aspects of her work – mainly, the manipulation of space and time, and the application of celebrities' representations – with a view to constructing a conceptual approach appropriate to my subsequent analysis of her concert staging for Pet Shop Boys.

Sam Taylor-Wood was born in 1967, living near Streatham Common in south London during the early part of her childhood. After her parents divorced, she moved with her mother and new stepfather to a hippie commune in the East Sussex countryside. When her state schooling ended, Taylor-Wood enrolled on an arts foundation course in Hastings, after which she moved back to London where she

studied art at the North East London Polytechnic and then sculpture at Goldsmiths College, part of the University of London. On graduating in 1990, she took a job as a dresser in the opera wardrobe department of the Royal Opera House in London. During her time there, Taylor-Wood became interested in the on-going tension between the creative and the banal, which was underlined to her by the constant broadcasting from the main stage around this building in order for performers to hear their musical cues, enabling them to promptly appear on stage during a performance or rehearsal. At the same time, she had artistically moved away from sculpture and was becoming more drawn to film and video technology. This led, in 1993, to her work known as *16mm*, which is a short piece of black and white film featuring the grainy image of a frenetic dancer. However, it was her experience at the Royal Opera House which was to provide the inspiration for her first major video art work. Reconciling the gap between the intensity of the characters which performers portray with the tedium of their everyday lives waiting in corridors and dressing rooms for these cues is the pretext for her 1994 work *Killing Time*. The work consists of four wall-sized screens, each showing film of a different person sat at home, drinking tea and smoking cigarettes, while lip-synching the singing roles from Richard Strauss' opera *Elektra* (the opera also has only four main characters). As Taylor-Wood explains,

> You hear this opera blaring out and then as you look to each screen they start to mouth the words. There's this feeling of nothingness matched with this high-octane, highly emotional state and the bringing of those two things together... [The effect is] that you feel that the people who are sitting at home really wish for the great high passion as they mouth the lines. (Sam Taylor-Wood quoted in Field 2003: 2)

On the strength of *Killing Time*, Taylor-Wood attracted the attention of the London gallery curator Jay Jopling, who presented her first solo exhibition at his White Cube exhibition space in 1995. (Jopling has continued to represent her ever since, and they in fact married in 1998.) Since then, Taylor-Wood has had numerous solo exhibitions in galleries across Europe and North America, such as the Centre Nationale de la Photographie in Paris, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid, the Musée d'Arte Contemporain de Montreal, the Kunsthalle in Zurich, the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington DC, the Fondazione Prada in Milan and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. She was also awarded the prize for most promising young artist at the Venice Biennale arts festival in 1997, while in the following year she was nominated for the Turner Prize, the most prestigious award for contemporary art in Britain. Furthermore, in 2002, Taylor-Wood became the youngest artist to have a major retrospective exhibition at the Hayward Gallery on London's South Bank arts complex.

Although Taylor-Wood's work also includes photography, I would argue that she is predominantly associated with the contemporary creative practice of video art. This practice began in America during the mid-1960's and must be considered from the perspective of the increasing cultural predominance at the time of the mass media, especially television. As Christine Hall, the curator of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, states, "a fundamental idea held by the first generation of video artists was that in order to have a critical relationship with a televisual society, you must primarily participate televisually" (Christine Hall quoted in Rush 1999: 78). That's to say, moving images of newsworthy events from around the world, which had previously been screened at cinemas in the form of news reels some time after these events took place, were now infiltrating the typical American household, of which ninety

percent had television sets by 1960. This level of technological innovation was matched by an increasing awareness of worldwide political upheaval, particularly around the political, social and cultural responses to events leading up to and during the Vietnam War.

Emerging from these contexts were so-called 'guerrilla videographers', who would force their way into political conventions and other news events without the appropriate press credentials with the intention of producing activist-driven documentaries and alternative news reporting. More straightforward examples of video art were pioneered by the Korean-born artist Nam June Paik, whose earlier work involved him exhibiting 'prepared televisions' (television sets which were physically altered in order to distort the reception of broadcast transmissions) in galleries. In 1964, however, Paik moved to New York, soon after portable video cameras went on sale to the general public. Paik purchased one of these cameras to film the Papal entourage during Pope Paul VI's visit to New York in October 1965 from the perspective of capturing an instant cultural and artistic document.

In addition, the use of video also allowed for a greater degree of intimacy not usually possible in film, such as in the work of artists like Vito Acconci and Bruce Nauman who filmed themselves in fabricated situations or in their studio. In so doing, video meant that an artist's gestures could be recorded and their own body could be observed in the act of creation.

As the physical size and scope of video art works grew larger in relation to technological advancements (as well as a more general use of film and film-making techniques), themes have leaned further towards the personal or individualistic. This had led to art

works known as 'installations' in which the artist is able to control, not only the image, but also the context of viewing the video art in environments of their own devising. In actuality, the ideas behind installation art can be traced at least as far back as Christian-inspired diptychs and triptychs in churches across Europe during the early fourteenth century, whereas spaces for exhibiting art began with the establishment of public museums in Europe largely during the eighteenth century. These historical precedents are useful in explaining why the physical presentation and surroundings of video art are increasingly considered to be part of the work itself. As such, the art historian Michael Rush argues that present-day video artists, just like their historical forebears, are extending the creative process beyond the artist's studio and into the social space, so that any installation is a recognition of the space outside the moving image (1999: 116).[15] Of equal importance is the extent to which the installation enhances the exploration of time. In other words, if time can be manipulated in multiple ways in video art where single-channel video is used, the possibilities are significantly expanded in installations where several screens or other projection surfaces, along with numerous video tapes, are deployed.

Much of Sam Taylor-Wood's video art also explores the aesthetic boundaries of space and time; but she does so by inscribing them with a complex range of meaning-making derived from her juxtaposition of the 'staged' and the everyday, celebrity discourse or star stories in her work. Her distinctiveness as an artist in these areas will be central to my analysis of her concert stage design for Pet Shop Boys.

Exploring spatial relationships is a key component in the construction of many of her multi-screened video installations, which have the effect of creating a sense of interactivity between

what is happening on screen and the viewer of the installation (presumably in the gallery). As Taylor-Wood says,

> It's about engaging the viewer without being didactic. When you see a film in a cinema you are manipulated and seduced and led through a story. A lot of my film works are more about making up your own mind about the situation you're looking at, how you place yourself within that and who you identify with. (Sam Taylor-Wood quoted in Carolin 2002: 2)

These criteria are evident in her 1995 work *Travesty of a Mockery*, in which a man and a woman are filmed separately but at the same time while standing in the same kitchen acting out a domestic argument between two lovers. In the installation itself, the two films are shown on screens whose edges touch at a ninety-degree angle in the corner of a gallery room. About her intention for the work, Taylor-Wood says,

> You could see [the woman] in one screen and [the man] in the other, although it was evident that they were sharing the same room. The couple are fighting and when she throws a sauce-pan at him, the object flies from one screen to the other. Again, what comes through in this work is that even though these two people are together in conflict and you are aware that they are fighting in the same, they are isolated. (Sam Taylor-Wood quoted in Heath 1997: 10),

The screening of the two films in this arrangement (allowing the actors and objects to 'move' from one screen to the other) could therefore appear to transgress the exhibition space on the one hand (because the viewer is forced to confront their own physical

relationship to the space), and the space in which the argument is being 'performed' on the other. According to the artist,

> when you walked in, you are immediately sort of party to the
> environment and you're in the midst of this argument, you
> are sort of in the cross-fire if you like. And so it was very
> much about being in that claustrophobic situation, two people
> having this fight and you're standing there in the midst of it.
> And then also having the space in between the two screens,
> which was very much a physical divide and when one person
> passes from one screen to another you feel like it's a real sort
> of abuse, an infringement of space. (Taylor-Wood 2004)

The transgression of time, as well as space, underpins Taylor-Wood's 1996 work *Pent-Up*. Lasting just over ten minutes, this installation consists of five large projected images, which sit alongside each other on one long wall with their edges abutting. On each screen is what appears to be an isolated public outburst, which is made directly to the camera – running from left to right – of a middle-aged woman as she walks down a London street scene angrily muttering to herself, an old man sat down in a chair in a withdrawn state, a young man wandering around his minimally-furnished modern flat, a young woman in a pub who is becoming increasingly inebriated and aggressive, and another young man who is pacing around an outside courtyard while gesticulating and shouting. However, it soon becomes clear that one outburst is being responded to by the next speaker and so on. Explaining the idea, Taylor-Wood says,

> If you saw each film individually, each person ranting and
> raving to themselves would look like they were mad – the girl
> in the bar is very drunk; the guy in the garden is shouting at

the world in a schizophrenic kind of way and another woman is shouting as she walks down the street. But what happens is that as the woman in the street says something one of the characters from another screen answers her, and so it goes on between the separate screens. The idea is that madness becomes almost reason in a sense, because a dialogue is created between the characters. Someone, somewhere is always answering, so the individual's thoughts are in effect being answered. (Sam Taylor-Wood quoted in Heath 1997: 10)

More precisely, *Pent-Up* constructs a sense of a running argument around the middle section of the installation between the restless young man in his flat while dressed only in boxer shorts, and the characters in the other four films. Although there is a narrative logic to what is being said, the rationale of this multi-voiced 'conversation' is juxtaposed with its location across different spaces and times. Disrupting normative assumptions about space and time in this fashion means that each viewer (in the gallery) is able to construct a story which links Taylor-Wood's characters together of the viewer's own making.

As already stated, another recurring theme in her work is the application of celebrity discourse, such as in her two collaborations with the American film and television actor Robert Downey Jr. The first of these collaborations was on the making of the promotional music video for the single *I Want Love* by the British singer-songwriter Elton John, which she directed in 2001. John makes no appearance whatsoever in the video. Instead, Downey Jr. is seen lip-synching the song's lyrics in time to the original (John) voice recording for the entire duration of the video as he wanders alone through an empty, unfurnished mansion in the Beverly Hills area of

101

Los Angeles. John has been variously reported in the media as saying that the lyrics, by his long-term collaborator Bernie Taupin, are based on his own history of alcoholism, cocaine addiction, compulsive eating and abusive relationships. With this in mind, the video's narrative is lent greater poignancy because, at the time that this video was filmed, Downey Jr. was undergoing a year-long court-enforced drug rehabilitation programme after pleading guilty to the possession of cocaine (for which he had previously received a prison sentence), an addiction to which he has had for many years. Furthermore, he had to be accompanied to the video's film set by his drug rehabilitation counsellor and had to wear an electronic tag on his ankle so that he could be tracked if he tried to escape; meanwhile Taylor-Wood herself was made responsible for his safe return to the clinic. As such, it is possible to see how the video - which would, in terms of common practice, feature Elton John as both the 'body' and the 'voice' - can instead become more likely inscribed with Downey Jr.'s personal narrative. As Taylor-Wood confirms,

> When we had the original idea of doing the video, Elton immediately said, 'I want Robert Downey'. I think he felt that the poignancy of the song and what Elton's history and what Robert's history is, the collision was just too great. (Sam Taylor-Wood quoted in Carter 2001)

With a large amount of film left over from the making of the video, Taylor-Wood spontaneously decided to create a further piece of video art in the same session and in the same Beverly Hills mansion. The result was *Pietà*, a film lasting less than two minutes in duration (but on a constant loop) which is influenced by Michelangelo's sculpture of the same name in St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City, depicting Christ's mother as she cradles her Son's

crucified body after He had been taken down from the cross. In Taylor-Wood's version, the artist herself is seated on a staircase as she appears to strain cradling the sprawled, half-naked body of Downey Jr. As well as drawing on the actor's personal narrative yet further, *Pietà* is also an intentional acknowledgement that this was the first art work proper which Taylor-Wood created since a mastectomy was carried out on her following the diagnosis of breast cancer. Giving her reasons for the work, she says,

> having been to St. Peter's and just seen the *Pietà* there, we had film left and it was really an immediate idea and it came in that moment. And I think it was at a time when I'd just come out of what I'd been through, I'd just come out of all the cancer stuff, and he was still going through what he was going through and it was the first work that we had both made as [people in a state of recovery]. It was very much about that kind of reciprocal support I guess. (Taylor-Wood 2004)

Making aesthetic choices which confront the nature of space, time and celebrity coalesce around Taylor-Wood's 1999 work *Third Party*, a seven-screen video installation which 'takes place' at a house party and features the British actor Ray Winstone.[16] The party is filmed using seven cameras, six of which are in a fixed position with the other one being hand-held, and each one records from a single position what happens over a period of around ten minutes. When the projections, which are of varying sizes, are placed around a gallery room, they are done so in such a way as to replicate the spatial layout of the party itself, giving the perception that a character on one screen might appear to be looking across the room towards someone else on another. The effect, then, is to virtually locate the party's physical space in the course of standing amid the

projections. At the same time, playing the ten minutes of party activity on a constant loop disrupts a normative sense of time spent at both the party and the gallery in which the installation is being exhibited. Layered onto these concepts of space and time is Winstone's star story, which is intentionally designed to lend an (albeit contrived) menace to the party atmosphere. To this end, Taylor-Wood states that,

> As soon as you see Ray Winstone in *Third Party* you know you're talking about a particular genre of film and also a particular person: a gruff, macho, masculine character. All the different characters that you know him to have portrayed are there in front of you. He doesn't say or do very much [in *Third Party*] but you can project all these other roles and ideas onto him. (Sam Taylor-Wood quoted in Carolin 2002: 4)

Another example of this artist's conflation of space, time and celebrity is to be found in her video portrait of the footballer David Beckham, titled *David*, made for the National Portrait Gallery in London.[17] On this occasion, it is possible to see how her distinctive aesthetic approach has the capacity to potently interact with unforeseen news stories relating to the celebrity subject in the work on being publicly exhibited. With more than 10,000 paintings from the sixteenth century onwards and 200,000 photographs in its collection, the National Portrait Gallery's traditional role is to commission and exhibit portraits of royalty, senior politicians and leading figures in the British establishment. When its trustees met in 2003 specifically to decide upon whom they want portrayed from contemporary British society (as they do annually), it was agreed to commission a portrait of Beckham; they also selected Taylor-Wood for the commission due to her reputation for using celebrities in her

work. On agreeing to accept the commission, Taylor-Wood chose to create a video portrait of him (appearing to be) asleep. As the artist explains,

> Making a portrait of a much photographed man like David Beckham was a challenge. I wanted to create a direct, closely observed study. Filming while he was asleep produces a different view from the many familiar images. (Sam Taylor-Wood quoted in Reynolds 2004: 5)

The video portrait was filmed over a single afternoon during early 2004 in a hotel room in Madrid, Spain, after Beckham had completed his daily training with his football team Real Madrid. Only Beckham and Taylor-Wood were present in the hotel room, with just a bedside lamp used for lighting. In the work itself, which lasts sixty-seven minutes, Beckham is seen reclining on a bed: he is at least half-naked, although he is for the most part only visible from the waist-up. As he is lying on white bed linen, this seems to emphasise his sun-tanned skin, while the fixed camera angle deliberately gives the viewer a sense of lying next to him.[18] However, when it finally went on public display at the National Portrait Gallery on 27 April 2004, the intimate nature of this video portrait – whose image was not only that of the captain of the England football team, but also a high-profile celebrity husband, father and marketing 'icon' - was given added context as a result of topical media allegations that Beckham had had an extra-marital relationship with his former personal assistant, Rebecca Loos. About the unveiling of the video portrait, Mark Lawson observes that

> The viewpoint is that of someone lying beside him, an
> intimate perspective which should have been known in recent

years only to [his wife]. It looks fantastically prescient now as an image. Inevitably the publicity changes the way that we look at this, whether or not it's true or not. You look at it in the light of those stories.[19]

In my opinion, the fact that Taylor-Wood's work has both the potential and expertise to function within the contingent nature of star stories like Beckham's lends greater emphasis to her involvement in reconfiguring Pet Shop Boys' frame after Tennant's public disclosure about his homosexuality. In this vein, the next concert analysis is intended to demonstrate how her involvement led to an aesthetic event which was 'instructive' in making a clear separation between Pet Shop Boys' star personae in the public domain and Tennant and Lowe's own 'experience' of the social world.

6.7 The *Somewhere* concert: reconfiguring Pet Shop Boys' performative frame

On an aesthetic level, Pet Shop Boys' first two concert tours appear to have been deliberately theatrical in presentation. The *MCMLXXXIX* tour, whose staging was discussed earlier in this chapter, was conceived by the British film-maker Derek Jarman, who made several films for projection onto a screen at the back of the stage during the concert to accompany the numerous *mises-en-scène* dealing with discourses of gender and sexuality in 1980's Britain. For their next tour, which began in 1991 and was given the name of *Performance*, the staging was conceived by the director David Alden and the designer David Fielding, both from the English National Opera. Again using singers and dancers, as well as a large

number of stage props, this production constructed a narrative 'thread' out of the Pet Shop Boys songs performed during the concert itself.

Leon Rosselson says,

> Song, like drama, is about the invention of characters and stories; people – not issues, arguments, slogans, abstractions or soul-searching – are at its centre. And because people do not live in a vacuum, song, like drama, is at home in the public arena. (Rosselson 1992/3: 8 – 9)

Taking this view into account, the *Performance* tour seems to have put further distance between Pet Shop Boys' public representation and their private identity by presenting their songs as 'mini dramas' in an overarching narrative, with each of these songs having their own set of characters. Indeed, the songs in the production were not always performed by Tennant and/or Lowe, but sometimes by the other performers in the company, as would be the case in a conventional piece of musical theatre. Indeed, this detachment was given more emphasis when Pet Shop Boys were involved in discussions to stage the production in London's West End theatre district with a cast entirely consisting of stage actors and singers in lieu of themselves (it didn't happen due to the fact that the interested producers insisted that the group would actually need to appear in the production for it to be commercially viable). Latterly, Pet Shop Boys have taken the process of 'disembodying' their corporeal selves from the narratives in their songs even further with the musical *Closer To Heaven*, on which they collaborated with the British playwright Jonathan Harvey. The musical, which opened at London's Arts Theatre in May 2001, had a conventional theatrical presentation and was entirely cast with professional stage actors

and singers. Furthermore, the score contained eleven brand new Pet Shop Boys' songs. Rather than appear as part of a new Pet Shop Boys album, these songs were instead released on an 'original cast recording' (a commercially available sound recording of a musical's score – very occasionally, featuring some dialogue - performed by the original cast in the sequence they would appear in the production).

Meanwhile, the process which eventually led them to become the first rock or pop act to perform a season in London's West End theatre district began when Tennant viewed Sam Taylor-Wood's work *Pent-Up* while being exhibited at London's Chisenhale Gallery in 1996. Shortly afterwards, Tennant suggested that she should work on staging the concerts which his group had planned to give at London's Savoy Theatre in 1997.[20] The group's initial idea was to have live 'real time' video footage broadcast from different parts of London onto two screens on the theatre's stage while the concert was being performed. However, that proved impractical when the cost of using the necessary satellite telecommunications was taken into account. In the final production design, Taylor-Wood nevertheless used video footage, but as part of an on-stage installation. In the centre of the back half of the stage was located a 'module': a hollowed out white cube, with the side facing the audience removed and a keyboard and its stand inside. On all internal surfaces of the module were dotted white spotlights, while at either side of the removed surface was a door opening outwards into the backstage area. Attached to either side of the module (leading away from each of the doors) were two large video screens, which extended to the vertical edges of the Savoy Theatre's proscenium arch. While the concert was in progress, forty-five minutes' worth of 'real time' video footage showing a group of increasingly inebriated people at a party was projected

108

onto each of these screens. The module and the two screens rested upon an even-heighted rostrum with a stage-wide staircase leading down to the stage's floor level; this, in turn, left the front half of the stage clear of any stage props or other stage furniture. During the concert, Tennant mostly sang either on the staircase or at the front of the stage; Lowe, on the other hand, stayed in front playing the keyboard inside the module for the entire duration of the concert. The only on-stage personnel other than Pet Shop Boys were a female backing singer and a male dancer, both of whom appeared intermittently throughout the concert. The performance itself consisted of two halves (separated by an interval) and (after a brief interlude) one encore. In the second half of the concert, another forty-five minutes' worth of video showing the same group of people was shown on each of the two screens, again in 'real time'. For the encore, however, cameras located in the theatre itself filmed the audience, whose live moving images were shown on the two screens.

As with the *MCMLXXXIX* tour, I will conduct an analysis of a selection of scenes from the Pet Shop Boys *Somewhere* again with the use of a commercially available video cassette featuring an edited version of the entire staging (Griffin 1997). Again, I have aimed to exercise the minimum use of adjectives and adverbs in my descriptions to ensure the highest degree of objectivity, and the timings again refer to the location on the video cassette of the relevant scene within reasonable exactness, while assuming any slight differences in the speed and precision between different models of video cassette player. Furthermore, the scenes are discussed in the order in which they appeared during the concert. For greater accuracy, this analysis is further supplemented by reference to a variety of press reviews of the *Somewhere* season (Cheal, 1997; Dalton, 1997; Flett, 1997; Sullivan, 1997).

6.7.1 Scene 1: The corporealisation of Pet Shop Boys as they move from the social world represented on video to the performative world of the concert platform

(Video cassette timings: approximately 25 minutes and 41 seconds to 52 minutes and 5 seconds)

The stage curtain rises to reveal a stage set consisting of a white module surrounded by the two screens either side of it. Silent black and white film is already running on these two screens. On the screen at stage left is shown a white-walled room with a wooden floor, in which there are three men and three woman chatting. There are three large windows at the back of the room, one of which has a window blind half-pulled down. There are also four coat hooks in the shape of human hands on the wall between two of the window frames. In the middle of the room is another sofa, with a stand chair to its left. Tennant is sat on this chair, while the others are sat on the sofa or its arms. Some of these people are smoking and drinking. The image on the screen at stage right is that of a similar room but with no windows or coat hooks (it is possibly the same room filmed from a different angle). There is a striped sofa in the middle of this room. On and around the sofa are five men and two women, who are engaged in conversation. One of them is Lowe, who is sat in the middle position on the sofa. Some of the other people are smoking and drinking. At a certain point, Tennant and Lowe simultaneously get up from their seats and walk to their right and left respectively. As their images go off camera, their physical selves walk out of the door nearest to where their video alternates were shown to disappear from. They are wearing the same clothes as they did in the film: both of them are dressed in a white tunic jacket, white trousers and white sports shoes; Lowe

is also wearing a blue-peaked white baseball cap and dark sunglasses. Lowe puts on a pair of headphones and begins to play the keyboard sited in the white module. Tennant walks down the staircase in front of the module and begins to sing. Other than their mode of entrance on stage, there is no other interaction between the actual Pet Shop Boys, their 'virtual' selves or the people on film during this scene. Meanwhile, the activities of the people on film continue in 'real time'. While the songs are being performed, Tennant moves only between the top of the staircase and the front of the stage; Lowe remains at all times behind the keyboard. When Tennant finishes singing the last song in this scene, he waves to crowd and walks up the staircase towards the white cube. Lowe by this point has removed his headphones and stopped playing the keyboard. With Tennant now inside the module, they both walk back through the same door from which they entered at the start of the concert. As they go through, their video alternates appear 'on cue' once more on the respective screen and they sit back in the same position as they did when the film began. The stage curtain is lowered and the first interval begins.

What kind of performance is being described here? On the one hand, the concert is taking place in a conventional theatre, but it is not a conventional piece of theatre. This is because Pet Shop Boys are not even offering a repertoire of on-stage incarnations populating a series of *mises-en-scène* as they did in their account of market oppression and the liberation of desire on their *MCMLXXXIX* tour in 1989. Neither does 'transmogrifying' from their video alternates into their corporeal selves suggest a typical example of backstage theatre-related activity (such as applying stage make-up or putting on a stage character's costume).[21] At the same time, when taking into account the forms and functions of Sam Taylor-Wood's work, it is reasonable to state that the staging is possessed

111

with the traits of video installation art; yet it is not being presented in an art gallery. Furthermore, unlike her more formal work in video art, what happens on film does not serve – at this point - to recognise the space outside of the moving image.

> I want the films to act as a form of background so that nothing is to overpowering. These fairly curious people, lounge lizards, do not distract from the performance and can merely be glanced at. It is an endless waiting, because the whole thing is shot in real time, unedited. I like the idea of the title of the show being *Somewhere* and the films being 'elsewhere' – somewhere else – but then seen to interact. (Sam Taylor-Wood quoted in Heath 1997: 10)

As far as I understand it, it seems to me that Taylor-Wood's use of video is deliberately establishing the limits of Tennant and Lowe's performative frame as Pet Shop Boys when they offer themselves up for public scrutiny. By way of an explanation, consider this statement from Tennant.

> You are a pop star when you're doing a pop star activity. And [Pet Shop Boys] have huge stretches when we're not doing that. I definitely draw a line between being on and being off, as it were. Some of them being Neil Tennant. I do get a bit surprised if someone recognises me in [the supermarket]. I get a bit taken aback and think, "No, I'm not on, I'm not him at the moment, I'm the real one". (Neil Tennant quoted on Griffin 1997)

In other words, the implication of what Tennant is saying here neatly corresponds with Taylor-Wood's concept which seems to visually indicate the social world (when Tennant and Lowe are 'in

112

private') in contrast to when Pet Shop Boys are performing for public consumption. Taylor-Wood sufficiently indicates that their video alternates, being located in the 'back region' where they can be found socialising with friends in an informal setting, refer to a sense of being 'off'; when the corporeal Pet Shop Boys appear in the 'front region' of the theatre, however, this is the confirmation that Tennant and Lowe have crossed over into Pet Shop Boys' public mode and should consequently be understood as being 'on'.

Of course, it is the audience in the theatre auditorium who have the task of interpreting this shift between 'on' and 'off'. As this concert analysis develops, so will the audience role become more involved to the extent where it becomes actively participative. So far, though, the audience can merely observe the interaction between the people on film and the corporeal Pet Shop Boys. When considering some of the 'fan reviews' of the *Somewhere* concerts on the "Pet Shop Boys... Funnily Enough" website,[22] it would seem that the installation concept had the effect of creating too much distance between the audience and the group. 'David A' found that "the installation art... makes little sense in the first half"; whereas 'Kirsty C' believed that "the first half was vaguely disappointing - the energy didn't seem to be happening". Meanwhile, 'Andrew W' found that the effect of using video art undermined the efficacy of the performance in that it overly inhibited more 'unscripted' forms of expressiveness by the group from taking place because "it does somewhat give the impression that the whole damn thing's rehearsed and timed to the second, with no room for spontaneity". How far Pet Shop Boys are able to reconcile the needs and demands exhibited in these fan reviews with 'reconfiguring' their public profile is brought into focus as this concert develops.

6.7.2 Scene 2 – Symbolic uses of colour and 'criss-crossing' the threshold between the social and the performative worlds

(Video cassette timings: approximately 52 minutes and 29 seconds to 1 hour, 16 minutes and 33 seconds)

The stage curtain is raised to reveal the same stage set as before the interval. Again there is 'real time' footage on each screen at either side of the white module. On the screens are shown the same people as seen previously, in the same location, engaged in the same kinds of sociable activity as in the first half of the concert. The key differences are that the footage is in colour and neither Tennant nor Lowe is on film. Rather, what is seen when the curtain rises is the corporeal Pet Shop Boys already standing on stage: Lowe is in front of his keyboard wearing his headphones, while Tennant is standing at the top of staircase. The design of their clothes remains the same, but the colour does not: their white tunics and white trousers are now blue in colour (although their sports shoes and Lowe's baseball cap and sunglasses are the same as in the first half). As Lowe starts to play the keyboard, Tennant moves down to the front of the stage and the concert continues. In the early stages of this second half, interaction between the people on screen and Pet Shop Boys takes the form of dancing by the former in time and rhythm to the music being performed by the group (they even stop dancing when a song stops). There are two moments, however, when much more involved interaction takes place between the 'worlds' on film and in the theatre. The first takes place when Tennant leaves the stage through the door he had used before the interval, with his video alternate appearing on screen as he does so to rejoin the socialising. Lowe then accompanies the female singer on one song, after which Tennant's

video alternate moves back 'off camera' with his corporeal self
walking through the same door to resume his place on-stage.
Shortly after, Tennant announces that he is to perform a song which
is be unaccompanied by Lowe, at which point Lowe walks back
through the door at stage left with his video alternate emerging on
the 'other side'. When the end of the final song is reached, Tennant
waves goodbye to the audience and stands to the left of Lowe at the
keyboard. They then both wave at the audience before walking
through the same doors as they did immediately prior to the first
interval. Again, as they go through, their video alternates appear
on the 'other side', who sit down on a sofa and begin chatting with
the people on film. The stage curtain is lowered.

Explaining her intentions for her Pet Shop Boys installation design,
Taylor-Wood says, "I wanted to create the idea that there is an
enormous party going on backstage, so the videos are all single
shots that happen in real time" (Sam Taylor-Wood quoted in
Harrison 1997: 5). So far, it would seem that this approach has
increasingly had the reciprocal effect of foregrounding the group's
star story by a juxtaposition of their on-stage performance with
images referencing how Tennant and Lowe might behave 'in private'
(and, therefore, outside the frame of what they would ordinarily
make available in the public domain). In the process, at least as
indicated by 'fan reviews' of this staging, this appears to have
inhibited a communicative flow between performer and audience.
However, I am inclined to the view that this second scene involves a
selection of aesthetic choices which has the effect of activating a
process of reconciliation around the performer-audience
relationship. The first of these is made in relation to having the
corporeal Pet Shop Boys already on-stage as the curtain is raised
after the interval. Linked to this observation is the strong allusion
to the 'here and now' due to the apparent interactivity between the

115

sounds and rhythms of what is being performed on the concert platform and the movement of the people on film (as well as the fact that they also appear in full colour). Furthermore, as Tennant, and then Lowe, cross the performative threshold (so to speak) and return to their video alternates, I would suggest that this effectively brings about a collapse in space and time, which in turn emphasises a sense that they cannot be far away from the stage: it should only take a reasonable leap of the imagination to symbolically locate their video alternates as being backstage. In addition, if this 'shared experience' between the performing Pet Shop Boys and the people on film accentuates concepts of being on-stage and backstage, then it must also recognise that the social space outside of the moving image can only be the frame around the group's star story. For this reason, therefore, it seems evident that the performance has 'turned its back' on the video world and directed itself entirely towards the audience in the theatre auditorium.[23] By conflating notions of space and time in the theatre even more, the next scene for discussion looks at how Taylor-Wood's installation staging concludes by firmly reiterating the group's distinction between being 'on' and 'off' amongst the audience in the theatre.

6.7.3 Scene 3 – How the audience interacts with Taylor-Wood's installation as the concert reaches its conclusion

(Video cassette timings: approximately 1 hour, 16 minutes and 38 seconds to 1 hour, 30 minutes and 37 seconds)

The stage curtain is raised for the encore. Tennant is stood at a microphone at the front of the stage, Lowe is at the keyboard; they are still wearing the same clothes as they did for the second part of the concert. The screens, meanwhile, are now showing live images

116

of actual audience members in (at least) the first few rows of the stalls in the theatre auditorium; what is happening directly at the very edge of the stage can also be seen on screen. After finishing the last song of the concert, Pet Shop Boys wave goodbye to the audience and the stage curtain is lowered.

Looking back over this analysis, I think it is credible to envisage how Taylor-Wood's installation constructed a two-way flow between notions of the 'staged' and the everyday. In the first part of the concert, the black and white footage on screen, together with its limited capacity for interactivity between the real and virtual worlds, began a process of 'separating out' Tennant and Lowe as private individuals in the social world from Pet Shop Boys' star personae as seen in aesthetic events (such as live concerts or promotional music videos). By the end of the second part, this opposition is developed further by emphasising the threshold between the real and video worlds in terms of what is meant by being on-stage, and what is meant by being backstage or off-stage. Within this paradigm, the concert audience has systematically been brought closer into the event's interactional processes, climaxing in their appearance on the video screens during this encore. By displacing the people on film with the audience, this signals the ultimate collapse of any spatial and temporal relationship the group has had with the video footage. Therefore, having now eliminated the virtual world inhabited by their video alternates from their concert, it is as if Pet Shop Boys' intention in placing the audience on screen is to impose upon them the role of 'border guards' at the threshold between the aesthetic event and the social world, and in so doing determining that all they can (be permitted to) see is the group's star personae, not who they are or how they live their lives beyond the stage curtain.

117

Formerly, this dynamic (at least on a symbolic level) would have been apposite given the way the group sustained their performative repertoire through different identities being 'acted out' in the (audience's) social world. However, there are also personal (to Pet Shop Boys) reasons why reconfiguring the relationship with their audience might be desirable in terms of its capacity to emphasise that private identity still remains outside the limits of their star story. By way of explaining this further, Tennant says,

> I have a very bad habit which is to keep different parts of my life separate, and when they mix I get what they call 'role strain'. I worry about whom I'm going to offend most. (Neil Tennant quoted in Heath 2001: 7)

In contrast to their *MCMLXXXIX* tour, which interpreted everyday stories of 'lived' experience recognisable by their audience, this performance (aided by Taylor-Wood's installation solidly and systematically enables a (loose) discussion about the differences between what the group was willing to make publicly available, and what related to private activity and therefore 'out of bounds' to the (concert, wider) audience.

6.8 Concluding remarks

On the matter of how Pet Shop Boys wish to project themselves in the public domain, Neil Tennant has said,

> It's fundamental that what we do only exists in our own universe. When you like Pet Shop Boys, you are in our world. This is absolutely crucial to our entire outlook... what we do has an incredibly strong identity and applies only to us. It's a

case of not recognising the existence of anybody else. (Neil
Tennant quoted in Wilde 1991)

With this in mind, this chapter has in large part mapped the
performative modes the group has deployed in 'acting out' their
representation. From the time of their inception in the 1980's, their
public representation has reflected and commented upon the
shifting nature of social codes being played out in the everyday
spaces in British society. Acting in an interpreting role, the group
(particularly Tennant) have narrated stories of 'lived' experience in
the face of a 'policing' culture towards personal morality existing at
this time (of which Section 28, with its perceived institutionalised
intolerance of homosexual lifestyles, was an example) and the
stifling of sexual desire due to the extent of the burgeoning HIV and
AIDS crisis. These narratives have been told through characters,
some of which were portrayed (mostly by Tennant) in Pet Shop
Boys' first concert tour in 1989. In the process of the concert,
these characters could be found in a series of *mises-en-scène* which
functioned as a critique of the Thatcher government's paradoxical
conflation of free market economics and a repressive moral order.

I have argued, therefore, that these kinds of approach to
performance have the overarching effect of embedding their
resistance to institutionalised or fixed (binary) concepts of sexuality
and gender (as well as related discourses of stardom and
nationhood) within their frame. Put another way, effacing
recognisable traces of private identity is central to how Pet Shop
Boys publicly represented themselves in terms of sexuality and
gender during this period. In his article for the journal *Popular
Music* entitled "Glamour and evasion: the fabulous ambivalence of
the Pet Shop Boys", Fred E. Maus states that the form which this
representation took "suggests that the ins and outs of Tennant's or

Lowe's personal self-disclosure are not, and perhaps were never, the central issue in their creative choices" (2001: 390). Likewise, Stan Hawkins observes that "concepts of pleasure and power resulting from the 'sexual undertow' [being] left open for negotiation, redefinition and reinterpretation" is justified in the context of binary social codes being disrupted in Thatcher's Britain (1997: 125).

At the same time, I raised the issue that critics have found their distinctive stance to be inconsistent with their involvement with events to promote gay and lesbian rights, particularly in their light of a persistent refusal to confirm their sexual orientation in the public domain. To this extent, it seems reasonable that when Tennant transformed a magazine interview promoting his group's product to publicly announce his homosexuality, Richard Smith from the gay and lesbian political magazine *Outrage* should state that for Tennant, as someone "who has built his career on a love of artifice and playfulness, to be so matter-of-fact was, one could argue, not very Pet Shop Boys" (1994).

In other words, if Pet Shop Boys' public representation was initially underpinned by the 'lived' experience of the Other, the consequential impact of Tennant's announcement about his sexuality was immediate and obvious. Taking this schism as the prelude to the second part of this chapter, I explored how it necessitated a reconfiguration of the relationship between performer and audience for the group. In tackling this problematic, I surveyed the video work of the contemporary British artist Sam Taylor-Wood, who collaborated on the stage design for Pet Shop Boys' concerts at London's Savoy Theatre (the first concerts in Britain the group performed following Tennant's sexual orientation being made public). In the process, I drew attention to the trend in

her video work of exploring spatial and temporal themes, often in relation to celebrity discourse or star stories. By drawing on these distinctive traits of her work as a means of interpreting what might have taken place during these concerts, I proposed that the staging's overall effect was to acknowledge the existence of a private life 'lived' by the group, but did so by 'instructing' the audience that it is not available as part of their star story which they 'perform' in the public domain.

---

[1] Chris Lowe was born in 1959 and comes from the English seaside resort of Blackpool. As a teenager, he played keyboards in a school rock group called Stallion, and afterwards became a trombone player with both his school orchestra and a seven-piece jazz group named One Under The Eight. In 1978, he began an Architecture degree at the University of Liverpool.

[2] Direct references from Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1986 are taken from Sanders (2003). Although no local authority (or any agent thereof) was ever prosecuted under the legislation, it was continually targeted by anti-discrimination campaigners such as the gay and lesbian rights lobby group Stonewall. Section 28 was eventually abolished in England and Wales on 17 November 2003; it had already been abolished in Scotland the year before.

[3] Jonathan Harvey was born in Liverpool in 1968. His playwriting is preoccupied by his exploration of gay lifestyle themes in plays like *Beautiful Thing* (which premiered at the Bush Theatre, London, in 1993, transferring to London's West End London in the following year; the play was also made into a feature film in 1996), *Rupert Street Lonely Hearts Club* (which toured the United Kingdom in 1995 in a production by the English Touring Theatre) and *Hushabye Mountain* (which was staged at the Hampstead Theatre, London, in 1999). He has also created the BBC Television comedy series *Gimme Gimme Gimme* and written several episodes of the British television 'soap opera' *Coronation Street*; in both cases, his scripts have often foreground gay characters and experiences.

[4] All quotations are taken from http://www.avert.org/aids.htm25.

[5] Homosexual acts between consenting male adults were decriminalised in 1967, although full legal reform lowering the age of consent in line with that for heterosexuals did not occur until 1998.

[6] Although Coward's knighthood came three years after the British government 'decriminalised' homosexuality in 1967, establishment hypocrisy seemingly demanded that his private sexuality be kept out of the public domain until after his death.

[7] Another prominent example is that of the classical actor Ian McKellen and the polarised reaction in the gay and lesbian community to his acceptance of a knighthood from the Conservative government, led by Prime Minister John Major, in 1991. The knighthood was given to acknowledge his work for the gay and lesbian rights lobby group Stonewall. On the one hand, it was felt that McKellen had diminished his lobbying credibility by accepting an honour from a political establishment which had (by then) neither lowered the age of consent for homosexuals in line with that for heterosexuals, nor repealed Section 28. Conversely, it was argued that McKellen's knighthood was a significant landmark in terms of positive representations for British gay men and lesbians, as it demonstrated that public figures would (should) no longer need to conceal their homosexuality in fear that it could damage their careers or social standing. (For further information, see http://myweb.lsbu.ac.uk/~stagglag/ianmckellen.html.)

[8] English seaside resorts dwindled significantly in popularity as cheap, all-inclusive holidays in Spain became more available to the working and lower middle classes from the 1960's onwards.

[9] The Supreme Congregation for the Holy Inquisition of Heretical Error (to give its full title) was an ecclesiastical tribunal set up by the Vatican for the suppression of heresy (it is now known as the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith). Its most prominent incarnation took place in Spain, where it lasted from 1478 until 1820. With Spain being a nation-state borne out of religious struggle between diverse communities, including Roman Catholics, Muslims, Protestants and Jews, the Inquisition was actively endorsed by the Spanish monarchy as a means of unifying the country through a extreme process of 'Roman Catholicising' the population. Many of those who refused were executed for heresy.

10 The 'Seven Deadly Sins' were described by Pope Gregory I (540 - 604) in a series of lectures he gave about the Old Testament *Book Of Job* which are collectively referred to as *Moralia in Job*. They are 'Superbia' (Pride), 'Invidia' (Envy), 'Ira' (Anger), 'Avaritia' (Avarice), 'Tristia' (Sloth), 'Gula' (Gluttony) and 'Luxuria' (Lust). Through Gregory's teachings, the Roman Catholic Church made a division between sins which are 'venal' and could be forgiven without the need for confession to a priest and those which are 'capital', thereby requiring confession in order to gain absolution. This moralising septet has continued to make an enduring cultural impact, from morality plays sponsored by the early Church to folklore stories such as the German legend of Faust, who sold his soul to the Devil in return for a lifetime of carnal pleasures. They have also inspired literary texts, ranging from Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* to Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, and more recently in the writings of C. S. Lewis. The emplotment of the film *Seven*, directed in 1995 by David Fincher, is also structured around the Seven Deadly Sins.

11 This is confirmed in Heath (1988: 12).

12 The case of Alice Cooper is discussed in Chapter 8 as a formative instance of a rock performer creating a stylised public incarnation which is intentionally separate from his private life and identity.

13 Margi Clarke is the actress portraying the blonde-haired woman in the "Rent" video. Liverpool-born Clarke is largely associated with film and television roles depicting strong or feisty, working class women from the north-west of England.

14 Clause 28 became Section 28 when the Local Government Act 1986 passed into law in May 1988.

15 The rationale behind Michael Rush's viewpoint here is developed in the second concert analysis in this chapter.

16 Ray Winstone was born in London in 1957. At the age of twelve, he started boxing for the Repton Amateur Boxing Club, becoming the London Schoolboy Champion on three occasions and representing England twice. When he was eighteen, however, he decided to study acting at the Corona Academy (now called the Ravenscourt Theatre School) in London, after which he cast as the

borstal inmate Carlin in the 1977 BBC Television production *Scum*, directed by Alan Clarke (he also appeared in a feature film version of *Scum* in 1979). Since then, he has appeared in several films in which he tends to portray brutal and brutalising characters: for instance, he plays a wife-battering alcoholic in the 1997 film *Nil By Mouth*, (directed by Gary Oldman), while in the 1999 film *The War Zone* (directed by Tim Roth) he portrayed a middle-class man respected in his community while in secret he repeatedly rapes his seventeen-year-old daughter. He is also known for playing gangland criminals from London's East End in films such as *Face* (directed by Antonia Bird in 1997), *Love, Honour and Obey* (directed by Dominic Anciano and Ray Burdis in 1999) and *Sexy Beast* (directed by Jonathan Glazer in 2001).

[17] David Beckham's public representation is not only concerned with his role as a professional footballer, but it also cuts across a range of other social and cultural arenas. Born in Leytonstone, near London, in 1975, he showed considerable footballing talent throughout his school years, representing the English county of Essex, having trials with Leyton Orient Football Club and attending Tottenham Hotspur Football Club's School of Excellence. At the age of sixteen, however, he signed as a trainee for Manchester United Football Club, with whom he made his senior team debut on 23 September 1992. Eventually earning upwards of £10 million a year from wages and sponsorship deals (including his own range of children's clothing at Marks and Spencer), Beckham left Manchester United in 2003 and moved to the Spanish team Real Madrid at a transfer fee of £25 million. Beckham has also enjoyed success at international level, which started in 1996 when he was invited to play for the England national football team, becoming the only player to make the starting line up in every qualifying match for the finals of the 1998 World Cup, which that year were held in France. However, during a second round match in France against Argentina, he was sent off by the referee for a foul on the Argentine footballer Diego Simeone. As well as being the first time during his professional career that he had been sent off, England also lost the match and were knocked out of the finals. That said, Beckham was eventually made captain of the England team by the new England team manager Sven Goran Eriksson in 2001. In this role, Beckham led the England team to the finals of the World Cup 2002, which were held in Japan and Korea. On this occasion, England succeeded as far as the quarter-finals where they were beaten by the eventual world champions, Brazil. In July 1999, Beckham married Victoria Adams of the all-female British pop group Spice Girls (whose first two albums

were the most commercially successful by a British act during the 1990's in terms of international sales), with whom he has had three sons: Brooklyn, Romeo and Cruz. After the birth of his first son, Beckham had the child's name tattooed on his lower back while Romeo's is featured across the back of his shoulders; his wife's name is tattooed on his arm in Hindi. In November 2002, the Metropolitan Police intercepted a plot to kidnap Adams, while in June 2003, Beckham was awarded the Order of the British Empire in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

[18] On another level, I would argue that Taylor-Wood's video portrait of Beckham is following in the tradition of earlier video art works by the likes of Vito Acconci and Bruce Nauman. These artists used the concept of video art to film themselves in the act of creation; similarly, Taylor-Wood permits her 'shadowy' image (made possible by the bedside lamp's reflection) to be visible behind the sleeping Beckham as she monitors the filming of the video portrait.

[19] Mark Lawson made these comments while speaking on the 26 April 2004 edition of BBC Radio 4's daily arts programme *Front Row*.

[20] London's Savoy Theatre, which is located next to the Savoy Hotel between the Strand and the Thames embankment, was opened in October 1881 by the impresario Richard D'Oyly Carte. It was under D'Oyly Carte's patronage that the dramatist and librettist W.S. Gilbert and the composer Arthur Sullivan enjoyed popular and enduring success with their late Victorian operettas such as *Iolanthe* and *The Mikado*, which necessitated a new theatre to house D'Oyly Carte's company and accommodate the large audiences which performances of these operettas drew. Indeed, the Savoy Theatre became the very first public building in the world to be illuminated by electric light. The building remained untouched until 1929 when Rupert D'Oyly Carte (the son of the founder) refurbished the original Victorian interior design with Art Deco details. Major renovation also took place between 1990 and 1993 after fire destroyed the inside of the theatre in February 1990. By salvaging clues from the wreckage, the restoration team were eventually able to recreate the 1929 interior (including light fittings, Utrecht velvet on the auditorium seating and silk tassels on the stage curtain).

[21] The kinds of theatre-related off-stage activity shown on film in the Pet Shop Boys concert, in my estimation, differ significantly in functional terms from the overtly theatrical conventions applied to the transformation of Bono, the lead

singer of the Irish group U2, into his on-stage incarnation of Mr. Macphisto (see Chapter 8). Although both instances make use of video technology (be it pre-recorded or live footage), the setting of an actor's dressing room in Bono's case is presumably intended to emphasise his 'getting into character' and, in the process, activate a clear distinction between what Bono represents and what Mr. Macphisto is representing. In contrast, I would argue that Pet Shop Boys are drawing attention to different social 'states' rather than portraying dramatic characters.

[22] All direct references from the fan reviews are taken from http://www.geocities .com/SunsetStrip/Performance/4741/savoy_fanrevs.html. The names of the fan reviews' authors are pseudonyms as they appear on the website, while every review was written in 1997.

[23] Responses to this point in the concert proceedings, as described in the 'fan reviews' on the "Pet Shop Boys… Funnily Enough" website, would appear to support this view: 'Miles', for instance, insists that "the whole place got up, and then it all started to kick in", while 'Kirsty C' states that the "second half was much better, with the crowd and PSB finally coming together".

Chapter 7: Case study 2 - Richey Edwards and Manic Street Preachers' fan culture

7.1 Abstract

Manic Street Preachers' profile in the public domain has largely come to be structured around images of self-harm and eating disorders directly involving their lyricist Richey Edwards in, by and for the media. In turn, the media has often juxtaposed these images alongside other tragedies involving other well-known figures as well as members of the public. The kinds of impact these images have can be measured by a variety of discourse observable in the group's fan culture. This discourse predominantly takes the form of stories of 'performed' experience in the social world which appear to 'resuscitate' events from Edwards' mediated story, often in 'sites' constructed by the media itself. Since his disappearance without trace in 1995, it is proposed that the pervasive and enduring circulation of the images he left behind has led Manic Street Preachers' fan culture to 'conspire' with the media in the reliable construction of a 'spectacle' as conceptualised by the French social theorist Guy Debord. In conclusion, it can be shown that the presence of a spectacle gives the potential for the three remaining members of Manic Street Preachers to create an imaginary 'reunion' with Edwards in their concerts since he disappeared.

7.2 Introduction

Richey Edwards is (was) the principal lyricist with the British rock group Manic Street Preachers, along with the singer/guitarist James Dean Bradfield, the bass player Nicky Wire[1] and the drummer Sean Moore. All born in the late 1960's in Blackwood, a former coal-mining town in South Wales, they attended the same schools and tertiary college, while Wire and Edwards both studied for degrees at Swansea University. By all accounts, this situation resulted in an intensely strong bond of friendship between them, coupled with an ever-growing interest in politicised (left wing) rock music. This led Bradfield, Wire and Moore, with the help of another mutual friend called Miles Woodward, to form the rock group Betty Blue in 1986. As Edwards could not play any musical instrument at that stage, he was enrolled as the group's driver due to being the only one amongst them who possessed a driving licence. Woodward left the group two years later, with Edwards being invited to replace him (although even then he was predominantly recruited as a lyricist because he was still only able to play a handful of guitar chords). The group also settled on the new name of Manic Street Preachers, supposedly after a comment from an elderly man directed at Bradfield while he was busking in Cardiff city centre. Following one of their first concerts in a London bar, the group attracted the attention of the publicist Philip Hall, whose company Hall or Nothing agreed to deal with all management and publicity matters on their behalf, and through him they signed a recording contract with Sony Music in 1991.

Worth £250,000, this contract first and foremost financed the production of their debut album *Generation Terrorists*, which eventually went on to sell 250,000 copies worldwide. "Little Baby Nothing", one of the singles released from this album, consisted of a

duet between Bradfield and the former American porn actress Traci Lords, [2] for which Edwards wrote lyrics dealing with the denigration of women in the entertainment industries. Their first top ten single in the British music sales chart, however, came in September 1992 with their recording of "Suicide is Painless", the theme song from the 1969 Robert Altman film about the Korean War *M.A.S.H.*, to raise funds for the Spastics Society. A less charitable gesture took place in December of that year when Nicky Wire announced to their audience while performing in London that, "In this season of goodwill, here's hoping Michael Stipe goes the same way as Freddie Mercury pretty soon" (Nicky Wire quoted in Price 1999: 88).[3] A similar incident took place when, during their appearance at the 1993 Glastonbury music festival to promote their second album *Gold Against the Soul*, Wire demanded that New Age travellers (many of whom were at the festival) were mostly the highly privileged offspring of the rich and should be 'rounded up' by the authorities.

That December saw the death of Philip Hall at the age of 34 from cancer, although management and publicity matters for Manic Street Preachers were taken over by his brother Martin. In response to Hall's death, the group organised a fundraising concert for cancer research at London's Clapham Grand in March 1994. Around this time, the group had begun work on their third album *The Holy Bible* at the Soundspace Studios in Cardiff, for which Edwards took responsibility for much of the lyric-writing and the album's artwork. The themes 'storying' his contribution included self-harm, eating disorders, abortion, the law and order discourses of the French theorist Michel Foucault and Nazi extermination camps. When "Faster", one of the singles released from this album, was performed by the group on BBC Television's music programme *Top Of The Pops*, their appearance in military costumes (with

Bradfield singing while dressed in a black balaclava ripped open at the mouth) apparently generated 25,000 viewer complaints to the broadcasting organisation.

What I contend to have been a more distinctive manner in which the group have come to be represented since entering the public domain has been in relation to a visible decline in Edwards' well-being which, following the diagnosis that he was suffering from anorexia and alcoholism, resulted in his hospitalisation during the summer of 1994. Edwards was still in hospital when the group began their 1994 European tour to promote *The Holy Bible* album, which saw them perform as a three-piece for the first time, although he was eventually able to join the tour for its culmination in a series of concerts at London's Astoria Theatre that December. The following month, Edwards even agreed to accompany Bradfield on a visit to North America to cultivate media interest in the group's forthcoming tour there. On 31 January 1995, the day before they were due to fly out on this trip, the two of them took separate rooms at the Embassy Hotel in central London. The next morning, Bradfield called at Edwards' room, but found no trace of him except for a packet of his prescription anti-depressant tablets, assorted toiletries and a suitcase packed with his clothes. It later transpired that Edwards had checked out of the hotel at around 7 a.m. and driven in his Vauxhall Cavalier car to his Cardiff apartment. However, when Wire entered the apartment later that day, he too found no trace other than more abandoned anti-depressants along with Edwards' passport and credit cards. The day after, he was reported missing to London's Metropolitan Police and fourteen days later his Vauxhall Cavalier was found abandoned in the car park at the Aust Motorway Services on the English side of the old Severn Bridge. He has not been seen since. Following consultations with Edwards' family, the group decided to continue as a three-piece still

under the name of Manic Street Preachers. Meanwhile, despite several alleged sightings, Edwards' case remains open, but inactive, at the National Missing Persons Bureau. Even though his family has had the right to have him legally declared dead since February 2002, they have so far declined to do so.

7.3 The representation of Richey Edwards and the role of the media

Having looked at Edwards' history in Manic Street Preachers, I now want to focus on two events which I suggest have been pivotal in defining the nature of his publicly mediated representation. The first of these took place when Edwards cut the slogan '4 REAL' into his left forearm with a razor blade while being interviewed by Steve Lamacq of the weekly British rock magazine *New Musical Express* after a Manic Street Preachers concert at the Norwich Arts Centre on 15 May 1991. Furthermore, before leaving to have his cuts treated at the local hospital, Edwards removed his bandages to allow the magazine's photographer to take a picture of him, with the subsequent image being prominently placed in the next issue. Evaluating the 'net impact' of this event, Neil Spencer comments that

> Every major rock band has its abiding mythology and the Manic Street Preachers found theirs in 1991 when their guitarist and songwriter Richey Edwards carved the legend '4 REAL' into his arm before an incredulous *NME* journalist. Edwards vanished six years ago… but his grisly assertion of authenticity has remained the Manics' central calling card. (Spencer 2001)

The visceral nature of this event, then, is overt. But I also consider that Edwards' active participation in its eventual mediation transforms the event into an aesthetically evaluable act: a deliberately public statement in which he posits something which would ordinarily be regarded as private firmly within the frame of his group's public profile. Furthermore, when the group signed to Sony Music just six weeks after this event, the image printed in *New Musical Express* was distributed by the company to promote them to North American media organisations.

To a wider degree, the event can also be viewed in the sense of being an act of resistance to 'Acid House' culture, which was the dominant discourse relating to youth in Britain at the time. Acid House culture began in Britain during the late 1980's at a time of excessive levels of youth unemployment resulting from a decline in traditional manufacturing industry which pursued the economic policies of the Thatcher government.[4]   Its visibility was mostly reflected in the renascent popularity in nightclubbing in many of Britain's former industrial towns and cities, most notably at Manchester's Haçienda nightclub. This was due in large part to a burgeoning interest in electronic dance music, together with the increasing accessibility of a recreational drug known as 'Ecstasy'[5] being illegally traded in these nightclubs and consumed with the purpose of creating a physical sensation of euphoria and a heightened breakdown in social inhibition. As the Acid House scene grew, illegal 'raves' (dance music parties mostly held in disused warehouses) were held across Britain, although they soon became vulnerable to large-scale police raids and appeared to be causal factors in amendments to Local Government and Public Order legislation. As such, if Acid House posited recreational drug consumption and collective hedonism as a means of confronting the social consequences of the prevailing political ideology, then the

public foregrounding of such an intensely subjective experience as self-harm had the potential to transform Edwards' actions into an expression of active disenfranchisement from both society and its dominant counter-culture.

As already stated, Edwards was also a sufferer from anorexia, and I would argue that this theme is central to any understanding of his lyrics for the Manic Street Preachers song "4st 7lb" (Bradfield and Edwards 1994), which are quoted in full below.

> (Spoken introduction on the sound recording) *"I eat too much to die, and not enough to stay alive. I'm sitting in the middle waiting."*
>
> *Days since I last pissed*
> *Cheeks sunken and despaired*
> *So gorgeous sunk to 6 stone*
> *Lose my only remaining home*
> *See my third rib appear*
> *A week later all my flesh disappear*
> *Stretching taut, cling-film on bone*
> *I'm getting better*
> *Karen says I've reached my target weight*
> *Kate and Emma and Kristin know it's fake*
> *Problem is diet's not a big enough word*
> *I wanna be so skinny that I rot from view*
>
> (Chorus)
> *I want to walk in the snow*
> *And not leave a footprint*

I want to walk in the snow

And not soil its purity

Stomach collapsed at 5

Lift up my skirt my sex is gone

Naked and lovely and 5 st. 2

May I bud and never flower

My vision's getting blurred

But I can see my ribs and I feel fine

My hands are trembling stalks

And I can feel my breasts are sinking

Mother tries to choke me with roast beef

And sits savouring her sole Ryvita

That's the way you're built my father said

But I can change, my cocoon shedding

Kate and Kristin and Kit Kat

All things I like looking at

Too weak to fuss, too weak to die

Choice is skeletal in everybody's life

I choose my choice, I starve to frenzy

Hunger soon passes and sickness soon tires

Legs bend, stockinged I am Twiggy

And I don't mind the horror that surrounds me

Self-worth scatters, self-esteem's a bore

I long since moved to a higher plateau

This discipline's so rare so please applaud

Just look at the fat scum who pamper me so

Yeh 4 st. 7, an epilogue of youth

Such beautiful dignity in self-abuse

> *I've finally come to understand life*
> *Through staring blankly at my navel*

At an immediate level, these lyrics might be read as a series of diary entries by a girl who is refusing food in a bid to will herself towards the weight referred to in the song's title, medically considered to be the threshold of death. Meanwhile, the spoken introduction heard at the start of the sound recording is taken from an actual television documentary in which a young woman talks about her real-life experience of an eating disorder. The content could also be a general critique of media images which make copious use of highly slim fashion models by stipulating the forenames of the real-life models Kate Moss, Kristin McMenamy and Emma Balfour, as well as making reference to Twiggy the leading British model of the 1960's known for her 'stick-like' physique. Similarly it implies judgement on the role and value of 'lifestyle advisers' in print journalism and on television by mentioning the forename of the real-life 'agony aunt' Karen Krizanovitch. At the same time, the proliferation of weight-loss regimes in the marketplace is emphasised by its mention of 'Ryvita', a brand of cracker promoted as being useful in calorie-controlled diets.

What I consider to have greater poignancy, however, is the degree to which "4st 7lb" is able to connect different narrative strands from Edwards' own experience of the same eating disorder suffered by the song's narrator. The song was recorded for *The Holy Bible* album in 1994, when he was then known to increasingly conceal himself in his Cardiff apartment and would participate in protracted sessions of cutting and stubbing cigarettes out on his arms while consuming excessive amounts of alcohol yet refusing food of any kind. By the time the song was released, Edwards had been diagnosed as anorexic. As Nicky Wire stated at the time the album

was released, any autobiographical element 'read into' the lyrical content is more than reasonable.

> Every word of that is Richey's, and it's pretty autobiographical. I think that when he was admitted to hospital, he was down to about six stones, which, for a five-foot-eight 25-year-old, is pretty grim.[6]

Furthermore, the fact that Manic Street Preachers initially had to perform songs from *The Holy Bible* live as a three-piece also publicly confirmed the gravity of Edwards' eating disorder along with the public admission that the group only agreed to play those concerts in order to raise money to pay for the substantial healthcare costs he required (he was being treated at The Priory in Roehampton, a private clinic often featured in media stories due to their numerous celebrity clients). In a similar manner to the '4 REAL' event, then, these contexts have been instrumental, in embedding Edwards' experience of anorexia within (the aesthetics of) the group's image and product.

If both these events became key layers in Edwards' representation prior to his disappearance in the media, how did they respond after it took place? As I will explain in more detail later in this chapter, one answer to this question is that the media itself was transformed into 'sites' where performative activity by Manic Street Preachers' fan culture is observable. What began this process is intimated in comments made by the *New Musical Express* journalist John Norris, in an article he wrote around the time Edwards was declared a missing person.

> However the mystery that currently surrounds him is resolved, Richey Edwards has done something that, in the

light of what's happened before, isn't surrounded by absolute surprise. This doesn't look like a breakdown. Far from being incapacitated to the point of stammering, shaking lethargy, he's carefully made plans and executed a positive act that may throw his protestations of diligence, duty and renewed purpose into hideous confusion. (Norris 1995)

Commentating through the media, Rob Stringer from Sony Music, Manic Street Preachers' record label, supported Norris' assertions in the same article by opining that Edwards is

"a very ritualistic person. He doesn't act arbitrarily. And the scary thing is, he's the most well-read person I've ever known. He would be able to tell you the last words of all the famous suicides… and he would know 20 different ways to disappear completely." (Rob Stringer quoted in Norris 1995)

In other words, an initial media response was to draw attention to a perceived 'specialness' about what Edwards represented by these events, which in turn created new media stories involving him, often within the context of a range of media responses to other public and personal tragedies. These kinds of sentiment, in my view, reflect the problematic nature of the case of a missing person: that without his body being available, there is no authenticating materiality which can attest to the fact that the mediated Edwards was indeed 'real' (unmediated). What this resulted in was a persuasive sense in which Edwards' representation could be envisaged as existing at the 'threshold' between life and death. By way of an explanation is a statement by 'Ryan Michael Keith' on the 'The Richey Debate' webpage, which invites contributors to "share your thoughts about what happened to Richey".

I think he is in the in between world that he talked about in '4st 7lb' from *The Holy Bible*. He is too much to stay alive, not enough to die and he's sitting in the middle waiting. You see how he can now walk in the snow and not leave a footprint or soil its purity. [7]

In turn, evoking images of resurrection and re-birth around Edwards' disappearance was made both possible and desirable. This was not just by the media, typified by Norris' question, "What happens if you want to re-assert the fact that you're Richard Edwards, not Richey Manic, and finally seize back that beloved control?" (1995). Similar comments could also be found in Manic Street Preachers' fan culture, as indicated by 'Rob Matthews' who wrote 'The Richey Debate' webpage,

I really believe that he made a statement and he would ruin the statement by coming back. He isn't dead but he is no longer the person who left... I'm sure Richard James Edwards is alive but Richey James[8] is dead. [9]

Imagining re-birth in this fashion, I would suggest, allows this discourse to have the 'dramatic' potential to echo the historical (Christian) drama of the 'Quem Quaeritis' trope which concerns Jesus' resurrection in a manner appropriate to its own contemporary (secular) era and constituency. Historically, tropes (short plays about events from the Biblical narrative) were introduced by the Church around either the ninth or tenth century as part of its attempts to enhance understanding of the Liturgy amongst its congregation at appropriate points in the Christian calendar. This particular trope, whose Latin title translates as "Whom do ye seek?", is a very brief dramatisation of the supposed dialogue at the tomb of the risen Christ. As the two Marys (Jesus'

mother and Mary Magdalene) arrive at the tomb in which Jesus was buried, they discover that the stone across the tomb entrance has been rolled away and that His body is no longer inside, at which point the angels guarding the tomb announce that the resurrection has taken place. Why I wish to draw attention to this trope is to lend credibility to the argument that discourse relating to Edwards and his disappearance shows signs of imposing a 'framing arrangement' to highlight performances in which Edwards' representation might be re-created by, and for, those he 'left behind'. This framing arrangement, I would further suggest, has become more likely with each day which has passed since he disappeared. Before looking at the forms these performances take, it seems inevitable to observe that the media itself (as the interlocutor of Edwards' representation in the public domain) would be transformed into 'site' where they could be acted out. One explanation for this is the fact that the media posited Edwards' possible reasons for disappearing in the context of another celebrity tragedy – namely, the events leading up to the suicide in 1994 of Kurt Cobain, the singer/guitarist with the American rock group Nirvana.

Like Edwards, Cobain was also born in the late 1960's. Originating from the Washington State town of Hoquiam on the American west coast, Cobain proved to be a sickly, bronchitic child, while at the age of four he was also diagnosed as suffering from hyperactivity for which he was prescribed the drug Ritalin.[10] His childhood was further disrupted when his parents divorced around the time of his eighth birthday, which resulted in him being moved constantly between his father and mother, his grandparents, and various aunts and uncles. Although his hyperactivity evolved into depression and anxiety, he nonetheless showed a keen interest in rock music and in his late teens formed Nirvana with Chris Novoselic and Dave Grohl,

releasing their first album *Bleach* in 1989. By the time their second album *Nevermind* was released two years later, they had established themselves as one of the most commercially successful new American groups of the early 1990's.

In February 1992, Cobain married Courtney Love, a singer with another American rock group called Hole (she is now a mainstream film actor), with the couple also announcing that they were expecting a child in the late summer. Shortly after the wedding, the American magazine *Vanity Fair* alleged that the couple were heroin users and that Love was still using the drug at the time of her pregnancy. Although the couple denied the allegations, they were taken to court by the Children's Services Department in Los Angeles when Love gave birth to a daughter in August 1992, on the grounds that they were unfit parents. They were eventually granted custody of their child by the beginning of 1993, but it was soon made public that Cobain had indeed fallen into heroin addiction by then. For most of his adult life he claimed to suffer from acute stomach pains and he insisted that these pains were only stilled by heroin. As a consequence of his addiction problems, the recording of the follow-up to *Nevermind* was delayed and, although he eventually was able to join Nirvana to record this third album, he suffered a heroin overdose shortly after its completion on 2 May 1993. Only a month later, Love had to call the police to their Seattle home after Cobain had locked himself in the bathroom threatening to commit suicide.

By the time Nirvana's third album *In Utero*[11] was released in September 1993, Cobain's heroin usage was such that the rest of Nirvana had to recruit another guitarist to accompany him on their forthcoming tour of North America and Europe, due to Cobain being mostly too incapacitated by the drug to play coherently for the

entire duration of a concert. Matters escalated on the tour when Cobain took an overdose of the tranquilliser Rohypnol[12] which he had taken with alcohol while staying in a Rome hotel in March 1994, putting him being in a coma for the next twenty-four hours. While the attempt was initially reported as an accidental overdose, information made public since indicates that Cobain had in fact written a suicide note before taking the tranquilliser. On returning to Seattle less than a week after this incident, the police were again contacted by Love after Cobain had once more locked himself in a room saying he was going to take his own life. Although he agreed to a drug rehabilitation programme at the Exodus Recovery Center in Los Angeles on 30 March 1994, he walked out of the clinic without warning which prompted his mother to report him as a missing person. On 5 April, Cobain had made his way to his Seattle home, barricaded himself into the greenhouse and shot himself dead. He was 27-years-old. Next to his body, Cobain left a suicide note in which he said,

> The fact is, I can't fool you, any one of you. It simply isn't fair to you or me. The worst crime I can think of would be to rip people off by faking it and pretending as if I'm having 100% fun.[13]

Two days after Cobain's body was found, around 5,000 people gathered in Seattle for a candlelight vigil where a sound recording made by Love was played, during which she read out extracts from the suicide note. Meanwhile, the two remaining members of Nirvana did not continue under this name, although Dave Grohl went on to form another successful rock group called Foo Fighters.

Committing suicide meant that there was a body, which not only testified to the fact that Cobain was more than his mediated

representation, but it also sustained a display of commemoration (a candlelight vigil) where grief could be collectively focused upon a single event. In contrast, the lack of resolution surrounding Edwards' fate appears to have been an enabling factor in the media's continued circulation of those images of self-harm and eating disorders which he left behind. One of the ways in which this has happened is a contextualisation of these images into the reporting of other traumatic or tragic events which have taken place in the light of Edwards' disappearance. For instance, within a month of him disappearing, a schoolgirl called Sally Allen from the Yorkshire market town of Skipton also went missing. When her disappearance was made public, newspaper articles noted the fact that she was a Manic Street Preachers fan and inferred that Edwards' representation had likely exacerbated her own eating disorders, as well as having likely encouraged her to cut off most of her hair to emulate the shaven-headed appearance Edwards 'sported' in the more recent photographs of him (including the one featured on an official missing persons poster issued by the Metropolitan Police). Although Allen reappeared three weeks after she went missing, it was further reported that she had actually gone on a 'pilgrimage' to the three main locations in the story of Edwards' disappearance: the London hotel where he was last seen near, the car park where his car was found abandoned, and the locale of his Cardiff flat. Meanwhile, in November 1997, the remains of a 16-year-old Manic Street Preachers fan from Marple in north-west England called Christopher Goodall were washed up at Beachley, a wide, tidal stretch of the River Severn into which he had earlier jumped. At the inquest, the coroner's 'summing-up' sought to establish a connection between Goodall's death and the impact of Edwards' representation upon him, concluding that, "clearly Christopher was influenced by this media pop idol and undoubtedly

142

he was in a very disturbed state… probably following what he had read about this idol" (quoted in Skirvin 2000).

The more topical plight of 22-year-old Sarah Lawson from the Kent town of Worthing underline the enduring nature of Edwards' representation in the media. Lawson had suffered from a long history of manic depression, as well as having experienced ever-worsening bouts of self-harm and alcohol abuse. Following the apparently systematic failure on the part of local mental health agencies to deal effectively with her symptoms, her father allegedly agreed to help her in taking her own life by a means of a drugs overdose and suffocation. Immediately after her death, he informed the police about what he had done and was arrested for her murder. When the case came to court in May 2001, he pleaded guilty to manslaughter for which he received a two-year suspended sentence. In the 15 May 2001 edition of the British newspaper *Daily Express*, the trial coverage is not only juxtaposed with an article entitled "Desperate life of tragic Manics star" (Chapman and Rice 2001a, 2001b respectively), but it also explicitly locates Lawson's own evolving narrative within broader implications of Edwards' disappearance by saying that,

> The court heard that Sarah had suffered from manic depression for more than 10 years and had a history of self-abuse and suicide attempts. Her depression started through an obsession with Richey Edwards, former guitarist with the pop band Manic Street Preachers, who is believed to have killed himself in a death plunge. (Chapman and Rice 2001a: 10)

In addition, a sample of trial coverage from the British national press generally (see also Larcombe 2001; Morris 2001; Sapsted 2001) is subtly able to establish a chronological link between the

143

on-going deterioration in the state of Lawson's mental health and key episodes in Edwards' own story. For example, her manic depression was apparently first diagnosed at the start of the 1990's when Manic Street Preachers entered the public domain, while it is said she began carrying out acts of self-harm from the time Edwards disappeared; there is also reference to the fact that the court was told of Lawson's 'need' to consume a large quantity of vodka before she could go to work, echoing Edwards' apologia for drinking a litre of vodka per day as a means of tackling 'stage fright' (see Price 1999: 124).

7.4 Manic Street Preachers' fan culture and stories of 'performed' experience

My reason for discussing the cases of Sally Allen, Christopher Goodall and Sarah Lawson is not to suggest that their actions were in any sense 'performed'. Rather, I do so in order to explain that the crux of Edwards' iconic power in relation to Manic Street Preachers' fan culture can expect to be structured around his images of self-harm and eating disorders given their on-going circulation by the media. As already stated, this situation has been heightened in other ways due to the lack of resolution surrounding Edwards' disappearance, which in turn has led to discourse which is inscribed with religious (Christian) connotations of resurrection and re-birth because, without his body being available, Manic Street Preachers' fan culture remains without the authenticating materiality that he was indeed 'real', as opposed to only being known to them as a mediated construct. Certainly before he disappeared, the foregrounding of his own experiences in such a publicly mediated fashion meant that he was able to appear

productively familiar to those who habitually suffered in comparable ways, as the following examples attest.

> 'Gill':   By chance, I stumbled across an interview he gave just after he came out of hospital. He seemed like such a nice person. At a time when I felt alone and depressed, it was comforting to know that someone out there felt the same. (Quoted in Jackson 1996)

> 'Helen from Ashford':   The more I got to know about him... the more I began to realise that perhaps I've got some things in common with him, also the more messed up he got the more I felt I understood him, because I've suffered from depression all my life. (Quoted in Skirvin 2000)

> 'Matt, Southport':   Richey for me was one of a kind, a great lyricist who wrote about very personal issues such as depression and anorexia. This helped those who suffered from these conditions greatly and gave them someone to identify with. Richey for me is still an iconic legend.[14]

> 'Heather, Sheffield':   Richey and his lyrics helped me through some of the darkest times of my life and made me realise, for the first time, that I wasn't alone.[15]

Since disappearing, though, it seems to me that the media has 'appropriated' Edwards as a 'touchstone' for discourses of self-harm and eating disorders in the wider social world. In my estimation, this explains why the media has subsequently been transformed into a 'site' where these kinds of discourse could be articulated ('performed'). A valuable example of this phenomenon is the response by another (now defunct) British rock magazine *Melody*

Maker to receiving correspondence from Manic Street Preachers' fans shortly after Edwards disappeared, which included photographic evidence of self-harm by some of these correspondents. Putting together an advisory panel of British musicians, journalists, fans, a clinical psychologist and a representative from the Samaritans counselling service, they commissioned a report aimed at assessing how far the specific fan discourse received by the magazine was representative, at a micro level, of much wider social and cultural problems in contemporary Britain.

Mediation, it must be said, had been crucial in invoking a sense of identification with Edwards prior to his disappearance because it ensured that his experience of self-harm and eating disorders could be articulated in the 'here and now'. On disappearing, it is possible to see (and as also concluded in the panel report published by *Melody Maker*) that not only was the absence of Edwards' corporeality felt, but such feeling indicated that the cathartic function provided by his presence (even if by mediation) had also departed.

> 'Gill Armstrong': I was completely cabbaged. I didn't want to go out anywhere, I didn't want to speak to anyone. I wanted to be sick all the time. I had agonising pains in my wrists, in my ankles, my legs, in my back. Sometimes I prayed I'd never wake up.[16]

> 'Jane of Brighton': I feel my whole life's been ripped in two. I'm so scared of what lengths I'll go to if the worst comes to the worst. (Quoted in Jackson 1996)

'Jasmine of Sunderland':   I cut Richey's name into my arm because I'm so depressed… I love [Manic Street Preachers] and only a couple of friends understand what I am going through.   (Quoted in Jackson 1996)

'Elizabeth of Harrow':   I almost died when I heard he was gone, and have thought about killing myself several times since.   I have to hurt myself to stay calm.   (Quoted in Jackson 1996)

At an immediate level, these instances of discourse appear traumatised and traumatising. However, the dramaturgical slant I am taking in this project generally inclines me to view they are also pushing out towards the vanguard of the social world to the point where they are also being 'staged', as stories of 'performed' experience. On the one hand, each 'performer' narrates (as an interpreting person) their self-reflexive account. As Bruce Wilshire has said that, "because there is an element of performance in all human skills and professions, the performers who are most vital will tend to push out the limits of their performances into borderline areas in order to test for increasing ability in the outlying actual world: to test, confirm and constitute their very selves" (1990: 171). But, at the same time, these accounts highlight how each correspondent's individual identification with Edwards appears to be 'written into' (or, 'acted out' as meta-narratives in) the performance of his own story. Consequently, the narrative elements in these stories have to be renegotiated in response and performed according to each new stage in the social drama surrounding Edwards' fate (see Chapter 4).

Although these stories are 'performed' by means of modern communication media, this form of performative activity in my view

mirrors the role of ritual within the community in which it takes place. A useful definition is to be found in *Days of Shining Red*, Gilbert Lewis' analysis of puberty rites practiced by New Guinea villagers.

> In ritual as in art, he who devises or creates is also a spectator of what he does; and he who beholds it is also active in the sense that he interprets the performance. The value of ritual lies partly in this ambiguity of the active and passive for creator, performer and beholder. (Lewis 1982: 38)

To this extent, each stage of the social drama for Manic Street Preachers' fan culture is dependent on them managing social relations through the adoption of different and differing participatory roles. In terms of appropriate 'scripting' of these roles, it is worth looking at Judith Butler's observations about how people respond to the death of a person noted in her book *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*, in which she suggests a profound relationship between mourning and modes of performance.

> We are made all the more fragile… and all the more mobile… when ambivalence and loss are given a dramatic language in which to do their acting out. (Butler 1997: 150)

Although I am talking about disappearance and not death, I am persuaded that the stories of 'performed' experience from Manic Street Preachers' fan culture serve to 're-stage' episodes from Edwards' own story, thereby continually 'resuscitating' his representation on his behalf, in his absence. This activity, I contend, is only possible due to the pervasive and enduring

circulation of those media images in which Edwards participated. Of course, prior to his disappearance, Edwards could be said to have actively limited the 'knowledge' of his own experience of self-harm and eating disorders which he was willing to make available for others' (public) consumption. In other words, what he offered up for mediation was for him the only public performance he was ever going to give.

7.5 The Debordian 'spectacle' in Manic Street Preachers' fan culture

In her investigation into identity construction within Manic Street Preachers' fan culture, Francesca Skirvin found that Edwards' 'control' of his representation in this fashion was not only tolerated, but affirmed.

> When questioned as to whether they would like to meet [Edwards], the majority of fans I questioned said they would not because they have a high level of awareness of the chasm between... the mediated image of him and him as an actual person. (Skirvin 2000)

Therefore, what does this depth of dependency upon intentional media images reveal about this particular fan culture? With mediation having become pivotal conduit through which these fans (are able to) relate to Edwards, I propose that this has reliably constructed of what the French social theorist Guy Debord conceptualised as a 'spectacle'. Debord was part of a movement known as the Situationists who, in the tradition of twentieth-century avant-garde 'experiments' such as Dada, Surrealism and Lettrism

which inspired them, attempted to merge art and politics. For their, part, Debord and his cohort particularly sought to juxtapose political theory, in their case as espoused by Karl Marx, with the new historical and artistic conditions in the Western world after the Second World War. Whereas Marxist theory focuses on class struggle and the means of capitalist production, Debord and the Situationists chose instead to highlight the pernicious dominance of the 'media society'. In their opinion, its effects were most noticeable in relation to how far 'cultural industries' (Hollywood, for instance) had colonised everyday life by organising society around the consumption of images and commodities. Instead of concrete events and social relations with others, these industries have substituted them with abstract images, commodified fantasies and making social relations dependent upon mass media technology. This thesis was central to Debord's key theoretical statement, *The Society of the Spectacle*, which was first published in France in 1967 and argues that the world of the spectacle converts direct 'lived' experience into an excessive array of images where an individual defines their self through the consumption of these images (1994: 12).[17]

With this in mind, I would say that the spectacle's presence in Manic Street Preachers' fan culture is inevitable, given the proliferation of relationships with someone who can (could) only ever be known through mediation. Theirs is an ersatz reality: an 'imagined' world where meaningful, empathetic relationships with Edwards can be 'felt' to have been formed. As 17-year-old 'Jessica from Bristol' comments,

> I think there are so many people who like the Manics who cut
> themselves and have eating disorders and because it was a
> thing that a lot of people were ashamed of, they think it's

abnormal and disgusting. But [Edwards] came along, he's in the media, he's very beautiful and intelligent and he does it as well so he made it seem less embarrassing. (Quoted in Skirvin 2000)

As I understand it, Debord would argue therefore that the spectacle has 'invaded' the domain of private life and personal expression to the point where issues such as self-harm and eating disorders are effectively 'reduced' to commodities for negotiation in the media landscape. In short, the 'lived' experience in the everyday, of which these issues are representative, is no longer tenable under the 'rules' of the spectacle. In Debord's estimation,

> The whole life of those societies in which modern conditions of production prevail presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. All that was once lived has become mere representation. (Debord 1994: 12)

To compensate for a life of 'unlived' experience, then, an individual is compelled into identifying with media icons, their lifestyles and scandals.

> Media stars are spectacular representations of living human beings, distilling the essence of the spectacle's banality into images of possible roles. Stardom is a diversification in the semblance of life – the object of an identification with mere appearance which is intended to compensate for the crumbling of directly experienced diversifications of productive activity. (Debord 1994: 38)

Far from revealing real human needs, the spectacle for Manic Street Preachers' fan culture presents an idealised world of meanings and

values; a falsified knowledge of the social world accessed through the prism of Edwards' style of celebrity. As a consequence, self-harm and eating disorders become separated from their relevance to those who habitually suffer from them and instead become 'fetishised' by the media. By having their lives integrated into the spectacle in this fashion, its spectators "see their lives reduced to the pure triviality of the repetitive combined with the obligatory absorption of an equally repetitive spectacle" (2002: 241). Of course, in the light of Edwards' disappearance, the media has facilitated a greater degree of 'interactivity' which ensures an even deeper tie to the spectacle in the form of the discursive 'sites' where stories of 'performed' experience can be, and are, posited. At the same time, by circulating the media images Edwards left behind, these 'sites' are critical in perpetuating these images' iconic power, thereby offering the potential for future fantasies to be created. As I will demonstrate later, one of these fantasies makes possible the creation of an imaginary 'reunion' between Edwards and the three remaining members of Manic Street Preachers. In the meantime, it is worth noting that, in Debord's estimation, the more the individual contemplates these images,

> the less he lives; the more readily he recognizes his own needs in the images of need proposed by the dominant system, the less he understands his own existence and his own desires. The spectacle's externality with respect to the acting subject is demonstrated by the fact that the individual's own gestures are no longer his own, but rather those of someone else who represents them to him. The spectator feels at home nowhere, for the spectacle is everywhere. (Debord 1994: 23)

As the media continues to invoke Edwards' name in reference to self-harm, eating disorders, depression and missing persons, it is reasonable to state that the spectacle provides the opportunity to 'perform' being a Manic Street Preachers' fan through the 'dramatic' (or dramatised) rearticulation of his past.

7.6 Different performative modes on the Internet and an imaginary 'reunion' with Richey Edwards

Diana Taylor, the American Performance Studies academic, has described the Debordian spectacle as "that which we do *not* see, the invisible that 'appears' only through mediation" (1999: 197). This, it would seem, is a cue to another way of envisaging the spectacle's role within Manic Street Preachers' fan culture: namely, its ability to effect an imaginary reunion with the three remaining members of the group (Bradfield, Wire and Moore) in their live performances since Edwards disappeared. This is particularly significant in the context that the group's profile in the public domain is predominantly centred on Edwards' iconic power, part of which includes the unresolved narrative structures following the disappearance. The kinds of undertow which might be at work here are indicated by the British rock music journalist and critic, as well as a prominent fan of Manic Street Preachers, Simon Price. Many of Price's journalistic assignments have provided media commentaries on the group's key episodes; moreover, he often draws on his own strength of fandom for the group (they are his favourite) even when he is looking at other rock performers. Furthermore, he has also written the book *Everything (A Book About Manic Street Preachers)*, which at the time of its publication in 1999 became the fastest-selling book about rock culture in the United Kingdom. For such

reasons, I suggest that it is worth paying attention (at least, in his role as a 'conduit' between the media and the fan culture) to his account, published by *Melody Maker* in January 1996, of Manic Street Preachers' first concert appearance following Edwards' disappearance, which took place at Wembley Arena in December 1995 as the support act for another British group The Stone Roses. By his own admission, the tenor of the article emphasises the fact that he is writing from the perspective of being an ardent member of the group's fan culture, rather than simply as a journalist working within (self-)imposed parameters of objectivity and critical detachment. As such, Price discusses the concert in the context of the history of both the group and his own fandom; he also talks with other fans present at Wembley Arena about their reactions to the group's return to live performance as a three-piece. To this extent, then, he is able to articulate his own (and perhaps the fan culture's) disappointment about what he sees as the group's refusal to make known their own thoughts about Edwards' disappearance less than a year before.

> I wasn't expecting a guitar stood stage right with a wreath around it, or a back-projected B&W photo saying "RICHEY JAMES EDWARDS, 1967 - ?"... but their refusal to acknowledge the situation was uncomfortable... I hope they give me more of a reason than sentimental affection. (Price 1996)

By assuming to speak as being representative of Manic Street Preachers' fan culture, Price's impulse is to demand that the three-piece acknowledges Edwards' representation in some (verbal, symbolic, ethereal) sense. Just as the fan culture 're-enacts' Edwards' public discourse on self-harm and eating disorders through their own stories of 'performed' experience, they might also

seek to impose a similar challenge upon the group to firmly 'embed' the relationship with their disappeared colleague in live performances. As the next part of this chapter demonstrates, the spectacle's presence creates the potential to bring about a collusion between the group and their fan culture in such a way as to create an imaginary 'reunion' with Edwards on the concert platform. In support of this proposition, I shall be looking at the testimony of Vivian Campbell, an American Manic Street Preachers fan (where the group enjoys comparatively little commercial or popular success in relation to Europe), as featured on her website known as "The Last of Richey Edwards?".[18]

In terms of background, Campbell was born on 15 April 1960 and states that she is one-half Italian, one-quarter Lithuanian with the remaining quarter of combined Scottish and Native American descent. Educated to degree level, she holds a Batchelor of Arts qualification in History from the University of Pittsburgh. She continues to live in Pittsburgh, where she is an active member of the St. Andrew's Episcopal Church as a singer in their choir, a lay reader and the 'webmaster' of the church website. With these kinds of personal information in mind, I feel her testimony should be useful in qualifying the extent to which the events underpinning Edwards' representation were (are) able to speak beyond their spatial and temporal locations. On its homepage, she introduces her website's primary function as being about

> the last known 16 months of, and disappearance on 1 February, 1995 of, Richey Edwards, a member of the Manic Street Preachers music group. This site is also about his possible whereabouts now.[19]

Evidently, the nature of a personal website is such that it can provide a 'framing arrangement' (see Goffman 1974: 124 – 125; also see Chapter 3) within which to 'perform' an inexhaustible variety of symbolic and practical responses in the everyday to her relationship with Edwards. In turn, the website becomes a site of 'ritual' to the extent that she can express a diversity of perceptions and meanings, through different performative modes. These responses are given a further sense of being 'performed' as visitors to the website are placed in an audience role through the default invitation to witness her 'participation' in these modes. Her website 'opens' with the genesis of her interest in Edwards, and Manic Street Preachers in general. This began in 1994 while she was being treated in hospital for an acute decline into self-harm and eating disorders which pursued the (alleged) violent break-up with her boyfriend. About this particular experience, she says,

> I was so happy to find someone who had gone through the same things – hospital, eating little, self-harm – and at the same time as I had! I finally heard the Manics on the best-albums-of-the-year tape that came with *Vox* [a British rock music magazine]… I desperately wanted to learn, and hear, more. Especially since no other musical artist at the time spoke to me. I related to Richey's story so much! (Campbell 2000b)

That said, the spatial and temporal constraints facing Campbell which prevented her from being aware of what was happening to Edwards at the time it was taking place need to be noted. As a consequence, she did not learn out about his disappearance until significantly after it had happened.

I hate to admit it, but I didn't find out about Richey's disappearance until mid-March, six weeks after it happened. I still wasn't up to regularly buying the British music press. I finally found an old copy of something, (I think it was the *NME*), which filled me in on the news... I felt stupid for not finding out sooner. I felt so far away from the UK, more than just an ocean away. Of course, I also felt worry, anxiety – what you'd expect. But there was also anger. Anger that he left so soon – I had just discovered and connected with him, and now he was gone, perhaps forever! (Campell 2000b)

This situation did not entirely hinder Campbell from sustaining a legitimate relationship (as she envisaged it) with Edwards. As such, relevant contextualisation can be made of Campbell's testimony within similar responses to tragedies involving other well-known public figures. Richard Johnson, a Cultural Studies academic, offers a useful paradigm with his comparative analysis between the death of his wife (Jill) in 1992 and the widespread expressions of public grief following the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, in August 1997. As he says, mourning for Princess Diana by those who only knew her as a result of mediation should not be defined "without an awareness of the power of sudden death over those who live on; but the mourning patterns also depended on a life which was colossally, excessively, represented" (1999: 15). As such, he is challenging the viewpoint articulated by Elizabeth Wilson which distinguishes between mourning "the death of someone who was actually a friend and the more ethereal loss of someone known only as a media figure" (1997: 136). Although many unresolved cases of a missing person could be expected to contrast forcefully with the abruptness of an event like Princess Diana's death, what Campbell has said supports Johnson's self-reflexively informed conclusions. That's to say, the manner ("an old copy of something") and the

delay ("six weeks after it happened") by which she learnt that Edwards had been declared a missing person behave with commensurate suddenness, while she overtly draws attention to the fact that her sense of loss was also dependent on a life which was entirely known to her in a mediated capacity.

As the moment of disappearance moves further and further into the distance, Campbell has far from been deterred in continuing to seek out Edwards' meanings and creations. As she explains on her website, since finding out about the disappearance,

> I've had to both catch up with the pre-disappearance Manics, and keep up with the post-Richey Manics. I finally own all of the songs, (in one form or another), and I have videotapes of most of their important TV appearances, shows, and promo videos. I've seen the band live several times. I've read most of the articles in the music press and the newspapers, and almost all of the biographies. I've also visited most of the Manic-related sites in London and South Wales. One thing I haven't done though, is bother Richey's family. I haven't got the nerve to approach them, and I think they have more than enough to contend with, without me showing up on their doorstep. Still, I'd dearly love to talk to them. As I've been catching up with Richey, I've developed a far greater appreciation of him than before. Each time I see or hear or read something new, (and that includes the not-so-great things), I realise even more, just what we've lost since he left. (Campbell 2000b)

By seeking to occupy those physical or symbolic spaces inscribed with Edwards' representation, the way in which Campbell's impulse

158

is so manifested mirrors the activities Johnson felt compelled to undertake following the death of his wife.

> I haunted her spaces, searched out her things, her creations, and used them, assumed her roles, became more like her. Much of this was done out of necessity and desperation, but many activities were also intensely pleasurable. Doing what Jill did was getting, staying closer to her. I was also doing what I should have done before or should have done better. I was showing her I could. In a way, I was appropriating her things, her job, her roles – her very Self? (1999: 16 - 17)

These wholly engrossing 'performances' of grief in Johnson's everyday life appear to have much in common with Campbell's concentrated focus upon appropriating as many material artefacts and archival remains relating to Edwards as she can. My observations, in turn, raise the issue of how these and other activities of this kind might be structured around Campbell's own daily routines. It is immediately noticeable from her website, in the form of a 'counter' informing a visitor of how many days Edwards has been 'gone', that the simple passing of time is dominated by this loss.[20] However, examples of her poetry more effectively show how her relationship with Edwards imposes itself upon her experience in the everyday. Before looking at some of these poems, I want briefly to discuss the nature and purpose of poetry as a performative mode.

In the poetry anthology *Changing Light: The Eternal Cycle of Night and Day*, its editor J. Ruth Gendler writes,

> In our time we commonly view poetry as a rarefied form that doesn't have much to do with our lives. Many of us stay

away, afraid it will either be too abstract and inaccessible or sentimental and precious. Yet, poetry may be the more precise language we have for talking about the world. Poets who give language to states where the soul meets the world, the inner and outer intersect, are charged and changed by the energy at the edge. (Gendler 1991: xxi)

What attracts me to Gendler's treatise is it seems to envisage poetry in terms of having a double function which enables a poem to clarify ideas and their relationship to the social world while at the same time create an aesthetic event in which the poet also 'performs' what is being claimed by the poem. At this conceptual level, Campbell's poetry has the potential to be a liminoid activity, uniquely poised to both reflect on, or analyse, an experience, and simultaneously to be, or perform, this experience. Furthermore, by suggesting that it is 'located' at the threshold between society and culture, poetry presents another way of gaining insight into how far Edwards' story impacts upon Campbell's everyday life. Take her poem entitled "Richey's Birthday" (Campbell 1995), which she wrote at the time, and to commemorate the passing, of Edwards' twenty-eighth birthday in December 1995.

> *today should be your birthday*
> *twenty-eight years of life on earth*
> *unless it all ended months ago.*
>
> *was the last thing you saw*
> *a cold river*
> *the last thing you did –*
> *to jump in?*
>
> *you were supposed to be the person*

who would cut and bleed himself
to relieve my misery.

you left me behind
to do it for myself
you left us all behind
to remember you today.

Some of the connotations of religious (Christian) iconography discussed earlier in this chapter would seem prevalent here. Viewed as being part of a Debordian spectacle, however, this poem serves to show how Campbell's routinised thoughts remain fixed upon Edwards' images of self-harm; meanwhile, as the redemptive effect of these images declines as his disappearance endures, she appears to want his 'works' to persist by proxy. A later poem called "Richey Days" (Campbell 2000c) is indicative of how the process of Campbell's active appropriation has persisted. According to her, the poem's title is the name she gives to the period between 14 January and 17 February every year, which correlates with the anniversary of both the recovery from her nervous breakdown and the emplotment of events leading up to Edwards' disappearance.

This is the time of year
I call the Richey Days.
From mid-January
to mid-February.
The time to remember him
and wonder where's he gone.
And if he's coming back.

This is the time of year
to copy Richey's ways.

From eyeliner

to potatoes and grapes.

The time to cut yourself up

and burn your arm with fags.

And drink too much vodka.

I wonder if anyone will

be staying in room 516

of the London Embassy –

like he did before he left us.

I wonder if anyone will

be keeping watch outside his flat

at Anson Court in Cardiff –

as if he might be going home.

This is the time of year

I call the Richey Days.

From mid-January

to mid-February.

The time to think why he went

and wonder where he is.

And pray that he's okay.

Similar examples to those which Campell makes reference to in this poem of Edwards' use of make-up, eating habits and particular forms of self-harming activity have been observed by Simon Price. In his book, he copiously mentions Edwards' wearing of heavy eyeliner in public, while it is also claimed that his only 'regular' meal from 1993 onwards was one jacket potato followed by a handful of grapes between daily binges of alcohol; he was also known for stubbing cigarettes out on his arms in addition to his bouts of

cutting himself with blades (Price 1999: 110, 113). For Campbell, this excessive array of media images at the heart of the spectacle has not only transformed Edwards' traits into 'commodities', for her (and others') consumption, but they have also determined that her many mundane or commonplace activities (eating, thinking, putting on make-up) during this period of the year are reflexively 'aestheticised' by such images. What she may feel she receives in return is a sense in which her website serves to 'do justice' to Edwards in ways she was unable (or failed) to do prior to disappearing. As she says,

> Richey's disappearance made me regret not finding out about him... sooner, like back in 1991, when I first saw his picture in *Select*. I felt like I had wasted so much time!.. Richey is still a big part of my life. This website is an obvious example of that. (Campbell 2000b)

Another performative mode which Campbell deploys on her website takes the form of a journal. As with her poetry, this is another way in which she 'performs' her critique of the relationship she has with Edwards; yet, on this occasion, it is also directed at the three remaining members of Manic Street Preachers. What she reveals in the process is a role for them to undertake in the spectacle, which can be shown to create an imaginary 'reunion' with Edwards' absent representation during their live performances. In the journal concerned, which is entitled "Five years and 24 hours (more or less), to see 'em", Campbell recounts her journey from Pittsburgh to see the group perform in the Canadian city of Toronto in September 1999, along with her 'meditations' during the concert itself, in the style of a series of diary entries. As the journal's title would suggest, this is her first experience of both attending a Manic Street Preachers concert and her having any actual interaction at a

163

physical level with the group. Of course, the concert itself provides her with another space for the expression of those perceptions and meanings activated by her feelings towards Edwards; and what is clear from the outset is how these feelings dominate her contemplative processes before she even arrives at the concert venue. This is even though Edwards had already been missing for over four years by the time this particular concert took place. As the following extract from Campbell's journal makes clear, the main catalyst seems to be the fact that the stage right position on the concert platform, where Edwards used to locate himself, has been intentionally left unoccupied by the three remaining members of Manic Street Preachers since the disappearance.[21]

> But what about the empty spot left on stage? Where Richey would be. Should I try to stand in front of Nicky [Wire]? Or the empty spot Richey left? I'm torn. As torn as I am between old Manics and new… I might be trying not to cry for the beauty of Richey that is not around anymore? (Campbell 2000a)

What I am proposing here is that the spectacle is such that the media images involving Edwards are sufficiently iconic to inscribe this 'empty spot'; for the three remaining members of Manic Street Preachers, it seems that they have been able to construct an event which (unwittingly) 'feeds' into Campbell's desire for Edwards to have a 'presence' in the group's live 'line-up'. Poignantly, then, even though she chose to stand in front of Nicky Wire, she does so precisely because "he was closest to dear Richey" (Campell 2000a). In *The Society of the Spectacle*, Debord argues that media images inevitably become detached from their own reality only to be reconfigured in what he terms a 'separate pseudo-world': where the spectacle becomes "a concrete inversion of life, and, as such, the

autonomous movement of non-life" (1994: 12). Being a spectator
at this level of the spectacle, Campbell is able to make the invisible
(the disappeared Edwards) 'appear': it does not exist in the (true)
reality of the concert venue, but she can 'see' it. When the
spectacle presents itself, "the locus of illusion and false
consciousness... where all attention, all consciousness, converges"
(1994: 12). This would certainly seem to apply in Campbell's case
as the concert becomes the focal point where the spectacle of
Edwards' disappearance conflates all the images which have
sustained her mediated relationship with him. In the process, the
spectacle evidently provokes in Campbell emotions it claims
exclusively to represent ('new Manics') while evoking memories that
belong to its Other ('old Manics').

> I was very aware of the empty spot on stage where Richey
> should have been. I noticed that James [Dean Bradfield] and
> Nicky stayed out of that area, except once when James
> ventured over there. Actually, I also noticed, it's not
> completely empty. That 'friend', as James called him, the
> keyboardist they add on tour, in a way fills part of that end of
> the stage. Even if he is in the background. That end's not
> completely empty. Sort of symbolic, don't you think?
> (Campbell 2000a)

As with the other performative modes she uses on her website, this
journal is reflective upon an experience: in this case, that of her
first attendance at a Manic Street Preachers concert. In addition,
the journal also fulfils a key function which is common to all modes
of ritualistic activity. The social anthropologist James L. Watson, in
his 1988 introductory essay to a book about Chinese funerary rites,
argues that spectatorship at any form of ritual is crucial if it is to be
performed with the correct authority and achieve the desired result

amongst those who witness it. This means that spectators must become ('performing') participants if they are to intervene when they feel a rite is not being performed properly, as well as validate a correct or pleasing performance. In the spirit of Watson's comments, I conclude by proposing that the journal's distinctively interventionist nature is effectively the 'performance' which Campbell must deliver if she is to qualify whether the remaining members of Manic Street Preachers incorporate Edwards' representation in their concert. By imagining a reunion with him in this way, she indulges and sustains the spectacle by creating new archival remains out of Edwards' (invisible) 'presence' and, in turn, ensuring further proliferation of his image in the media.

7.7 Concluding remarks

In his 1995 book *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*, the sociologist John B. Thompson argues that media expansion – notably in the areas of new forms of mediated visibility and the emergence of global communication networks - has transformed the spatial and temporal constitution of social life, creating new forms of action and interaction which are no longer linked to the sharing of a common locale. The consequences of this transformation impinge on many aspects of everyday life, from the most intimate aspects of personal experience and self-formation to the changing nature of power and visibility in the public domain. As Thompson comments,

> In the case of mediated quasi-interaction, individuals can create and establish a form of intimacy which is essentially non-reciprocal It is this new form of mediated, non-reciprocal intimacy stretched across time and space, which underlies, for

166

example, the relationship between fan and star. It can be exhilarating, precisely because it is freed from the reciprocal obligations characteristic of face-to-face interaction. (Thompson 1995: 208)

To this extent, it is entirely reasonable that the stories of 'performed' experience discussed in this chapter are borne out of genuine strengths of feeling about the kindredship Edwards' story offers those in Manic Street Preachers' fan culture who are narrating them. This is, in large part, as a result of Edwards' personal experience of self-harm and eating disorders being copiously made available to these fans, through his own 'performances', which were acted out intentionally for the purposes of mediation. This availability was (remains) manifest in two ways. In objective terms, his distinctive genre of rock stardom meant that the media have been able to present his traits as *causes célèbres* through him. But, he is also available subjectively in that such traits, usually regarded as private, have been made explicitly public, often in the mediation of his own actions and words, which have in turn been reported and discussed. On disappearing, the media images he left behind have continued to be circulated, commodified and consumed. Part of the reason these images are still able to speak beyond their spatial and temporal locations is because the media has transformed itself into a 'site' where fans can 'perform' their own stories, perhaps under the guise that Edwards' representation was more reflective of the traumatised and traumatising lives found in the fan culture than his public life. Meanwhile, the pervasiveness of Edwards' representation continues with every occasion when his name is invoked in reference to other public and personal tragedies, such as the court case of Sarah Lawson's father.

Eschewing such acutely psychological examples for analysis, I went on to locate where performative frames were imposed around certain 'performed' types of discourse in Manic Street Preachers' fan culture, and considered how far these functioned as meta-narratives within the wider implications of Edwards' plight. Given the extent to which these stories were sustained by the enduring circulation of his media images, I felt able to claim that in the process this transformed the fan culture into spectators at a Debordian spectacle. In other words, what has clearly united them in this spectacle is the facilitation of a relationship with someone which was entirely dependent upon mediation. Emanating from this spectacle are new performances in which his images of self-harm and eating disorders have come to be 'resuscitated' through these stories of 'performed' experience, on his behalf, in his absence.

The creation of new archival remains is also observable, as evidenced by the Internet testimony of American fan Vivian Campbell. Through various performative modes deployed on her website, it was possible to identify the myriad ways in which her relationship with Edwards was manifest. Although the spatial and temporal constraints for her were relatively complex, the more it seems that Campbell's relationship with Edwards is dependent on mediation, the more likely Campbell's daily routines appear to be reflexively 'aestheticised' by the activities and events associated with his story. As I established, one function of her website is that it appears to 'do justice' to Edwards in ways she was unable (or failed) to do prior to his disappearance. Most significant of all, however, is that she is also able to implicate the three remaining members of Manic Street Preachers at her level of participation in the spectacle. When viewing the concert she attends more broadly as a 'rite', the interventionist nature in documenting her attendance can be seen as crucial in envisaging an imaginary 'reunion' between

168

the group and their disappeared colleague. As a consequence, the spectacle 'benefits' from the potential for having an unending source of images from the Edwards 'repertoire' being created every time the group appears in live performance.

For all of these reasons, rather than being merely spectators at this particular spectacle, Manic Street Preachers' fan culture are instead featured as actors in the unresolved 'drama' of Edwards' story.

---

[1] For information, Nicky Wire is the 'stage name' of Nicholas Jones; the name is apparently in reference to his tall, 'gangly' frame.

[2] Traci Lords began acting in pornographic films from the age of 15, having supplied producers and directors with a false documentation which (wrongly) showed she was the legally permissible age to act in films of this kind. However, in 1986, it eventually came to light that she was underage, instantly making it illegal to rent, buy or view any of the films in which she had appeared. The United States' federal government tried to prosecute the producers of the one of her films for child pornography, but the case collapsed when it transpired that she had also been issued with an American passport with the exact same false documentation she has presented to her employers.

[3] Freddie Mercury was the lead singer with the British rock group Queen who died of an AIDS-related illness in November 1991. Michael Stipe is the lead singer with the American rock group REM who has been a persistent target for false rumours that he has AIDS.

[4] See Chapter 6 for a more in-depth discussion of the economic policies of the Thatcher government and their impact upon social and cultural trends.

[5] 'Ecstasy' is the 'street name' for the synthetically-produced, psychoactive drug known as MDMA, which is chemically similar to the stimulant methamphetamine and the hallucinogen mescaline.

[6] Nicky Wire is quoted in "Manics' New Testament", *Melody Maker,* 27 August 1994, author unknown: see http://articles.richeyedwards.net/1995.html.

[7] 'Ryan Michael Keith' is quoted on http://www.crosswinds.net/~aesthetic debris/rich/debate.htm.

[8] In the months leading up to his disappearance, Edwards chose to use his second forename of James as his surname in the public domain.

[9] See http://www.crosswinds.net/~aestheticdebris/rich/debate.htm.4.

[10] 'Ritalin', the trade name for methylphenidate, is a medication prescribed for individuals (usually children) who have an abnormally high level of activity or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, either of which is characterised by agitated behaviour and an inability to focus on tasks.

[11] Originally the intention was to name the album *I Hate Myself And I Want To Die*. Although *In Utero* became the eventual title, one of this album's preoccupying themes is nonetheless suicide.

[12] 'Rohypnol', the trade name for flunitrazepam, is largely known as a 'date rape' drug due to the cases where women are unknowingly given it and, when mixed with alcohol, can incapacitate them in resisting sexual assault. It is also known to have a lethal effect when mixed with alcohol and other depressants.

[13] See http://www.datejesus.com/sermons/cobain/suicide.html.

[14] 'Matt, Southport' is quoted on http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/music/4225125.stm.

[15] 'Heather, Sheffield' is quoted on http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/music/4225125.stm.

[16] 'Gill Armstrong' is quoted on http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Theater/2955/articles/23dec95nme.html.

[17] I accept that Debord is essentially offering an anti-capitalist critique by insisting that contemporary society is transformed into a spectacle because it is organised by capitalism, of which the media and other cultural industries form a complicit part. Rather than become distracted by this line of inquiry, I am only interested in the Debordian spectacle insofar as it offers a theoretical concept

which productively deals with mass communication and its contribution to circulating media images in the everyday.

[18] See http://www.richeyedwards.net/richey.html.

[19] See http://www.richeyedwards.net/richey.html.

[20] This 'counter' can be found at http://www.richeyedwards.net/center.html, and simply states "Richey has been gone for X days" with X being updated by one day every twenty-four hours.

[21] In his 2002 article "Preachers lay Richey to rest at last", the journalist Brain Boyd states that Manic Street Preachers left Edwards' stage right location unused in acknowledgement that he should remain at least symbolically 'present' in the group during live performances. Their concerts which I have been present at, or have seen on video recordings, would indicate an active disengagement with the stage right position and, having spoken with fans on the subject, Boyd's statement mirrors the overwhelmingly prevalent interpretation amongst them.

Chapter 8: Case study 3 - Bono of U2

8.1 Abstract

In 2003, the American current affairs magazine *Time* conducted an opinion poll over the Internet to find out whom their European subscribers considered to be the continent's most 'heroic' public figure. Topping the poll with more than one in three votes was Bono, the lead singer of the Irish rock group U2. His nominations were not merely in recognition of his status as an internationally successful rock performer, but also related to his high-profile political lobbying to secure debt relief for developing countries and funding for projects to tackle the HIV and AIDS crisis in Africa. Other ways in which he is represented in the public domain include film production, book illustration and the proprietorship of a Dublin hotel and nightclub. In turn, this has led to numerous news and newsworthy stories about these activities in the media, to the extent that his representation appears to have sufficiently transcended its origins in rock culture to possess a broader Western cultural, social and political significance. One consequence of this situation is that multiple 'Bonos' increasingly pervade the everyday, with his primary role as U2's lead singer having the potential to be lost under the welter of such competing discourses. The images generated by this situation can no doubt be expected to flow into U2's concerts by dint of the audience's presence; the audience are, after all, being delegates from the social world where these images seemingly proliferate. However, in the course of analysing a U2 concert from the early 1990's, it is possible to see how Bono addresses and potentially resolves these kinds of representational schism in the form of an elaborate theatrical event involving his public transformation into a character known as Mr. Macphisto. It is

concluded that, in the course of this portrayal, he was able to rein in the multiple 'Bonos' from the social world, thereby allowing his authority as U2's lead singer to be re-asserted in live performance.

8.2 Introduction

Over 25,000 votes were cast when the American current affairs magazine *Time* invited its subscribers from Europe to nominate their 'Hero of 2003' in an Internet-based opinion poll.[1] To any reasonable extent, I cannot insist that these votes reflect a fundamentally pan-European view. What is significant about the response from this 'constituency', however, is the fact that Bono, the lead singer from U2, decisively topped the poll with more than one in three votes: way ahead of other contenders which included Pope John Paul II, Nelson Mandela and Winston Churchill, even Jesus Christ and the Prophet Mohammed. Amongst the reasons given by those voting for Bono were Giancarlo Rocca's description: "A real hero: from rock to the United Nations… He spends celebrity in the best way." Another was Thomas Voßen, who says Bono "uses his reputation to make this world a better place." Helga Baumgartner portrayed him as "the most charismatic man ever. He brings joy and peace and love to the world with his songs." Implicit in these comments is the suggestion that Bono's star story is not limited to its origins in rock culture, but can also be associated with the political 'stage', mostly in the form of his high profile lobbying of Western governments about debt relief for developing countries. Later on, I shall be looking at a range of news and newsworthy stories to emphasise how this has led to his pervasive 'familiarity' in the social world. Firstly, I will begin by talking about how he is broadly represented in the public domain.

Bono was born Paul David Hewson in Dublin on 10 May 1960. About life in his parental home, he says,

> My mother was Protestant, my father Catholic; anywhere
> other than Ireland that would be unremarkable… In Ireland

wealth and Protestantism went together; to have either, was to have collaborated with the enemy, i.e. Britain. This did not fly in our house. (1999: x)

At a micro level, then, Bono's family dynamic both represented and resisted some of the competing political and cultural claims which have historically and topically dominated the island of Ireland: a society polarised by sectarian politics which (in recent history) emanated from its division in May 1921, following centuries of British rule, into the independent Irish republic in the Catholic-dominated south, and the province of Ulster, which continued to fall under Britain's sovereignty, in the Protestant-dominated north. Based on anecdotal evidence, it seems typical that his parents chose to send him to Mount Temple, his hometown's first ever comprehensive non-denominational, co-educational comprehensive school. At the school, he met Dave Evans (nicknamed 'Edge'), Adam Clayton and Larry Mullen Jr. with whom he formed the embryonic U2 in 1976. Taking the lead singer's role, Hewson took the 'stage name' of Bonovox (after a hearing-aid suppliers of the same name based on Dublin's O'Connell Street), or Bono for short. After leaving Mount Temple, the group were soon managed by the Irish film producer Paul McGuinness, through whom they secured a major recording contract with Island Records in 1980. Although their early repertoire was influenced by both Punk rock (which prevailed during the late 1970's) and traditional Celtic sounds and instrumentation, U2's subsequent output has seen their persistent appropriation of 'in vogue' musical styles. In the process, their album sales worldwide have been in excess of 130 million.

Other than as their lead singer, Bono's contribution to U2 from the outset has been as their lyricist, providing narratives which have commented on contemporary political issues from the local to the

global, such as Ireland's sectarian culture to heroin abuse amongst its young unemployed, Poland's Solidarity trade union movement to the destruction of British coal-mining communities under the Thatcher administration, the proliferation of nuclear armoury during the Cold War and human rights violations in Latin America. His interest in topical humanitarian 'issues' has not been limited to his song lyrics: a case in point has been his involvement on the Band Aid and Live Aid projects of Bob Geldof (himself the singer with another Irish rock group called Boomtown Rats). This began in 1984 when Geldof organised the recording of the Band Aid single "Do They Know It's Christmas?" in response to Michael Buerke's report for BBC television news about famine in Ethiopia whose death toll was running into several millions. Bono joined with a number of other mainstream rock and pop performers from Britain and Ireland to appear on the charity record, which sold three million copies in the United Kingdom and raised £8million pounds intended for the provision of emergency food aid for the famine-stricken region and investment in long-term structural needs on the African continent. Geldof then set about arranging a one-off live music event called Live Aid. Held on 13 July 1985, it was in fact two concerts in two venues on different sides of the Atlantic (in London's Wembley Stadium and Philadelphia's JFK Stadium) and broadcast live to an estimated worldwide television audience of 1.5 billion viewers. During the broadcast, each performance by a rock or pop act was punctuated with requests for donations to fund African famine relief projects.

As well as participating at Live Aid with U2 (seeing their album sales treble in the ensuing months), Bono also took on a more direct role in how the £60 million raised by the event was spent. To this extent, Bono and his wife visited Ethiopia in September 1985 to look at social projects being established in the northern province of

Wello. During their stay, the Hewsons participated in the development of a health and nutrition programme, which was designed to introduce new ideas concerning health, nutrition and basic farming methods to local communities through the idiom of simple one-act plays, performed by relief workers.

Bono's identification in the media with the campaign for debt and famine relief for the African continent has persisted with his prominent role in the 'Jubilee 2000' organisation. Founded by a group of political activists who were inspired by the tradition of the 'jubilee year' mentioned in the Bible's Book of Leviticus, in which the indebted poor in a community should be unburdened every fifty years, the organisation began as a lobbying campaign to help cancel the debts of the world's poorest countries to coincide with the start of the second millennium. However, 'Jubilee 2000' was more publicly launched by Bono at the British music industry's annual Brit Awards in February 1999. Following this, he led a 'popular' delegation on behalf of 'Jubilee 2000' to the 1999 G8 summit meeting in Cologne where he presented a petition signed by 19 million people to the German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, calling for the organisation's wishes to be realised by the new year. In the end, the summit agreed on the lesser provision of $70 billion worth of debt relief, known as 'The Cologne Debt Initiative'.

That August, Bono accepted an invitation to address the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York about the aims of 'Jubilee 2000', while the month after he also obtained the Roman Catholic Church's support following a private a meeting with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican. Since the new millennium, 'Jubilee 2000' has become known as 'Drop The Debt' and, on their behalf, Bono met with President George W. Bush at the White House in March 2002. According to official reports, this meeting led to $5

billion being granted in extra aid for the world's poorest nations, although it was firmly 'tied' to the proviso that these nations had to demonstrate respect for human rights and liberalise their economies (as defined by the Bush administration) in return. Other world leaders he has met in relation to debt relief have included former American President Bill Clinton, Prime Minister Tony Blair, Russian President Vladimir Putin, United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, former South African President Nelson Mandela and chairman of the Microsoft corporation Bill Gates. Along with his continued involvement with 'Drop The Debt', Bono is also a founder member of the 'DATA' (Debt, AIDS, Trade, Africa) organisation. In recognition of his debt relief activities, he received the Knight of the Legion of Honour medal from the French President Jacques Chirac in February 2003.

Both individually and as part of U2, Bono has been associated with a variety of other hybrids between rock music and political campaigns. Shortly after Live Aid, he participated in the recording of the single "Sun City", which was organised by Steve Van Zandt, the guitarist with Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band, to raise money for 'Artists United Against Apartheid'. The main purpose of this single was to draw attention to Sun City, an entertainment complex built in the Zulu 'homeland' of Bophuthatswana by the apartheid regime of South Africa, which had a history of attracting top entertainers from Europe and America with lucrative contracts (some of whom had appeared in the Live Aid event), with the South African government benefiting from their indirect endorsement.

The year after Live Aid, U2 performed at the Self Aid concert in Dublin with other Irish artists to raise money for projects to help Ireland's unemployed as well as inviting employers to create jobs (in the end it was claimed that 1,332 jobs were made available as a

direct result of this event). The same year, U2 were one of the acts on the *Conspiracy of Hope* tour in America, whose aim was to increase American awareness and membership rates for Amnesty International, the human rights lobbying organisation. While on tour in June 1992, U2 invited British fans using 'advertisements' at their concerts to join the group in a protest at Sellafield, on England's Irish Sea coastline, where British Nuclear Fuels' plans to open processing plant for nuclear waste from around the world, which would increase radioactive emissions – both locally and on Ireland's eastern coastline - ten-fold. British Nuclear Fuels, however, successfully pursued an injunction to prevent the group and their fans from being able to demonstrate in the area. In the end, U2 convened a 'photocall' for local and national media at a nearby beach dressed in white anti-radiation suits, posing with drums of contaminated mud from the Irish Sea.

While on U2's Italian tour in 1993, Bono spoke via a satellite link during the concerts with Bill Carter, an American filmmaker who was working in a relief camp in Sarajevo while the Serbs were besieging the Bosnian city following the collapse of the former republic of Yugoslavia.   The claimed intention was to bring U2's concert audience 'up close' to everyday life in the war-torn city (Italy, after all, was merely the other side of the Adriatic Sea from where the war was taking place). However, the 'stunt' received criticism for putting the lives of local camera crews in Sarajevo at risk for the sake of entertainment. U2's intervention into a 'live' political process was central to their concert at the Waterfront Hall in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in June 1998. This concert was organised to encourage young people's support for the referendum on the Good Friday Agreement, the result of multi-party talks between the British and Irish governments and Northern Ireland politicians aimed at encouraging groups associated with sectarian

violence to renounce terrorist activity in favour of democratic politics. U2 were invited by the two governments to add impetus to the campaign in support of the Agreement which appeared to be dwindling in the opinion polls leading up to the vote. Indeed, one poll conducted by the *Belfast Telegraph* newspaper on the day of the U2 concert showed that Northern Ireland's Protestant population remained divided almost evenly, in much contrast to Roman Catholic voters whose approval of the Agreement stood at almost ninety percent. Present at the concert were David Trimble, the leader of the (Protestant) Ulster Unionist Party, and John Hume, the leader of the nationalist (Catholic) Social Democratic and Labour Party, both of whom were brought on-stage by Bono who then 'forced' a handshake between them.

Other representations in the public domain include his involvement as a scriptwriter and producer on the film *The Million Dollar Hotel*, which starred the Hollywood actor Mel Gibson. The film itself was based on a short story Bono had written about a group of residents at a Los Angeles hotel of the same name. In addition, he has been a book illustrator, a guest editor on BBC Radio 4's morning current affairs programme *Today*, written an introduction to a reprint of *The Book of Psalms* and contributes occasional articles and commentaries on music and political matters to a variety of newspapers, magazines and television programmes.

In 2005, Bono also gave evidence in a case he took to the Dublin Circuit Civil Court. The defendant Lola Cashman, who was a stylist on U2's *The Joshua Tree* tour in the late 1980's, had been accused by him, and the rest of U2, of trying to auction possessions which belonged to the group from that tour without their permission. Judge Matthew Deery found for Bono on the grounds that the possessions had an "iconic status" (his reported words), and to give

them away freely, as Cashman claimed, would in his opinion have been unlikely.

Furthermore, he is the owner (along with U2's three other members) of the Clarence Hotel and the Kitchen nightclub, both of which are in Dublin.

Meanwhile, Bono continues to live in Dublin with his wife and children.

8.3 Multiple 'Bonos': the media, stories of expertise and 'familiarity' in the everyday

The previous section gave an account of how Bono has come to be broadly represented in the public domain, both individually and as the lead singer of U2. I now wish to look more closely at a range of news and newsworthy stories which testify to the presence of multiple 'Bonos' in the social world, sometimes in the same place and at the same time. In other words, what I am dealing with are those public appearances and activities distinct from when he is on the concert platform, in the recording studio or on a promotional music video. That said, I do accept that his star story will inevitably become attached to the diverse roles and responsibilities in addition to his rock culture profile. My intention, therefore, is to argue that he has become a 'familiar' presence in the everyday due to 'excessive' mediation.

Beyond what are clearly Bono's aesthetic performances, it would appear that his lobbying activities on debt relief dominate news stories about him. I have also observed that, even when he is

predominantly reported as being in the role of a political lobbyist, other kinds of 'Bono' are acknowledged and mediated. A particularly strong example from the media is a report by Josh Tyrangiel for the current affairs magazine *Time*, describing two episodes which took place while Bono was on tour with U2 in North America during 2002 (all remarks in italics are not found in the original text).

Late one night, during the [World Economic Forum] in New York City, a dozen officials from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Episcopal Church, MTV and DATA (Debt, Aid, Trade for Africa) gathered for a strategy session in the back room of a Manhattan restaurant… By midnight, the air had leaked out of the room and, with it, any glimmer of productivity. Then U2's singer Bono strolled in. Wearing a black leather jacket, his trademark blue-tinted shades and a roguish smile, he glided around the table, shaking hands and kissing cheeks… With his glad-handing complete, Bono – founder, spokesman and chief benefactor of DATA, a nonprofit, debt relief advocacy group - sat down at the edge of the table and, at 1 a.m., recounted the details of his early-morning session with 30 G.O.P. Congressmen… With the energy in the room reignited, Bono the rock god disappeared. This lasted for the better part of an hour until Trevor Neilson, director of special projects for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, complained, "Look, we have to give away, by IRS law, $1.2 billion a year." "Trevor," said Bono, reinflating himself to pop-star proportions to better deliver his punch line, "we can help."…

[Two days later Bono performed with U2 at the Super Bowl 2002 half-time show in New Orleans in front of an estimated 130 million television viewers.]

...At a celebratory post-game dinner in the French Quarter with his band mates, the U2 management team and actress Ashley Judd (an old friend), he throws back some red wine, tells a few stories about Frank Sinatra... and then sneaks off to the bathroom for a cigarette. (Bono thinks the rest of U2 doesn't know he smokes; they know.) After 15 minutes, guitarist the Edge... glances towards the bathroom and says nervously, "Bono's allergic to red wine." Sure enough, Bono has passed out on the bathroom floor. A few minutes later, Bono emerges rumpled but renewed. As he exits the restaurant and makes his way through the mob on Bourbon Street, he throws his hands in the air and screams to no-one in particular, "No, I will not do the snake dance for you!" Bono is in full rock-star mode.

Naturally, the caveats of anecdotalism, a prosaic journalistic style and the likelihood of partiality should be borne in mind. My point, though, is that such reporting *by* the media is part and parcel of cultivating an overwhelming impression of multiple 'Bonos' being present *in* the media. In a very broad sense, Tyrangiel talks about three kinds of the 'social Bono' in these two episodes: these are how Bono might behave amongst friends and family (dining with friends, 'sneaking off' for a cigarette, collapsing from drinking too much red wine), as a political activist in the public domain (meeting with Trevor Neilson of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in his capacity as a founder of DATA) and as an off-stage rock performer (gesturing at the crowd as he leaves the New Orleans restaurant).

Other news stories emphasise his level of expertise, and how this has been achieved, for his appearances on the social 'stage'. Firstly, they imply that the concept of 'rehearsal' can (and does) apply just as much to Bono's activism as it does to learning the song lyrics he needs to know for the next U2 concert. For instance, certain media reports have commented that Bono arranged

'personal tuition' on the global economy and the role of the World Bank with Professor Jeffrey D. Sachs at Harvard University. Appraising Bono's ability to grasp such complex information takes the form of personal anecdotes and testimonials reported in and by the media. A case in point is a comment reported in the media made by Congressman John Sweeney, who has had meetings with Bono about debt relief at the United States Congress.

> "Fundamentally, I think [Bono's] tapping into my energy," Sweeney said, adding: "This isn't your classic celebrity involvement in an issue. This is a guy who, first of all, has studied the issue with such great depth and detail that it's almost like talking to an economist when you're talking to him." [2]

At other times, it is reported that Bono actively conflates this mode of expertise with his profile as a rock performer, allowing the media in turn to demonstrate how his overall representation 'cuts across' various contrasting arenas in the public domain. As Mark Memmot of the American newspaper *USA Today* states,

> By night, he's a longhaired, pierced-eared, combat boot-wearing superstar who spends two deafening hours whipping 20,000 screaming fans into a rock 'n' roll frenzy. By day, he still has the long hair, pierced ears and combat boots. But the fans he often sees are Washington powerbrokers who sport power ties or silk scarves and couldn't care less about listening to the lead sing of U2 perform the band's new hit. (Memmot 2001)

This, in turn, has led to other testimonials being mediated which qualify the extent to which Bono is able to 'persuade' as a political

lobbyist while maintaining his rock culture 'credibility', typified by the following extract from a report on a speech given by the former American President Bill Clinton in which he talks about a meeting between Bono and the former United States Treasury Secretary Larry Summers.

> I can't help noting, there have been a lot of ancillary benefits to Bono's passionate devotion to this. I'll never forget one day Secretary Summers coming in to me saying, 'You know, some guy just came in to see me in jeans and a tee-shirt and he just had one name, but he sure was smart. Do you know anything about him?'[3]

Certain stories of expertise in the media also draw attention to the kinds of 'Bono' which might ordinarily only be available to his family and other intimates in his life away from the public domain. One useful example is his involvement with the former United States Senator Jesse Helms, which does not appear to have been dependent on an *a priori* knowledge of Bono's U2 profile. Known for his 'personal crusades' against abortion, affirmative action and gay rights, as well as his high-profile opposition to the nomination of certain African-Americans to judicial and ambassadorial positions, Helms first met Bono in September 2000. According to one American newspaper,

> "It's much more glamorous to be on the barricades with your handkerchief over your nose than it is to have a bowler and a briefcase and go to work," [Bono] says. "But that's the way to get the work done. It's uncool. It's incredibly unhip. But it's the way to get it done." That attitude, and the religious tone of the [Jubilee 2000] campaign, have helped him win fans such as Helms. Bono first met the senator last

September, when he visited Helms' office. Afterward, the senator told the Raleigh (N.C.) *News & Observer* that Bono "has depth I didn't expect. He is led by the Lord [Jesus Christ] to do something." (Memmott 2001)

A commonsense view would hold that such rhetoric on Helms' part is not necessarily inconsistent with his publicly stated espousal of a right-wing Christian agenda in American politics. More relevant, perhaps, is the report's ability to comment on a more private version of Bono. By way of explanation, I wish to cross-reference the Helms story with another media narrative dealing with Bono's religious faith from the perspective of Neil McCormick, the rock music critic of *The Daily Telegraph* whom Bono has also known since childhood.

Bono's mother died when he was 14 years old, something which he has long recognised as a defining moment in his life. It had the effect of pushing him in two directions at once: towards the emotional exorcism offered by rock music and the spiritual solace to be found in Christianity. In some ways, his whole career might be viewed as an ongoing attempt to reconcile the conflicting demands of his faith and his vocation. Although he will ruminate intensely on religious subjects in private, he has always been reluctant to say too much in interviews, lest he be perceived as some kind of evangelist. (McCormick 2000)

In an introduction he wrote for a reprint of *The Book of Psalms* from the Old Testament, Bono 'mediated' his own public testimony about his religious beliefs within the context of his star story.

Psalms and hymns were my first taste of the inspirational music. I liked the words but I wasn't sure about the tunes – with the exception of Psalm 23, 'The Lord is my Shepherd'. I remember them as droned and chanted rather than sung. Still, in an odd way, they prepared me for the honesty of John Lennon, the baroque language of Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen, the open throat of Al Green and Stevie Wonder – when I hear these singers, I am reconnected to a part of me I have no explanation for… my 'soul' I guess. Words and music did for me what solid, even rigorous, religious argument could never do, they introduced me to God, not belief in God, more an experiential sense of GOD. Over art, literature, reason, the way in to my spirit was a combination of words and music. As a result the Book of *Psalms* always felt open to me and led me to the poetry of *Ecclesiastes*, the *Song of Solomon*, the book of *John*… My religion could not be fiction but it had to transcend facts. It could be mystical, but not mythical and definitely not ritual. (Bono 1999: ix)

This seemingly less public dimension to his star story has come to generate stories of expertise which conflate Bono's religious faith with his political lobbying on behalf of developing countries and HIV and AIDS organisations on the African continent. A report written in 2002 by Madeleine Bunting and Oliver Burkeman for *The Guardian* is one instance of where Bono's interpretation of Christianity is *re-*presented as the source of his expertise in the area of political activism.

The US wing of Jubilee 2000 hit on the idea of persuading the Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, a Baptist, to write a letter to Baptist churches across southern US states explaining the Biblical principles behind debt cancellation.

Suddenly Bono found he had access to a swathe of strongly Christian Republicans compelled by his Biblical theme – what Bono calls "the melody line" of his pitch. "We knew we had to get both sides," he explains. "So we got Billy Graham [the American Christian evangelist] and the Pope and I went to people like Jesse Helms, who had been very tough on the concept of foreign assistance and very bleak on Aids. [Helm is] a religious man so I told him that 2103 verses of scripture pertain to the poor and Jesus speaks of judgement only once – and it's not about being gay or sexual morality, but about morality. I quoted that verse of Matthew chapter 25: 'I was naked and you clothed me.' He was really moved. He was in tears. Later he told me he was ashamed of what he used to think about Aids." (Bunting and Burkeman 2002: 3)

Summing up, then, his myriad representations which the media helps to create can be found amongst family and friends, leading politicians and key players from the business world, and even passers-by in the street and other members of the public. Furthermore, as a result of mediation, these 'Bonos' – along with the stories of experience or expertise they embody - can appear separately, consecutively, simultaneously or interchangeably in different and differing social, political and cultural arenas. Given the extent and the range of his public profile (other than when he is performing explicitly as part of U2), it no longer appears exclusive to its rock culture origins, and indeed more than hints at a shift in the way political and other institutions are prepared to deal with a rock or pop performer. In this regard, Bono's representation in the public domain bears comparison with the historical example of how the French actress Sarah Bernhardt changed 'high society' attitudes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries towards the

acting profession. Willmar Sauter, the theatre studies academic, says Bernhardt was

> not only asked to act in respectable people's houses – which probably seemed more excusable – but she was asked to dine with the aristocracy. In reality she contributed immensely to the social advancement of the acting profession. Instead of being degraded to a mistress who privately entertained and pleased the rich and noble – as so many of her colleagues had to do – she met princes, heads of state, and business leaders as her peers. (Sauter 2000: 143 – 144)

Similarly, in Bono's case, meeting leaders from the worlds of politics, business and the community as his peers has led to a broader 'familiarity' in the social world, not least because he is perceived as presenting, by and through the media, an image of a rock or pop performer in more than one way. To illuminate this process further, I now wish to discuss another multi-representational example of a celebrity from popular culture, of which I can provide a more direct insight.

8.4 Gaining insights from the experience of Kwame Kwei-Armah and his myriad representations in the public domain

In my capacity as a specialist journalist writing about practitioners in the theatre 'industry', I have observed a similar manifestation of myriad representations 'appealing' to different kinds of audience within an individual celebrity's star story. The celebrity in question is Kwame Kwei-Armah, whom I interviewed at the Royal National

Theatre of Great Britain for the British theatre magazine *Plays International* in February 2004. My reason for interviewing him was to critically assess his career to date in writing plays about the African disaporic experience in Britain following the critical and commercial success of *Elmina's Kitchen*, his 2003 play about gun crime involving young black males in the London borough of Hackney. I had first come across Kwei-Armah's name when I saw his 2001 play *A Bitter Herb* at the Bristol Old Vic, where he was then their playwright-in-residence. In the course of my research in advance of the magazine interview, I discovered that Kwei-Armah also had other (perhaps more) significant representations in the public domain: for instance, as one of the lead actors in the weekly BBC television hospital drama *Casualty*, a contestant on the BBC 'reality TV' programme *Celebrity Fame Academy*, a recording artist, a 'goodwill ambassador' for the charity Christian Aid and a commentator-at-large in broadsheet journalism. These connections with popular and media culture no doubt cultivated a greater level of interest in a young playwright's early work than would ordinarily be the case. In my own defence, however, it was true that I only knew Kwei-Armah as a playwright by this stage. Meanwhile, my family and friends were 'impressed' by the fact that I was interviewing a well-known television star: put another way, while I was wholly ignorant of his television career, they had no idea he wrote plays (let alone the kinds of play they would expect or assume to be performed by a national theatre company). His playwriting has, in turn, brought about another representational layer when his first lead role in a West End theatre production was as a result of being cast as the protagonist in *Elmina's Kitchen* when the Royal National Theatre production transferred to London's Garrick Theatre in 2005. During our interview, I asked Kwei-Armah – who is at once part of the media and in the media's 'gaze' – how

he himself distinguishes between the multiple 'Kwames' in the media. He replied,

Traditionally, the black people that are deemed successful have usually, not always but sometimes, had to compromise their personality in order to be accepted by the wider establishment or wider public. So what I'm saying really is that they've had to play down their blackness in order to be accepted by white society, so as not to be a threat. What is relatively interesting about what has happened to me by a combination of fate, luck and divine blessing, depending on one's perspective, is that at one time I was able to be exposed to the general population as someone who sings well. When I went into *Celebrity Fame Academy*, my brief to myself was to be myself. Which was to continue praying, to talk in the way that I talk and to present myself in the way that I am. That I don't have to compromise a part of me for fear that it will intimidate. And so in many respects that image came out. Which I'm not responsible for because I didn't point the cameras at me. But an image came out of me which I was very happy with, which is very close to who I am. That I can be myself and I can be someone who we perceive has a level of intelligence. So it just so happened that I had a play on at the National Theatre that's then given plaudits. So consequently you have an image of someone whom the middle class establishment are saying, "this person operates in the high arts as well as the popular arts". That's relatively rare in this country. In fact I've found more prejudice in popular art about my associations with what purports to be high art. Actually, the reason for writing *Elmina* and *Elmina* being here [at the Royal National Theatre] is that all of a sudden what is deemed as high art becomes popular art and

191

we've proven that by putting it on the BBC [the play was filmed and screened on BBC3] and people watching it who wouldn't necessarily have gone to the theatre. So personally I think part of my job is to break down those barriers. Then of course people would see things about me being the ambassador for Christian Aid. So in a kind of way I haven't had to make a choice as to which Kwame to play because at one time within a period of two or three months several images of Kwame came across and so the audience and the general public could go well that's who he is. He is the playwright, he is the goodwill ambassador, he is the guy in *Casualty* and he is the guy that sings in *Celebrity Fame Academy*.[4]

On further investigation, it also transpired that these myriad representations are not exclusive to the public domain, but also extend to his immediate family. By that, I am referring to the fact that he was actually born Ian Roberts to West Indian parents in London in 1966. Kwei-Armah is not a stage name but, rather, the original name of his paternal family from Ghana (Roberts was the name of the slave-owner which his family were 'forced' to adopt after slavery was abolished in the British Empire under the 1833 Abolition of Slavery Act); his forename is in honour of the Ghanaian independence leader Kwame Nkrumah. This conflation of personal and political discourses has, consequently, infiltrated his star story. At the same time, these divergent 'Kwames' are not necessarily compatible, and can even be disruptive in terms of his more popular (even populist) representations. The following experience told to me by Kwei-Armah is indicative of the kinds of impact I am referring to.

There has not been a pressure on me to be anybody else as there is sometimes on other people. Only once was it mentioned to me that I should stop being who I am. I went on *Today with Des and Mel*[5] and Des said to me, "Kwame Kwei-Armah wasn't the name on your birth certificate, it's very difficult to say". And I said, "no Des, it wasn't on my birth certificate". He said, "it was Ian Roberts wasn't it" and the audience laughed. And I said, "yes it was". But I said, "Des, I don't think you know but in 1833 and I gave him that story [about the abolition of slavery in the British Empire] and I believe that culture is a living, breathing thing which we contribute to on a daily basis and I do not want my family to carry that". At the end Des said, "well done Kwame. Shake my hand you're a very brave man and never lose that". I won't lie but I was slightly afraid when I was asked the question, but I knew that I had to say it. I had to deal with it. Not in a confrontational way, but I had to say those words. Then I went to an interview directly after that at BBC London and a few black journalists came up to me and said, "I heard you on *Des and Mel*, my God you said that thing about the emancipation of slavery. I said to them, "I just said it because that's the true story, I had no point to make". When I was promoting another product, I was told Des wouldn't have me back on *Des and Mel* because I was too heavy. So one person from that product suggested that maybe when I do interviews I don't allow myself to talk about those kinds of issues. At which I was outraged. I automatically felt a condensing of my spirit and of my soul. All of a sudden what I thought I had escaped was landing on me. That I had to contain myself and be a smiley guy. I love smiling, I love life, I love people across the board. I love humanity, which is why I hate injustice. Which is why I'll fight to bring justice. And

I'll put on my serious hat when it's time to deal with injustice. Be that class, be that race, be that whatever it is. But I felt ultimately condemned and I got on the telephone and said, "look, this is rubbish" and to their credit they said look it's fine. But it was a big lesson, that I thought I'd escaped the shackles of conformity. It's a long way round of saying that I acknowledge that there are pressures that celebrities have in order for them to continue to sell their brand. I am fortunate in that the brand that I have, if we look at it in those terms, is that I can be political without being offensive thus far. That I can deal with popular culture without being condescended upon thus far. That I can write plays and articles for broadsheets without fear of people asking why. So in many respects I try to make the same Kwame.

As far as I am concerned, the gist of what Kwei-Armah is saying here is relevant to the overarching problematic at the centre of this case study on Bono. They are both performers, they are both part of media industries and institutions, they are both of interest to the media and its reporting when they are 'at large' in the public domain. Most crucial of all, perhaps, what they represent can apply to any number of social, political and cultural arenas. This latter point is poignantly relevant to Kwei-Armah's experience after appearing on the 'chat show', which could be explained in terms of being an instance where an incompatible combination of his 'celebrity', 'cultural', 'social' and 'political' discourses were brought together in a way 'unacceptable' to the branch of the media represented by the chat show. This, I would suggest, leads on to a much broader concern: namely, the relationship between a performer's intention (even when they are not 'performing') and the understanding or otherwise of that intention by an audience or other witnesses and spectators. As the kinds of representation

surrounding a particular public figure proliferate, and the more familiar they become as stories about them increasingly pervade the everyday media, I propose that this relationship would face greater and greater impact to the point where they may need to re-assess or reconfigure this relationship, in the least to permit the prevalence of how they prefer to be represented according to the elemental circumstances surrounding them.

Of relevance to this line of discussion is a comparable story from the media where competing discourses surrounding Bono's public representation appeared to have been 'in conflict' and 'irresolvable'. In February 2002, Bono performed as part of U2 at the half-time entertainment at the American football Super Bowl XXXVI game in New Orleans, in common with this annual event's tradition of inviting live performances by leading rock and pop performers. On this occasion, a few months after the Al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on New York and Washington the previous September, U2 acknowledged them by performing their song "Where The Streets Have No Name" in front of a giant video screen on which were 'scrolled' the names of all those killed. Following this appearance, Bono (independent of U2) had numerous meetings with the National Football League, which organises the Super Bowl, to obtain their permission to allow him to perform a song as a solo performer at the 2004 Super Bowl. This song, also written by Bono, was intended to raise awareness of the rampant extent of the HIV and AIDS crisis on the African continent. In the end, the request was turned down. As a National Football League spokesperson told the *New York Daily News*,

> "We simply decided that we were going to deliver, as we do annually, an extremely entertaining halftime show. We don't believe it's appropriate to focus on a single issue." [6]

As with Kwei-Armah's experience after appearing on the chat show, I am inclined to the view that the National Football League's stance is suggestive of what kinds of 'Bono' are tolerable to their institutionalised understanding of the entertainment 'frame' – and presumably how they envisaged their audience's - and what kinds are not. In this sense, Bono's associations as a campaigner on behalf of African and other developing nations were 'detrimental' to their (the National Football League's, the assumed or actual Super Bowl audience demographic's) desired associations of him being the lead singer of U2.

It is in this vein that I wish to introduce the next part of the chapter. The purpose so far has been to establish the argument that 'excessive' mediation of Bono's representation in the public domain is such that the appearance of multiple 'Bonos' has meant that he is a 'familiar' sight in the most inhabited (sometimes, over-crowded) spaces in everyday life. In the process, as Bono is no longer contained within rock culture, his dominant claim to be the lead singer of U2 above all other representations is at risk from becoming lost under the welter of other increasingly higher profile activities in those 'extra curricula' social, political and cultural arenas I have discussed. Ways in which he confronts that possibility is central to my subsequent analysis of a U2 concert. The previous two case studies, of course, have both shown how an aesthetic event from rock and pop culture can be a crucial component in the redressive action taken to dealing with a representational schism. Although my U2 concert analysis serves a similar purpose, Bono is observable participating in a more conventionally theatrical event in which he transforms into the on-stage incarnation of Mr. Macphisto. By employing a number of actorly techniques, I will show how the increasingly elaborate nature of the concert appears to make strange any familiar

assumptions about Bono (including his creative associations with U2) which the audience may have brought into the concert venue, but precisely in order to re-assert his authoritative role as U2's lead singer (an instance of 'applied Brechtianism', which I discussed in Chapter 5).

8.5 Identifying the problematic

This chapter has so far been concerned with the multiple 'Bonos' in the public domain and, in the process, the different levels of age, culture, social status, cultural awareness, education and intellectual sophistication found in the various audiences and 'constituencies' they have created. In common with the representation discourses in the previous two case studies, this situation has been facilitated in large part by the actions of, as well as the (passive or active) 'collusion' by the rock or pop performer under focus with, the media. On considering these issues within the context of Henri Lefebvre's insistence that modern society now exists in the 'mediatised everyday' (as I discussed in Chapter 5), it is possible to conceive the notion that Bono has become 'familiar' to the extent that his primary role as the lead singer of U2 has become a mere component of his complexly layered representation. Indeed, I have further argued that his profile has transcended its origins in rock culture to foster increasingly broader social, political and cultural significance. I feel it is reasonable to state that he is the beneficiary of a kind of emancipation in rock culture which Sarah Bernhardt had in relation to the professional institution she was overwhelmingly associated with (French theatre). According to Willmar Sauter, Bernhardt's associations with other professional institutions meant that her profile during her life and career underwent several changes, "partly in her favor, promoting her success, and partly

contrary to her interests" (2000: 144). With this in mind, it worth mentioning again the address given by Bono to the Harvard University graduating class of 2001 where, although the subject was his political lobbying for debt relief, he introduced himself accordingly: "My name is Bono, and I'm a rock star."[7] In my opinion, what the reflexive tenor in this particular introductory statement suggests is how he wishes to be primarily represented in spite of how the media simultaneously represents him in the public domain. In terms of its performative function, I would argue that this statement becomes an act of disengaging himself from the associations with the political and other professional institutions he has been dealing with from outside, or at the periphery, of rock culture. Appropriately, news stories also emphasise how Bono is insistent that his dominant mode of public representation remains firmly embedded in rock culture. For instance, speaking in 1995, he was reported as saying,

> All the prisoners aren't out and all the people who are starving aren't fed, so it goes on. But you see, the first responsibility of a rock 'n' roll star is not to be dull. I think it's part of the job to have jeopardy. At least unreliable and at best human sacrifice and self-mutilation. It's cool to be concerned about the environment and have a political attitude but only if it brings you close to your real job as a firework. (Bono quoted in Richardson 1995)

In the course of my U2 concert analysis, it will be possible to see how Bono re-asserts the claim on this 'real job'. This, I argue, is realised in the form of an aesthetic performance with the capacity for disturbing and disrupting many of the familiar images of Bono which the concert audience will have brought in from the social world. More precisely, this event takes the form of a sequence of

theatrical 'techniques' surrounding a publicly observable on-stage transformation by him into a character known as Mr. Macphisto. However, in keeping with what I referred to earlier as 'applied Brechtianism' (again, see Chapter 5), this serves to create an alienation device which ultimately has the potential to instruct the concert audience in ways to unpick Bono's authority as U2's lead singer from amongst these familiar images. Before dealing with these issues, I wish to provide a brief history of U2. As my account reveals, underpinning their profile is a persistent adoption of topical musical, performance and political stances, or ones which are self-consciously 'linked' to a particular social concern or historical moment. This will be followed by a consideration of the role of the theatrical in rock culture, as well as the institutionalised discourses relevant to my concert analysis.

8.6 A brief history of U2

U2 are the singer Bono, the guitarist Edge, the bass player Adam Clayton, and the drummer Larry Mullen Jr. When the embryonic U2 were formed in 1976, they did so in a period of 'upheaval' for rock culture in the form of the burgeoning Punk music scene (and in particular the group called Sex Pistols, managed by the London-based fashion designer Malcolm McLaren) as a reaction to what was perceived as an overly capitalistic music industry producing increasingly moribund work. While this scene originated in London, the 'ethos' of Punk rock (independently produced, often politicised recordings sleeved in 'home-made' designs) nonetheless sprang up in several cities across the British Isles, including Dublin where the strong Irish roots of key Punk players such as Sex Pistols' singer John Lydon (also known as Johnny Rotten) and guitarist Sid Vicious were acknowledged. Although Paul Hewson and his school friends

who would eventually become U2 sought to harness much of the raw, aggressive energy of Punk, they were also unusually attracted to the idea of blending it with more traditional Irish melodies and instrumentation, along with the kinds of political topicality in their lyrics which were previously associated with the protesting rhetoric of songwriters during the Vietnam War era. In particular, the lyrical content did much to comment on the then political landscape, which had come to be dominated by the economic and foreign policies of the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the American President Ronald Reagan. Themes included the sectarian culture in Northern Ireland, the Solidarity trade union movement in communist Poland, the threat of nuclear war in Europe, the ongoing civil rights movement in America, heroin abuse amongst Dublin's unemployed, human rights violations in Latin America and the destruction of British coal-mining communities under the Thatcher administration.

In terms of recordings, the group were eventually signed to Island Records, releasing their debut album *Boy* in 1980. This, along with their second album *October* a year later, brought U2 much positive coverage in the British and Irish music press, whilst the strong audience base they had acquired resulted in their third album *War*, achieving the number one position in the British album charts in 1983. Greater commercial success was to follow with their next album *The Unforgettable Fire* in 1984, while they also saw their overall album sales treble in the months following their appearance at the Live Aid event in July 1985. Their next album *The Joshua Tree* was released in 1987 and, in large part due to the trans-Atlantic publicity their Live Aid appearance brought them, they also appeared on the cover of the 27 April issue of the American current affairs magazine *Time*, with the words "U2: Rock's Hottest Ticket". Only The Beatles and The Who had received the same distinction

before them. Indeed, such was the interest around U2 during this period that the film director Phil Joanou released the documentary *Rattle and Hum*, about the group's North American tour to promote *The Joshua Tree*. The film enjoyed mainstream cinema distribution around the world, while the ensuing film soundtrack provided U2 with another number one album in Britain and North America. In contrast with their earlier politicised work, this soundtrack appeared more interested in aligning the group with formative influences from rock music - such as American blues and folk rock, Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan and Jimi Hendrix - balancing the group's previous criticisms in their lyrics of American politics with a celebration of its popular culture.

In contrast were their next three albums - 1991's *Achtung Baby*, 1993's *Zooropa* and 1997's *Pop* – which saw U2 collaborate with established dance music producers and embraced much of the renaissance in night-clubbing culture during the early 1990's in Europe and North America. In addition, this decade also saw the group opening the Kitchen nightclub in the basement of the Clarence Hotel in Dublin, which they also own. At the same time, electronic beats were combined with the more melancholic guitar-based songwriting which had also been central to the rock culture of the early 1990's, not least in the form of the American 'alternative' music scene known as 'grunge' (mostly centred around Seattle) and included exponents such as Nirvana.[8] As the group's output moved into the new millennium, they have appeared to acknowledge a renascent interest in popular songwriting amongst British rock and pop performers, such as the Manchester-based group Oasis and the singer Robbie Williams, and the sentimentalism indicative of the 're-working' by Elton John of his song *Candle in the Wind* following the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, in 1997.

It is possible, therefore, to see how U2's evolving 'sound' is clearly rooted in a knowingness about topical and historical trends in both rock and pop culture, while their 'stance' appears to some extent reflective of the kinds of political and social issue associated with Bono's profile in the public domain generally. In the next part of this chapter, as a prologue to my concert analysis, I will be looking at the forms and functions of the theatrical in rock culture from an historical perspective.

8.7 Conventions of theatricality in rock culture

As will become evident in the course of my ensuing concert analysis, concepts of the theatrical are not merely based on assumption; rather, they are grounded in clearly identifiable techniques with the capacity for 'alienating' and in turn 'instructing' the audience in some meaningful way. These techniques refer to the process by which Bono publicly transforms into, and returns from, an on-stage incarnation known as Mr. Macphisto: a process which, in the end, 're-integrates' him back into an unified image of U2, so as to lend renewed authority to his (preferred) role as the group's lead singer. Before looking at the specific contexts of Bono's performance at this event, I now wish to consider some of the originating forms and functions of theatricalised interpretations in rock culture.

For some cultural commentators, a more theatricalised interpretation of rock music in live performance has its roots in the expectations of an ever-expanding television audience since the early 1970's. For instance, Jim Curtis argues that this trend indicated rock culture's desire to compete with television by offering live performances which could not be experienced simply by

listening to audio recordings or watching television programmes (1987: 252). What is equally worth pointing out is that, between (roughly) 1970 and 1974, rock culture was in the throes of a brief 'movement' known as Glam Rock (or Glitter Rock, as it was known in North America). Although almost all of the protagonists were male and the music was guitar-based, Glam Rock's ideological intent, as far as one existed, was to subvert (or at least play with) many of rock culture's institutionalised discourses which had prevailed since its formative period starting with Elvis Presley and enduring with groups like The Beatles. In the broadest sense, Glam Rock performers appeared to replace rock culture values of musicianship, artistry and sincerity with ephemeral conceits of visual style, gimmickry and hype. More exactly, these performers (to varying degrees on an individual basis) incorporated images of extroversion, artifice, a stylised sense of time travel (the idea of being futuristic aliens while embracing European-fetishised Orientalism of the past) and a perversion of traditional images of masculinity (such as through the liberal use of make-up) into their presentational styles (be it live performances, marketing or publicity). In turn, what the typical Glam Rock performer would make available in the public domain was marked by an complete effacement of the actual (real, private) self. A valuable example is that of Vincent Furnier, whose Glam Rock alternate known as Alice Cooper intentionally sought to draw a clear line between his private life and what the public identified as his performative Other.

> Alice had a life of his own that existed only on-stage. But then my other life was my own, and it had a lot more aspects to it than Alice's did. (Vincent Furnier quoted in Hall 1997: 15)

In Philip Auslander's view, this intentionality on Furnier's part would likely undermine the very essence of rock ideology, which "demands

parity between the performer's stage and private personae, even if that parity is wholly illusory" (1999: 89 footnote). Playing with the genre to a much greater degree was David Bowie's "systematic and self-conscious metamorphoses of persona (including his sexuality) and musical styles", while his distinctiveness "lies not only in the frequency and extremity of his transformations but more importantly in his assertion of the conventionality and artificiality of all of his performance personae" (Auslander 1999: 89). Therefore, while Furnier limited the effacement of his 'real' self to Alice Cooper's appearances in the public domain, Bowie appeared to take the view that every performance – public or private – could be consciously constructed. In terms of sound recordings, a case in point is his 1973 album *Pin Ups*, on which he performs songs previously recorded by British rock groups of the early 1960's using different voices and accents. The intention here is to demonstrate how Bowie's performance persona on each recording is determined by the song, not vice versa, refuting what Simon Frith insists is the 'promise' in popular music: that "the 'real me'…lies in the way we hear the voice, just as for a film star the 'real' person is to be found in the secret of their look" (1996: 199). Other 'acts' by Bowie - such as making a public declaration that he was bisexual during the Glam Rock period, and then later withdrawing it some years later - suggest the view that his identity was as much (if not more so) likely to be a matter of 'role-playing' rather than any essentialised truth. On the subject of one of Bowie's performative incarnations, John Gill states that he "intended to signify Ziggy Stardust not *be*" (1995: 111). Taken overall, in Curtis' view, what Glam Rock resulted in was an excessive proliferation of encoded actions, all of which sought to transgress the 'real' in rock culture (1987: 259).

U2's genesis – coming together while still at school during the late 1970's, 'turning professional' in the early 1980's - falls outside the

period of Glam Rock. In actuality, the group's origins are far closer in time and spirit to the formative ideology of Punk, which is generally said to have began in 1976 when the first concerts by Sex Pistols took place in London and Manchester (the same year that the embryonic U2 were formed). Taking the U2 concert I am going to analyse as a 'snapshot', however, does suggest that Bono's adoption of the Mr. Macphisto 'mask' calls into question many of the same issues which surrounded the representation of Glam Rock performers. Conversely, when considering that U2 in general continuously embrace musical and performance stances to reflect a particular social concern or historical moment, this would more broadly indicate a closer affinity with rock ideology than Glam Rock's subversive or playful aesthetics. In essence, my analysis will show the extent to which these competing discourses co-exist during the concert, precisely because the appropriation of Glam Rock values (reflexively applied or objectively perceived) offers one way of alienating U2's audience, but precisely because the process of alienation can facilitate Bono's reclamation of a more 'ideologically sound' posture.

8.8 Relevant institutionalised discourses of the music industry to the U2 concert analysis

The U2 concert I will be looking at took place at the (stadium-sized) Cricket Ground in Sydney, Australia, on 27 November 1993; it was part on the group's 1993 *Zoomerang* tour of Australia and New Zealand to promote their albums *Achtung Baby* and *Zooropa*. Rather than (needlessly) considering the entire concert, my analysis will focus on Bono's performance immediately prior to, during, and returning from his transformation into Mr. Macphisto, as well as the

border crossings he makes between them. Firstly, it is useful to explain the brief history of Mr. Macphisto. Bono first adopted an on-stage incarnation of this kind for the encore of U2's North American *Zoo TV* tour in 1992, when he would come on stage as a character called the Mirror Ball Man, a brash but nameless American character dressed in a silver lamé outfit who would throw fake dollar bills into the crowd. By the time the *Zoo TV* tour set out on its European leg a year later, Bono had developed this vague stage persona into the more fully-fledged Mr. Macphisto, whose name, according to Mark Chatterton, alludes simultaneously to the throw-away consumerism epitomised by the McDonalds fast food chain and Mephistopheles, the evil spirit in German legend to whom Faust sold his soul in return for material and carnal pleasures in his earthly life.

> Instead of silver, he would be dressed in gold and would have 1970s style platform boots. Originally he was going to be called "Mr. Gold", the somebody gave him a pair of horns at the last minute and Macphisto was born. Macphisto was, in essence, the Devil (complete with red horns). He had a refined English accent and white stage make-up. Each night, during the encore, he would telephone a well-known celebrity (in most cases) from the stage. (Chatterton 2004: 142)

Before the transformation takes place, the group are seen performing on a satellite stage at the end of a walkway, which thrusts out at a ninety-degree angle from the centre of the main stage at the concert venue. On this satellite stage, U2 perform a series of songs with the minimum of instrumentation, using pared-down arrangements, all of which plausibly assumes rock culture values of musicianship, artistry and sincerity. When Bono later engages a performative frame around Mr. Macphisto, he seems to

replace these assumed values with more ephemeral conceits and artifice. Already, then, an overt degree of aesthetic and geographical distance between the main and satellite stages is being established. In my opinion, this invites a further discussion about some of the prevailing institutionalised discourses which pertained to rock culture at the time. More precisely, I am talking about the changing meaning and status of live performance in the wake of the Milli Vanilli 'scandal'.

In the spring of 1990, Milli Vanilli, a two-man Franco-German pop group, were awarded the Best New Artist Grammy for 1989 at North America's most prestigious popular music awards. The National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences, the Grammys' institutional sponsor, subsequently rescinded this award when Milli Vanilli's producer admitted the group had neither sung at their concerts, nor on the album for which they were awarded. One of the key issues raised by Milli Vanilli was that it represented the culmination in the systematic erosion of the importance of live performance in rock culture which, according to Lawrence Grossberg, "lies precisely in the fact that it is only here that one can see the actual production of the sound, and the emotional work carried in the voice" (1993: 204). The implication for the audience, therefore, was that Milli Vanilli represented one way in which they had been 'exploited' due to their desire for the uniquely felt pleasure they enjoyed during a live performance: this, in Theodore Gracyk's view, results from the uncommon opportunity for them to experience a less illusory, more intimate bond with the performer (1996: 78).

Historically, the relationship between music performer and spectator was primarily based on music being a 'performing art' (that is, before the advent of recording technology). Before sound

recordings became possible, music could only ever be heard in live performances. However, as Dave Laing identifies, what fundamentally separated the musical (aural) performance from the live (visual) experience was the introduction of the gramophone in the 1890's. With the consumption of sound reproductions becoming more widely available as a consequence, the critical impact was a "vital shift in the experience of listening to music: the replacement of an audio-visual event with a primarily audio one, sound without vision" (Laing 1991: 7 - 8). By the early 1960's, however, the visual aspects returned again to complement the musical experience through the burgeoning exposure on television and film of the 'new' sound of rock music, and in the use of elaborate record covers, press photography and marketing (Goodwin 1993: 8). Furthermore, it also transpired that the listening experience ought to be supplemented with additional artefacts of rock music consumption, such as "posters, booklets that come with the recordings, and the paraphernalia of fandom" (Auslander 1999: 75). With the formative emergence of rock culture, therefore, a much greater degree of inseparability between the aural and the visual than had happened at any time since the introduction of the gramophone. But, as Lawrence Grossberg points out, this situation is inherently problematic for rock ideology, because

> The eye has always been suspect in rock culture; after all, visually, rock often borders on the inauthentic. It was here – in its visual performance – that rock often most explicitly manifested its resistance to the dominant culture, but also its sympathies with the business of entertainment. (Grossberg 1993: 204)

In other words, the visual aspects of rock culture are often dismissed as mere reflections of the commercialism which in effect

sustains the music industry, even if commonsense indicates that everything associated with rock culture is itself a product of this commercialism, irrespective of what 'values' a performer might lay claim to. This reality, combined with the impact of television (as discussed earlier), meant that, over time,

> Live concerts would become what recordings had always been: simulations – recreations of performances that never took place, representations without referents in the real. (Auslander 1999: 86)

Following Glam Rock and a much greater widening of television accessibility, the visual in rock culture was privileged even further through the proliferation of promotional music videos being increasingly used in the music industry's marketing activities and "suggested the arrival of a new era of music performance in which the visual evidence of performance would have no relation to the production of the sound" (Auslander 1999: 86). The most high profile consequence was the establishment in 1981 of the American (and later European, as well) satellite and cable network known as Music Television (more commonly referred to as MTV), which was originally created to offer a continuous rotation of promotional music videos by rock and pop performers. So unnecessary it seemed were the aural aspects of live performance at this level of the media by the 1980's that it was inevitable that an act like Milli Vanilli would soon become an accepted form of music industry practice.

The underlying concern behind Milli Vanilli is not so much why it happened, but the redressive action taken on it being made public. To this extent, exposing Milli Vanilli as 'fraudulent' appeared to bring about the need to recuperate rock culture's 'traditional'

values, but only by 're-generating' a semblance of the real in live performance. This process is defined by Jean Baudrillard as a 'scandal effect'; in other words,

> When the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity. There is an escalation of true, of the lived experience… And there is a panic-stricken reproduction of the real and the referential. (Baudrillard 1983: 12 - 13)

Auslander insists the phenomena which Baudrillard describes appeared in the wake of Milli Vanilli, made manifest through a renewed emphasis within rock culture on music being – and seen to be – performed (and 'performable'); and for him, the apotheosis of this particular scandal effect is *MTV Unplugged*, a television programme produced and broadcast by MTV (1999: 96). According to E. Ann Kaplan, MTV "simply takes over the history of rock and roll, flattening out all the distinct types into one continuous present" (1987: 29). *MTV Unplugged*, on the other hand, serves to foreground the 'sincerity' of acoustic musicianship by inviting established rock performers to perform a concert using the simplest of musical accompaniment and setting; this concert is then filmed in front of a live audience for broadcast on MTV at a later date.[9]

8.9 The *Zoomerang* concert: Bono, Mr. Macphisto and the theatrical event

Although there is no formally acknowledged 'connection' with the *MTV Unplugged* series, the purpose in looking at the historical and

topical discourses relevant to Milli Vanilli is to subtly impose a 'reading' upon U2's performance on the satellite stage, particularly given the comparable use of minimal aesthetics in the staging. In the process, I am using this perspective essentially to identify the 'border crossing' across which Bono's engagement of the performative frame and the transformation into Mr. Macphisto are realised. To analyse this concert, I will make reference to a commercially available video cassette (Mallett 1994) which features an edited version of the entire staging. I have aimed to exercise the minimum use of adjectives and adverbs in my descriptions to ensure the highest degree of objectivity. The timings refer to the location on the video cassette of the relevant scene within reasonable exactness, while assuming any slight differences in the speed and precision between different models of video cassette player. The scenes are discussed in the order in which they appeared during the concert.

8.9.1 Scene 1: U2's performance on the satellite stage and the 'recreation' of a performance which has never taken place

(Video cassette timings: approximately 46 minutes and 50 seconds to 1 hour, 1 minute and 20 seconds)

All four members of U2 walk down to the end of runway and onto the satellite stage, surrounded on all but one of the sides by the audience. The aesthetics of this satellite stage are relatively minimal compared with the banks of video screens and full-size East German Trabant cars suspended from the lighting rig on the main stage behind them. Two guitars (played by Bono and Edge), one bass (played by Clayton), a single drum (played by Mullen Jr.) and microphones (Bono on lead vocals, supported by Edge) are the only

stage furniture. After two songs, Clayton and Mullen Jr. depart the satellite stage, leaving Edge and Bono to remain. Bono begins to sing the Lou Reed song "Satellite of Love", which Edge accompanies on his guitar. During the song, the largest video screen on the main stage flickers with snowy distortion. The image on the screen eventually defines itself into a live action image of Lou Reed.[10] Midway through the song, Bono introduces the 'electronic' Reed to the audience. Edge then accompanies 'Reed'; Bono remains quiet. Towards the end of the song, Bono eventually joins 'Reed' in a duet. When the song is finished, the image of Reed disappears. Bono and Edge leave the satellite stage in the direction of the main stage.

Even if the manner of U2's foregrounding of acoustic musicianship in a pared-down setting does not precisely equate with a *MTV Unplugged* performance, it nonetheless appears to impose some kind of aesthetic and geographical distance between itself and the main stage (the future site of Mr. Macphisto's performative world). Furthermore, by staging this part of the concert in the 'bosom' of the concert audience, it seems to me that the available connotations lend themselves to a simple image of Bono unfettered by anything outside his rock culture frame. Interviewed in the programme for this tour, Bono explains the importance he places on an this 'uncluttered' view.

> To me, cool is about knowing who you are and liking who you are and walking without fear of who you are, with no baggage, no mask. (Bono quoted in Fallon 1993: 14)

At the same time, what I consider is also being constructed is an open and free passageway which facilitates Bono's border crossing into the performative frame where his subsequent transformation into Mr. Macphisto will take place: a process which in large part has been facilitated by the concert audience, acting as a conduit

between this aesthetic event and the multiple 'Bonos' they have brought into the venue from the social world. The border crossing is further enabled by the electronic image of Lou Reed. By that I mean, Bono's duet with 'Reed' is in effect a 'recreation' of a performance which has never taken place, and in the process provide an initial step towards 'breaking up' the on-stage relationship of U2 as a singular performing unit.

8.9.2 Scene 2: Engaging the performative frame and Bono's transformation into Mr. Macphisto

(Video cassette timings: approximately 1 hour, 29 minutes and 50 seconds to 1 hour, 32 minutes and 50 seconds)

The recording of a brass fanfare is heard over the stadium loudspeaker system. When it ends, Edge, Clayton and Mullen Jr. appear on-stage dressed in matching buttoned, blue-coloured tunics and begin playing the introduction to the next song. Meanwhile, a live image of Bono is seen on the video screens placed above and around the main stage area. He appears to be in a dressing room somewhere in the backstage area of the stadium. The dressing room is made up of red-coloured padded walls. Bono, dressed in a red puffy shirt with his hair greased back and wearing red horns on his head, is sat at a dressing table in front of an ornate gold-framed mirror. He is applying white face paint. He then begins to sing into a microphone, which is on a stand fixed onto the dressing table. Two members of the stage management team appear with a gold lamé jacket and assist Bono with putting it on. As he does so, he stands up to reveal that he is also wearing matching gold lamé trousers. Now transformed into Mr. Macphisto, he walks out of the dressing room and into the backstage area, waving at various members of the stage management, and then onto the main stage.

In *The Empty Space*, Peter Brook says that "if the theatre is essentially artificial, then the stage door reminds the actor that he is now entering a special place that demands costume, make-up, disguise, change of identity" (1990: 141 - 142). Although Bono's transformation into Mr. Macphisto takes place in a mock dressing room, it essentially represents a similarly meaningful engagement of a performative frame as that of Brook's actor crossing the threshold of the stage door. Furthermore, being observed sat in front of a mirror is a clear indicator – at least in theatrical terms – that Bono is taking apart one persona (likely the one seen earlier on the satellite stage) and putting together another. What is particularly unusual about this situation, though, is that Bono is 'flouting' the theatrical convention that an actor getting into character in their dressing room is not ordinarily part of the performance. Indeed, this transformation strongly contrasts with the on-stage incarnations of the Australian actor and comedian Barry Humphries, whose transformations into Dame Edna Everage and Sir Les Patterson always take place in the privacy of his (real) dressing room (see Lahr 1991). What makes Bono's transformation part of the performance is the fact that it is being broadcast on screens around the concert venue. As Willmar Sauter explains in his discussion of the relationship between theatrical practice and the development of technology,

> Through various media developed during the twentieth century it has become possible not only to experience events, but also to observe artefacts and documents as they are created, although they are created in a different place. (Sauter 2000: 98- 99)

To this extent, the concert audience are thus implicated in a spectatorial role by means of this particular mode of mediation, even 'welcomed' into Bono's dressing room. Sauter says, "looking into the performer's dressing room leaves it open to the onlooker to determine whether the event carries an element of theatricality" (2000: 57). In Bono's case, I would insist that there is little potential for ambiguity as to its theatrical provenance. As such, with the performer's dressing room door being open in this fashion, the audience are encouraged, perhaps even compelled, to observe and participate in this transformational process. As such, Bono is clearly insistent that what he is doing is theatre, rather than merely getting into character through the use of encoded actions.

In his book *The Theatrical Event: A* Mythos, *A Vocabulary, A Perspective*, David Cole says,

> Two stagehands fooling with prop swords is not theatre, though it is feigning. Hotspur's and Hal's duel is theatre, though the actors were to bare their swords' points. (Cole 1975: 78)

All things considered, then, it seems evident to me that at no point does the transformation represent the private act of an actor getting into character, as Bono offers sufficient clues which are observable by the audience to intentionality on his part. By granting the audience access to something usually considered as private, however, means that this mundane workplace 'ritual' of an actor is elevated it to a more intense level. The rituals carried out amongst the Tikopia islanders of Polynesia offer a useful analogy. Throughout the year, these islanders construct numerous ceremonies at festivals which, in effect, appear to be many of the everyday activities they carry out at any other time, the only

difference being that on these ceremonial occasions they are reproduced as a mode of worshipping their gods. In Cole's discussion on these islanders, he observes that when the intention behind these activities being carried out is ceremonial, this makes them ritualistic because "the ceremonies take place in an atmosphere saturated with the sacred" (1975: 78).

In Bono's case, what makes the actor's workplace ritual of getting into character 'special' is the fact that, by mediation, he is able to present it as a performance, both to the concert audience and to himself. By that, I mean that part of the audience's spectatorial role includes them watching Bono become a spectator himself in the transformational process: a technique where, in Marvin Carlson's observation, "the participant position is *always* accompanied by the analyst/observer position" (2000: 88). One way of explaining this technique can be found in Constantin Stanislavski's description of the experience of a Russian acting student named Kostya Nazvanov, who was invited by his acting tutor to spend a week constructing an original character. After days of becoming fruitlessly preoccupied with how a costume might bring about notions of a character, it was not until the student found himself alone backstage, removing thick layers of stage make-up in front of a dressing room mirror, that he 'discovered' the essence of his character in the hue left behind on his face. As Nazvanov stated,

> "Yet can I really say that the creature is not a part of me? I derived him from my own nature. I divided myself, as it were, in two personalities. One continued as an actor, the other was an observer." (Kostya Nazvanov quoted in Stanislavski 1949: 19)

Why this perception of double agency – by being simultaneously an actor and an observer - is useful is in its capacity for drawing attention to the 'seams-showing' quality of Mr. Macphisto's characterisation which is generated by the explicitly public nature of Bono's transformation. About this kind of strategic decision in performance, Bonnie Marranca opines that its purpose is to "make the audience more conscious of events in the theatre than they are accustomed to", while allowing the actor to 'stand' both inside and outside the character they are to play on stage (1977: 3). I would argue that this does apply in Bono's case, not least because the presence of the mirror, and his interaction with it, determine that he not only sees the face and hears the voice of the Mr. Macphisto, but also reacts to this exterior gaze and sound of this 'mask'. For Richard Schechner, writing in *Between Theater and Anthropology*, this arrangement creates a sense of oscillation in the moment of an actor's transformation into their character. More specifically, Schechner would insist that what is happening with Bono is that he is acting in between identities, in a liminal place: Bono is not Mr. Macphisto, but he is also not not Mr. Macphisto (1985: 123). Adding to this discussion is Marla Carlson, who says,

> The actor thus observes the entire process of characterization even as he participates in it, but he ceases to be *answerable* as himself, within the ordinary circumstances of his life. (Carlson 2000: 89)

In other words, this juxtaposition between what is coherently Bono, and what is incoherent, possesses the kind of ludic potential which will mean that what is said and done by Mr. Macphisto does not carry the same authority as if said and done by the lead singer of U2. This, in turn, gives him the permission he needs to justify his intent to 'make strange' the familiarity surrounding Bono's

representation: a process which continues more emphatically in the next scene to be analysed. Beforehand, though, I feel it is also worth talking about how the relationship between the three other members of U2 and their lead singer is affected by the transformation. From the moment Bono appears through mediation in the dressing room, Mr. Macphisto's costuming visibly contrasts with the three others' matching blue tunics. For Philip Auslander, the notion of identical costuming has an important role in a formative period in the history of rock culture. That's to say, "it was possible at the moment of rock's emergence in 1964 for The Beatles to be a credible rock group while wearing identical "mop-top" haircuts, tailored suits, and "Beatle boots" in photographs, including those on their record covers" (1999: 75). The significance of costuming in relation to The Beatles' representation is also raised by Albert Goldman, who refers to them as being "the best costumed, best produced, most versatile and technically resourceful of rock bands" (1992: 60). In one sense, the identical nature of The Beatles' costuming is useful 'short-hand' to the perception of this group as a performing unit, even though they had abandoned live performance in the second half of their career (the late 1960's and early 1970's). On applying this 'reading' to U2 at this point in the concert, it seems persuasive that having Bono dress so differently from the three other members of the group is one way in which the image of the group as a performing unit is disrupted for the duration of Mr. Macphisto's appearance, indeed for the first time in their own history of performing live.[11]

8.9.3 Scene 3: 'Making strange' - Mr. Macphisto addresses the audience and makes a telephone call

(Video cassette timings: approximately 1 hour, 34 minutes and 30 seconds to 1 hour, 39 minutes and 55 seconds)

As Mr. Macphisto finishes his first song, both he and the three other members of U2 are being showered with bills of an unspecifiable currency. When the song comes to a close, he applauds along with the audience. After waving at the audience, he moves to the centre of the main stage and delivers the following speech:

Mr. Macphisto: Look what you've done to me. You've made me very famous and I thank you. I know you like your pop stars to be exciting so I bought these. *[Mr. Macphisto indicates down to pair of Cuban-heeled shoes covered in gold glitter he is wearing on his feet.]* Now my time among you is almost at an end. The glory of *Zoo TV* must ascend and take its place with all the other satellites. Don't fear for I'll be watching you. I leave behind video cameras for each of you. There's so many listening tonight, I have a list. People of America *[Mr. Macphisto asks the crowd to "shush"]*, I gave you Bill Clinton, I put him on CNN, NBC, C-Span. Too tall to be a despot but watch him closely. People of Asia, your time is coming. Without your transistors, none of this would be possible. People of Europe, when I came among you, you were squabbling like children. Now you're all hooked up to one cable, as close together as stations on a dial. People of the former Soviet Union, I've given you capitalism. So now you can all dream of being as wealthy and glamorous as me. People of Sarajevo, count your blessings. There are those over the world who have food, peace and security, but they're not on the TV like you are. Frank Sinatra, I give you the MTV demographic. Salman Rushdie, I give you decibels. Goodbye Squidgy, I hope they give you Wales. Goodbye Michael, goodbye all you neo-nazis, I hope they give you Auschwitz. Around about this time I often make a telephone call, sometimes to the President of the United States. But not tonight. Tonight I'm going to call a taxi to take me home. I'm tired.

Mr. Macphisto moves to a mirror-tiled telephone, picks up receiver and appears to dial a telephone number. The sound of a telephone number being dialled followed by that of a dialling tone are heard over the loudspeakers in the stadium. Eventually someone is heard picking up the telephone at the number dialled.

Female speaker: Thank you for calling Taxis...

Mr. Macphisto: Hello?

Female speaker: How can I help you, sir?

Mr. Macphisto: Hello. My name is Mr. Macphisto. I'm looking for a taxi to take me from Sydney Cricket Ground.

Female speaker: Okay sir, what is your name? Hello?

Mr. Macphisto: My name is Mr. Macphisto. And what is your name? Hello?

The sound of the female speaker putting down the telephone on Mr. Macphisto is heard on the loudspeakers around the concert venue. At this, Mr. Macphisto begins to sing unaccompanied into the telephone.

Mr. Macphisto: Show me the way to go home. I'm tired and I want to go to bed. I had a little drink about an hour ago and it's gone right to my head.

The other three members of U2 being to play the introduction to their next song. Mr. Macphisto dances and then begins to sing it.

In Chapter 5, the concept of 'applied Brechtianism' was discussed in terms of how any everyday problematic might 'learn' from the 'lessons' to be found in Bertholt Brecht's theatrical process of estrangement. With this in mind, the staging of a theatrical event should afford Bono the opportunity to disturb and disrupt many of

the familiar representations in the media I have talked about. Brecht, as I explained, used his own kinds of 'interruptive' strategy in order to estrange his own audience from the 'numbing' effects of everyday life, demanding that his actors made the audience aware of the ideologies on stage, enabling them to interpret their own 'lived' realities of the everyday in the process. In Bono's case, by 'celebrating' the cult of personality, the media manipulation of political systems, American imperialism, the capitalist expansion into Eastern Europe and the war in the former Yugoslavia, it seems plausible that Mr. Macphisto is so constructed as his portrayer's ideological Other. With the more theatrical 'touches' Bono brings to the performance, it should follow that the concert audience will more than likely appreciate that, as Michael Issacharoff observes, "the stage, the area of fictional utterance, is a frame that disengages all speech acts" (1989: 9). Aiding this process of disengagement is the potential that the audience have brought in their knowledge and awareness of the images of Bono which circulate in the social world. What kind of impact this might result in is usefully articulated by Simon Frith, who says,

> In judging a performer we are, as an audience, measuring her
> gestures against our sense of what she's really like, off-stage
> (what her voice and body really do, in this sort of situation).
> (Frith 1996: 214)

With regard to the acting profession, Michael Quinn insists that associations from an actor's life and career outside the theatre can profoundly impact upon the dramatic characters they portray on stage, and how far an audience is convinced by these characters' interpretations, because "the personal qualities of the individual actor dominate the perception of the actor's reference to the fictional events" (1990: 155). This, of course, is helpful to Bono if

he wishes the audience to see enough of a 'trace' of his familiar self to prevent them from being entirely persuaded that he and Mr. Macphisto are the same person. In which case, this situation should facilitate an invitation to play. On the subject of this tour's staging, Bono has said,

> The stage is a platform show after all. All it does is make us look bigger. I think dressing up as the devil was great, and I enjoyed every minute of it. What we did with Zoo TV was, again, just a way of stopping me being placed as one person, because you have to accept the caricaturing that goes on when you become a big band and have fun with it and create these alter egos. I mean, we were parodying it all, you know, these were other sides of myself: The Snake Oil Salesman, The Devil, The Mirrorball Man. It was a nice way of sending out decoys, because, deep down, I'm still a really nice guy. Honest. [12]

This sense of 'incompleteness' behind Bono's transformation mirrors much of how Bertolt Brecht saw the role of estrangement in his theatrical ideal, such that the 'ideal actor' is one who alternates between being and speaking about their character.

> The actor does not allow himself to become completely transformed on the stage into the character he is portraying. He is not Lear, Harpagon, Schweik; he shows them. He reproduces their remarks as authentically as he can; he puts forward their way of behaving to the best of his abilities and knowledge of men; but he never tries to persuade himself (and thereby others) that this amounts to a complete transformation. (Brecht 1964: 137)

Brecht's model is informed by what he learned about Asian theatre and its use of the mask. Of course, Bono's transformation is (loosely) not unlike an act of putting on a mask and, to this extent, the public nature of the act gives the audience a glimpse of what is underneath Mr. Macphisto's 'mask'. The capacity for creating an alienation device is one way in which Brecht envisaged the role of the mask in his theatre; by 'mask', I mean totemic costuming and make-up as well as bold, expressionistic stage gestures. Bono satisfies such criteria as the desirability of Mr. Macphisto depends upon a rhetorical (objective), rather than a naturalistic (subjective, sympathetic), interpretation of character. In Peter Brook's view, as discussed in *The Empty Space*,

> Alienation can work through antithesis; parody, imitation, criticism, the whole range of rhetoric is open to it. It is the purely theatrical method of dialectical exchange. Alienation is the language open to us today that is as rich in potentiality as verse: it is the possible device of a dynamic theatre in a changing world, and through alienation we could reach some of those areas that Shakespeare touched by his use of dynamic devices in language. Alienation can be very simple, it can be no more than a set of physical tricks. The first alienation device I ever saw was as a child, in a Swedish church; the collection bag had a spike on the end of it to nudge those of the congregation whom the sermon had sent to sleep. (Brook 1990: 82)

In what sense does this help answer the question as to why Bono needs to create an alienation device in the style of Mr. Macphisto? Firstly, I should explain that Brook is effectively reiterating what led Brecht to define late nineteenth and early twentieth century drama as 'culinary theatre' (see Chapter 5 for more information), except

that Brook was applying that critique to his own experience as a theatre practitioner during the late 1960's. Witnessing a theatre, whose audience merely smiled out of recognition for their knowledge of the European textual tradition, rather than considering the artistic merits or otherwise of a complacent, even moribund, dramatic culture, led him to define the term 'deadly theatre'. Much of this, I would argue, involves notions of familiarity in the sense that the representational problem facing many a high profile actor is a similar phenomenon to Bono's familiar presence in the public domain, as it potentially undermines his ability to convince as a rock performer.

> Building a career and artistic development do not necessarily go hand in hand; often the actor, as his career grows, begins to turn in work that gets more and more similar. It is a wretched story, and all the exceptions blur the truth. (Brook 1990: 32)

In which case, Mr. Macphisto could represent the 'spike' which can jolt the U2 concert audience into activating the kinds of critical faculty needed to 'unpick' (and then prioritise) the different layers in Bono's representation. How much, and in what way, the 'spike' was felt is suggested by an account, in the form of a news story in *The Sunday Telegraph*, by a music journalist named Chris Heath of a U2 concert at London's Wembley Stadium in August 1993, part of the same tour as the one being analysed.

> Bono returns in the guise of his latest alter ego, Mr. Macphisto, who wears a gold suit, white face paint and red horns, and who affects the manner of someone part devil, part faded cabaret singer and part decadent English aristocrat. It is now that Bono-Mr. Macphisto exercises his

next nightly habit of telephoning someone live from stage. Tonight, he will dial up Salman Rushdie. The call is made, the novelist-in-hiding answers and Bono-Mr. Macphisto mugs some slightly spiteful questions of "how miserable are you?" variety, before we realise that the situation is a sham. It is Salman Rushdie, but he has not only been expecting the call but is standing backstage. Eventually Rushdie appears. Mr. Macphisto kneels to kiss his hand, and they hug. Then Rushdie departs, and U2 play another song. It leaves an uneasy feeling. (Heath 2003)

If the response inferred by this news story is symptomatic of the concert audience in general, I would advance the view that this results from a performance 'consensus' amongst the audience – what they expect (desire) Bono to posit within the concert's performative frame – being disrupted by the extraordinary conditions created by Mr. Macphisto's presence. Of use here is Richard Schechner's discussion about an audience's ability to understand a performance being relational to their ability to interpret the set of theatrical conventions belonging to that performance genre. As an example, he refers to the various forms of Japanese theatre and, specifically, the term known as 'hana'. In Schechner's approximation, hana is essentially when a shared appreciation and informedness of "an art of distilled discipline" exists between performers and spectators;

> when it is there both performers and spectators are transported. But unless the spectators know what's going on through specific instruction in Noh, the hana is missing. (Schechner 1985: 144)

Understanding the relationship between hana and the use of an alienation device is central to one of Peter Brook's experiments cited in *The Empty Space*, in which he invited a male volunteer from amongst a group of students he was lecturing to join him on the stage, and for that student to read an extract to himself in silence from *The Investigation*, a play by Peter Weiss about life in the Auschwitz concentration camp during the Nazi occupation of Poland. The immediate effect was to invoke mild amusement amongst the audience, which Brook concluded was likely due to their not knowing how to respond to this silent performance. On being asked by Brook to read the passage (about death at the Auschwitz camp) again, but this time out loud, the mild amusement amongst the audience disappeared, giving way to stunned silence.

> Immediately the audience understood. It became one with him, with the speech – the lecture room and the volunteer who had come on to the platform vanished from sight. (Brook 1990: 28)

Hana, I feel, suggests the antithesis of theatre's capacity for making strange because, in its absence, the audience is forced to confront the unexpected, the *unfamiliar*. Its absence in this context means that the 'Bono' which the concert audience most (wish to) recognise has, for the time being, disappeared from view. With this in mind, it would make sense for Bono to adopt stagy trappings, as it established from the off that the level of playfulness in Mr. Macphisto's presence is 'upfront'. In this sense, Bono is following the actorly technique as described by David Z. Saltz.

> An actor, if asked, would unhesitatingly agree that most of the character's assertions are literally false. But this concession is beside the point. Assertions an actor makes

refer to the beliefs and desires set forth for the character. Like a press secretary, actors may make real assertions that express the beliefs of the characters they represent, and may be *committed*, while functioning within their roles, to defending those assertions. The audience does not hold actors off-stage to the assertions they make on-stage precisely because they understand what those assertions refer to. (Saltz 2000: 72)

As for the female speaker on the telephone, she cannot (should not) be aware that it is Bono who is calling her taxi firm, nor that she is a participant in a theatrical performance, and she can hardly be said to be 'in on the game'. As such, unwittingly involving her in this fashion brings the performative arc towards the realm of the grotesque. When applied to the theatre, Yana Meerzon explains that "the grotesque means to re-imagine and re-construct everything on-stage in order to destroy reality" (2003). One innovator of the theatrical grotesque was the Soviet Russian theatre director Vsevolod Meyerhold. Until the outbreak of the Russian revolution, he developed many of his directing ideas at Constantin Stanislavski's Moscow Art Theatre. After the revolution, he was appointed head of theatrical activities for the new Soviet state (he had been a member of the Bolshevik party). His non-verbal, highly visualised approach was to create an 'anti-realistic' environment on stage by drawing on theatrical forms which he saw as grotesque: for instance, pantomime, cabaret and circus acrobatics. He also sought to eliminate many of the formal conventions of the theatrical event, such as removing the stage curtain to give the audience the dramatic world prior to the formal entry of the actors on-stage. For Meyerhold, "Stage action is to catch the audience unprepared, so that its impact is increased".[13]

When this is considered in the context of the U2 concert, I am inclined to the view that the audience are inevitably compelled to witness the 'unprepared', as Bono's performance enters a contingent stage with Mr. Macphisto's telephone call, given that the performer (or, for that matter, his on-stage incarnation) can neither accurately predict the female speaker's responses nor allow him to properly prepare (pre-script) his own. The awareness that this woman is neither a willing, nor a witting, participant in this grotesque act may explain why it becomes too 'intolerable' a performance for her to endure, indicated by the provocation which forces her to abruptly terminate the call. However, having 'thrown open' his creation to the full contingency of the social world, Bono has now reached the apex of his transformation. By convention, this high point of the transformation should ordinarily dictate that Bono must now come back from this 'complete possession'.

8.9.4 Scene 4: 'Cooling down' Bono's performance as he re-joins U2

(Video cassette timings: approximately 1 hour, 43 minutes and 0 seconds to 1 hour, 46 minutes and 40 seconds)

Bono is finishing the song which follows his address – as Mr. Macphisto - to the audience. He turns around to face the other three members of U2, all of whom are behind him on the main stage. Then he turns to face the audience again and says, "Off with the horns, on with the show". As he does so, he removes the red horns from his head. Bono dances slowly onto the runway which connects the main and satellite stages and starts to sing the next song. While moving along the runway, he is followed by a large film camera, which is attached to a pivoted arm. The camera is filming him; in turn, this produces live action footage of his movements

which is broadcast on the screens situated around the main stage.
At one point, Bono pulls back his gold lamé jacket, unbuttons his
red puffy shirt and reveals the left side of his bare chest, pulling the
camera towards the region of his heart: the image of which appears
mediated on screen to the audience.

In *Between Theater and Anthropology*, Richard Schechner contrasts
the theories and practices of Western practitioners (such as
Constantin Stanislavski, Bertolt Brecht and Peter Brook) with the
rituals and traditions found in Eastern dramatic forms (such as Noh,
Kabuki and the ritual events of Bali and India). One particular focus
in his analysis is in explaining the changing state of the actor in the
course of different kinds of ritualistic and traditional performance.

> The performer goes from the "ordinary world" to the
> "performative world," from one time/space reference to
> another, from one personality to one or more others. He
> plays a character, battles demons, goes into trance, travels to
> the sky or under the sea or earth: he is transformed, enabled
> to do things "in performance" he cannot do ordinarily. But
> when the performance is over, or even as a final phase of the
> performance, he returns to where he started. (Schechner
> 1985: 126)

Within the frame of Bono's performance, I propose that it is possible
to see a similar trajectory: this began with his appearance as an
inclusive member of U2 in a pared-down setting, then the disrupting
of the image of the group as a performing unit, moving to a
transparent process of actorly transformation, and culminating in
'conjuring up' the theatrical grotesque with the telephone call to the
woman at the taxi firm. By a process of systematic analysis, I have
sought to establish that its value might be to re-awaken the concert

audience to the possibilities Bono possesses as the lead singer of U2 which have become 'hidden' under the welter of his familiarity in the public domain. Now, I propose that Bono has reached the point of 'complete possession' by Mr. Macphisto, precisely because he can now be seen turning the performative arc and back towards the U2 fold with its commensurate assertion of authority as their lead singer.

This part of the concert then serves as a border crossing back from the performative world of Mr. Macphisto to the less 'impure' world in which Bono's rock culture representation is no doubt desirably located. For this reason, he is providing the concert audience with yet more cues, but this time to direct their gaze firmly on the performance's 'final destination'. By way of approaching this matter, I refer to Willmar Sauter's description of a colleague's one-man performance he witnessed in a seminar room during a conference on reception research in Munich. The performance, which was based on a story about a Turkish tailor, is one occurrence of how an actor can bring the performative world to an end. Sauter begins his description by explaining the kinds of action which confirm that an actor has stepped inside the performative world.

> While he was talking, he removed his shoes and took off his sweater. So far I only thought that he would feel more comfortable this way, but I also remember that I was surprised by his fairly muscular body, which became more visible when he wore only a T-shirt. He also took off his socks, a move which went beyond my assumption that he wanted to be comfortable. He quickly jumped onto the table – again I was surprised at how easily he moved his body – and sat down cross-legged. (Sauter 2000: 70 – 71)

Using hands and fingers to suggest scissors, needles, thread and material indicated that this performer was still Sauter's colleague, while simultaneously performing his narrative in the style of someone sewing. "The references he evoked were nevertheless "real-life" actions, imitating the way we might imagine a tailor sewing" (Sauter 2000: 72). As the storytelling came to an end, the colleague brought closure to his performance by carrying out a set of distinctive gestures to show he had also finished the tailor's sewing activity, thus confirming that he is about to step back outside the performative frame. For Bono's part, removing the red horns from his head is a clear indicator that Bono is signalling that Mr. Macphisto's appearance is drawing to an end. Indeed, I further contend that this action indicates the moment when Bono rejects the necessity to wear this stage mask, thereby disengaging himself from this particular mode of characterisation. Consider this in the light of Richard Schechner's statement about the trajectory of actorly transformation, where "during the performance the performers are "taken somewhere" but at the end, often assisted by others, they are "cooled down" and reenter ordinary life just about where they went in" (1985: 125 – 126). In Bono's case, Mr. Macphisto's service as an alienation device began by disrupting the image of U2 as a performing unit; appropriately, then, that his removal of the red horns - his border crossing back from this on-stage incarnation – is accompanied by his gestural, and verbal, acknowledgment to the group's three other members. Of course, mediation by means of broadcasting to the screens around the concert venue remains; except, on this occasion, it is being deployed precisely to emphasise the antithesis of theatrical 'artifice'. As Bono draws the camera up against his bare chest, it seems to me that this represents a moment of total (naked, vulnerable) 'unmasking': a cue that he is re-intergrating himself into the unified

image of U2 and resuming his role as their lead singer once more back behind the microphone.

8.10 Concluding remarks

In the previous two case studies in this project, my analysis focused on a specific event from the social world which 'ruptured' the ability of the particular subject from rock or pop culture to sustain its originating representation. After having offered 'performances' in the media in which his group had previously only portrayed fluid codes of sexuality and gender through the various narrative worlds they constructed, the example of Neil Tennant of Pet Shop Boys considered how (far) and in what ways the public statement about his sexual orientation, a reflexively narrated story of his own 'lived' experience, could be reconciled in an aesthetic event (the pop concert). As for Richey Edwards of Manic Street Preachers, I explained how his group's representation in the public domain has come to be structured around his personal (but visibly mediated) experience of self-harm and eating disorders; in turn, I discussed how this has led to stories of 'performed' experience from the group's fan culture, which has consequently enabled the remaining members of the group to create an imaginary 'reunion' with Edwards in their concerts since he disappeared.

The problematic surrounding Bono's public representation does not relate to a specific, singular 'event'. Rather, it pivots around the fact that his public profile appears to cut across a broad range of cultural, social and political arenas. As such, many of these different modes of 'profiling' increasingly pervade the social world as a result of news and newsworthy stories in the media. In the process, these stories more than hint at an important break in the

attitudes of a wide spectrum of institutions towards his type of celebrity, particularly in lobbying Western governments to offer debt relief for developing countries. In addition, the media also circulate stories of expertise, some of which appear to be dependent, not on an *a priori* knowledge of his primary role as a leading rock performer with a highly successful group, but rather (for instance) his knowledge of the Scriptures and his personal religious faith. To this extent, resembling what the French actress Sarah Bernhardt did for her own profession in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, I have argued that Bono's profile can be said to have transcended its origins in rock culture in such a way that it is located in a broader Western cultural, social and political history, meeting Princes, Presidents and Popes, as well as multi-national business leaders, as though they were his peers. In Bono's opinion,

> As a performer, I understand it takes a picture of me with the Pope or a president to get debt cancellation on to the front pages. Otherwise it's just too obscure a melody line. (Bono quoted in Memmott 2001)

The consequence of such 'excessive' mediation has meant that his primary role as U2's lead singer has the potential to be lost under the welter of these competing discourses.   As the latter part of the chapter argued, this situation is further problematised given that familiar images of Bono inevitably flow in from the social world by dint of its delegates in the audience at a U2 concert. The imperative, therefore, is for Bono to rein in these myriad 'Bonos' and 're-awaken' the audience to the desirable possibilities of his role as U2's lead singer. As my analysis showed, one way he has been able to resolve this schism took the form of a theatrical event in which he publicly transformed into an on-stage incarnation known as Mr. Macphisto, the effect of which was to draw attention to the

'mask' of such a performance and the ideologies it represented in terms of 'artifice' and 'masquerade', as well as disrupting the notion of U2 as a performing unit. On being 'unmasked', the net result appeared to offer the audience a version of Bono, unfettered of all his attendant *extra-curricula* associations, and so able to re-assert his authoritative claim as the lead singer of U2 above all other 'Bonos'.

---

[1] Information and comments about the poll taken from Brockbank (2003).

[2] John Sweeney quoted on http://www.u2.com/homepage/news040701 _1_detail.html.

[3] Bill Clinton quoted on http://www.u2.com/homepage/news081100_detail.html.

[4] All quotes from Kwame Kwei-Armah are taken from my personal interview with him on 4 February 2004 at the Royal National Theatre of Great Britain, London.

[5] *Today with Des and Mel* is a daytime chat show on British television, featuring interviews with celebrity guests by the presenters Des O'Connor and Melanie Sykes.

[6] The spokesman is quoted on http://www.macphisto.net/article589.html.

[7] See http://www.u2.com/homepage/news110601_1_detail.html.

[8] Nirvana, and in particular their lead singer Kurt Cobain, are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

[9] It is poignant to note that, at the 1993 Grammy Awards ceremony (the first ceremony in which the institutional implications of Milli Vanilli could have had an impact), a large number of awards went to Eric Clapton for the soundtrack album of his performance on *MTV Unplugged*. This, in my opinion, signals the ultimate recuperation of rock culture's 'traditional' values, but for the kind of simulationist cultural economy which pursued Milli Vanilli. This viewpoint is made all the more persuasive given that Clapton had previously been neglected by the Grammys.

Although Clapton has been active in blues and rock since 1965, not least as a member of commercially successful groups, such as the Yardbirds and Cream, Clapton did not receive his first Grammy award until the 1990's.

[10] Lou Reed founded the rock group The Velvet Underground with John Cale, Sterling Morrison and Maureen Tucker in New York in 1965. The group soon became a part of Andy Warhol's Factory 'scene', which 'housed' some of the city's avant-garde artists, musicians and film-makers of the time. In 1970, Reed became a solo performer, working with the likes of David Bowie.

[11] There is only one instance of where less than the four same members appeared in live performance as U2. This happened when Clayton was unable to appear for health reasons at their concert at the Cricket Ground in Sydney on November 26 1993, the night before the concert being analysed in this chapter was performed. Clayton's place was taken by Stuart Morgan, his technician. (See http://www.u2faqs.com/live/#2, accessed on 18 December 2003.)

[12] Bono quoted in *Juice*, March 1996 (see http://www.yourblueroom.com/bono _stage.txt). The Snake Oil Salesman, The Devil and The Mirrorball Man refer to prototypes of Mr. Macphisto.

[13] See http://www.members.tripod.com/~afronord/biomx/meyer95.html.

9 Project conclusion

> Twenty years ago at Live Aid we asked for charity. Today at
> Live8 we want justice for the poor. The G8 meeting next
> week can take the first real step towards eradicating the
> extremes of poverty once and for all. We will not applaud half
> measures, or politics as usual. This must be a historic
> breakthrough. Today there will be noise and music and joy,
> the joy of exuberant possibility. On Friday there will be great
> silence as the world awaits your verdict.

> "An open letter to the leaders of the G8"
> Bob Geldof, 2 July 2005

On 2 July 2005, the Saturday before a summit of world leaders at
Gleaneagles in Scotland, Live8 took place: an event which
comprised simultaneous rock and pop concerts in all of the G8
countries – Britain, the USA, Russia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan
and Canada. Organised by Bob Geldof, it represented a successor
to his Live Aid event twenty years earlier on 13 July 1985, bringing
together many high profile rock and pop performers to again
highlight the extreme famine conditions in Africa which are currently
responsible for around 50,000 deaths per day. Unlike Live Aid,
however, its purpose was not to raise funds for emergency food aid
and investment in long-term famine relief projects: indeed, tickets
for the Live8 concerts were made available for free (via a series of
public lotteries). Rather, with trains, boats and coaches organised
to transport up to a million protestors to Scotland after the
concerts, Geldof insisted it should lead on to a rally in Edinburgh,
forty miles from Gleneagles, calling on the G8 leaders to cancel
debt, double aid packages and remove trade barriers which, he

argued, hinder sustainable development on the African continent. In Geldof's estimation, the G8 leaders "will only have the will to do so if millions of people show them enough is enough" (Bob Geldof quoted in Jury 2005: 4). Live8, then, was purportedly not in the business of promoting new albums, selling a range of merchandise or even raising charitable funds, although this may indeed have happened (and did happen in the experience of Live Aid). Instead, it represents a clear intent by rock and pop culture to envisage a 'performing' role for the audience away from the concert platform by calling on them to take the event's political demands, however virtuous or self-serving, to major institutions found in the social world. Even where opposition to Live8's ambitions was raised, such as in response to the conspicuous lack of Black performers at any of the concerts or the neo-colonial depiction of Africa as a continent entirely at the mercy of Western governments, these 'voices' were nevertheless 'performing' their critique in everyday fora.

The relative topicality of Live8 is also helpful in emphasising the distinctive contribution I seek to bring to the 'academy': to focus the level of scholarly investigation into rock and pop culture more pre-eminently upon the relationship between an aesthetic event and the social world. Mapped onto my approach in this specific project have been dramaturgical elements of narrative, spectacle and performance, chosen not just for their inherently theatrical characteristics, but also their resonances within the study of human activity by the social sciences. In the process, this has enabled a theoretical toolkit, spanning the distance between the 'staged' and the everyday, which has underpinned my case studies. This toolkit focused on three distinctive, but interconnected, areas of performance: performative uses of language, social behaviour from a dramaturgical perspective, and distinctive cultural practices in a society or culture.

My discussion of the performative stemmed from the work of J. L. Austin and his successors in this area of linguistics, in order to establish those instances of human activity which do not conform to formalised definitions of the theatrical or the dramatic, but which are nevertheless strongly suggestive of being some kind of performance. The cues indicating that a performative frame has been engaged are not always verbal or paralinguistic, but they can also be contextual: for instance, interviews given by rock or pop performers with the media can be considered as performative as they offer up a layer of representation which is being 'performed' for public consumption. It was also necessary for me to establish where the divisions between the social space the performative world lie. In doing so, I looked at Erving Goffman's theoretical work about social behaviour, which has persistently employed a technical dramaturgical approach. To this extent, his writings were productive in analysing instances where the subjects in the case studies could be seen 'playing with' images of life on-stage with life backstage from the theatre in order to delineate when they were 'performing' for public consumption and when they were 'expected' to be afforded privacy. Last but not least, Victor Turner's social drama model was aptly suited to each case study, given that it is possible to identify each of the model's four stages – breach, crisis, redress and reintegration - in the stories from rock and pop culture they tell. More specifically, the main plot element to these stories centres around some kind of representational schism and, in my line of argument, I sought to show how redressive action is pursued through this culture's distinct form of aesthetic event - the live concert – and how this type of event contributes to the reintegration of the originating, or another preferred, mode of representation.

So, in conclusion, to what extent have these theoretical concepts been informative about this relationship between the 'staged' and the everyday in rock and pop culture?

In Pet Shop Boys' originating representation, (mostly) Neil Tennant made use of the performative frames afforded by the creation or promotion of their product to narrate everyday stories about the changing nature of sexuality and gender codes in Britain since the 1980's. This approach was further embedded in the staging of their first concert tour in which (mostly) Tennant portrayed various on-stage characters in an account of how the free market economics espoused by the Thatcher government and the impact of the HIV and AIDS crisis impacted upon morality and other sociological discourses. Positing a story from Tennant's own 'lived' experience (his public confirmation that he was homosexual) inside Pet Shop Boys' frame (during a promotional media interview for the group) undermined the group's capacity for persisting with a mode of representation which effaced recognisable traces of his private identity. By analysing the staging of their first concerts in Britain which pursued this announcement, however, it is possible to observe how the group imposed theatrical notions of 'on-stage' and 'backstage' on the division between the social space and the performative world. The likely effect, I argued, was to 'instruct' the audience that the group's 'performed' star story acknowledged, but did not include access to, their private, 'lived' experience in the everyday.

Richey Edwards' reflexive foregrounding of actions which dealt with traumatic and traumatising issues found in the social world could be considered performative where they were 'performed' as part of Manic Street Preachers' public profile. (Conversely, where the experience was 'lived' in terms of being psychologically

dysfunctional, the same actions were not intended to be audience-facing.) Meanwhile, the iconic potency of Edwards' aesthetically evaluable acts 'interlocked' with related phenomena in the social world, as well as reported tragedies involving other celebrities or members of the public. As such, the complex way in which Edwards' narrative structures were layered into Manic Street Preachers' 'repertoire' meant that his disappearance without trace in 1995 was problematic on two counts. Firstly, attaching their creations so firmly to Edwards' personal experiences, and the sometimes visceral nature of their articulation, meant that the group's other members would need to 'reconfigure' the staging of their subsequent concerts, given that this is where his absence was most conspicuous. For their part, the group's fan culture were denied the 'here and now' cathartic effect which Edwards' public profiling of self-harm and eating disorders had offered prior to his disappearance. The situation reflected by these two observations has ensured a constant circulation of the images associated, resulting in a variety of performative modes expressed in social spaces of the everyday. One significant outcome of this discourse has been its ability to testify to a 'collusion' between the fan culture and the group's three remaining members in creating an imaginary 'reunion' with Edwards in the concerts since he disappeared.

Of all the case study subjects, Bono's presence in the social world would appear to be the most pervasive, due to his increasingly widespread associations with a diversity of social, political and cultural institutions and agencies. This, in turn, has escalated his public representation to the extent that it is no longer restricted to its rock culture origins, given that he meets with presidents, popes and princes as his peers. Where his public work, at least in the higher echelons of the Western world's political classes, cannot rely upon an *a priori* knowledge of his involvement with U2, stories of

expertise exist which offer insights into how Bono might appear in the 'back region' of his private social activity, such as his personal (Christian) faith. My assumption, however, has been that his preferred mode of representation is as the lead singer of U2. Therefore, the specific intention behind my analysis of a U2 concert was to map how he might re-assert his authority as the 'frontman' of one of the world's most successful, most recognisable rock groups. I considered this problematic in conjunction with a range of discourses (relating to the music industry, the historical and topical role of the theatrical in rock culture, and other relevant concepts from performance studies), as well as taking into account the inevitability that the audience would bring a knowledge and awareness of Bono's familiarity in the everyday into the concert venue. Furthermore, the analysis incrementally mapped the concert's use of a theatrical event, and identified a process which correlates with my description of 'applied Brechtianism' from Chapter 3. In other words, although theatrical concepts of artifice and mask – common to playful or subversive trends in the historical experience of rock culture – were deployed, the process of Bono's transformation into Mr. Macphisto can, in the end, be seen to have 'instructed' the audience in privileging his rock culture status above all other 'Bonos' in the public domain.

Given this project's desire to maintain a performance studies perspective throughout, what has surprised me most has been the major role played by the media, and mediation in general, in my case studies. Far from undermining the case studies' dramaturgical aspects, mediation can ensure that the appropriate spatial and temporal arrangements are in place, not just in enhancing existing forms of aesthetic event (theatre, video art etc), but also in facilitating sites for less obvious, as well as innovative, performances, which Victor Turner would say belonged in a liminal

place, due to their existence in a 'social limbo', taking everyday phenomena and recontextualising it as a distinctive 'rite' in a specific culture.

As stated earlier, the media - particularly in the form of promotional interviews - was crucial to Neil Tennant's cultivation of Pet Shop Boys' effacement of traces of private identity in all of their interactions with the public domain. At the same time, using a magazine interview arranged to promote his group determined that Tennant's public confirmation of his sexual orientation within it would be understood as performative, and therefore belonging to the group's repertoire of images. The traits of a more recent media form – a video art installation - was central to my argument that Sam Taylor-Wood's staging for their *Somewhere* concerts at London's Savoy Theatre constituted a redressive action in dealing with the representational schism caused by Tennant's announcement. By showing him, as well as Chris Lowe, appear as their on-stage incarnation (corporeal selves) alongside, and interacting with, their off-stage versions (video alternates) in the same performance site, this served to emphasise to the concert audience that, although Pet Shop Boys had a private life, it did not form part of their 'performed' star story.

In the case of Richey Edwards, the media has been crucial in ensuring his narrative, with the private (even taboo) issues it refers to, is articulated and discussed in the everyday. After his disappearance, it has been possible to observe how the media 'pushed' performance into social spaces by allowing testimony of certain phenomena relating to Edwards representation to be told and negotiated. In the process, I am persuaded that Manic Street Preachers' fan culture is consumed by a spectacle, which Guy Debord insisted (and as I explained in Chapters 5 and 7) were due

to the colonisation of the everyday by the media and other cultural industries. This proposition rest upon my observation that social relations appear governed by, and to have resulted in, the 'resuscitation' of events these images embody. As technology has advanced, the Internet has had an enabling role in allowing new kinds of performance to be created and observed. To this end, my case study looked at the website of an American fan of Manic Street Preachers called Vivian Campbell. On her website, Campbell deploys different performative modes - autobiography, poetry, journal writing - which testify to the extent to which, in her daily life, 'Edwards' (as media icon) has impacted upon many of her routinised structures of living. An important aspect of her journal – which chronicles her journey to, and experience of, her first Manic Street Preachers concert some years after Edwards disappeared – is that it too becomes a performance whose purpose, on behalf of her audience (the website's visitors, the wider fan culture, Richey Edwards *in absentia*) is to scrutinise the event to determine how far the group's three remaining members 'correctly' acknowledge their disappeared colleague. The major consequence of this discourse is its capacity for demonstrating that the spectacle is sufficiently intense for certain constituents of the fan culture to 'conspire' in the creation of an imaginary 'reunion' with Edwards.

My argument that Bono has become familiar in the everyday is predicated on the (valued) assumption that his public representation has generated 'excessive' mediation of his activities in various social, political and cultural arenas. The more that Bono's profile is observed outside of its rock culture origins, therefore, the more that stories of experience and expertise proliferate in the media. Because the media is not an homogenous entity, however, the presence of multiple 'Bonos' can conflict with the specific demands of the entertainment industry. For his part, it can also be

seen how these institutionalised associations might hinder his persuasiveness as U2's lead singer, the prevalence of which is essential to the efficacy of his performance during U2's concerts. Simultaneously, the media images Bono has 'created', and the stories they tell, can be expected to be known by any U2 concert audience, who are, after all, delegates from the social world. That said, in the course of my analysis of a particular U2 concert, the use of mediation (broadcasting real time, live footage on video screens around the stadium-sized venue) can be seen to have offered what Bertolt Brecht conceptualised as 'interruptive' strategies by giving the audience sufficient cues to their being presented with a grotesque version of Bono, one which 'breaks up' the notion of U2 as a unified commodity. As the portrayal comes to an end, though, Bono resorts to mediation once more to maximise the opportunity for the audience to witness his return to the U2 fold, privileging his rock culture representation above all others.

As I bring this project to a close, it is important to state that my primary wish for this project has been to argue against limiting the investigation into rock and pop culture to musicology or media studies, as has tended to be the case in the past. At the same time, I have sought to highlight the rich source of material from rock and pop culture which is available to the study of human activity by both performance studies and the social sciences, separately and collaboratively, as well as new forms of what can constitute a theatrical, dramatic or aesthetic event. At least in the light of the Live8 event alone, I conclude by accentuating the value in contemplating the evolving state of the relationship which rock and pop culture can, and does, facilitate between the 'staged' and the everyday.

Bibliography

Abercrombie, Nicholas and Brian Longhurst (1998) *Audiences: A Sociological Theory of Performance and Imagination*, London: Sage

Adams, Tim (2002) "Play it again, Sam", *The Observer*, 28 April: accessed online at http://observer.guardian.co.uk/print/ 0,3858,4402890-02280,00.html on 21 May 2004

Aristotle (1996) *Poetics*, Malcolm Heath trans., London: Penguin Books

Ashead – Lansdale, Janet (2000) in Lizbeth Goodman and Jane De Gay (eds.) *The Routledge Reader in Politics and Performance*, London: Routledge, pp. 183 - 188

Auslander, Philip (1992) *Presence and Resistance: Postmodernism and Cultural Politics in Contemporary American Performance*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Minnesota Press

Auslander, Philip (1997) *From Acting to Performance: Essays in Modernism and Postmodernism*, London and New York: Routledge

Auslander, Philip (1999) *Liveness: Performance in a mediatized culture*, London and New York: Routledge

Austin, J. L. (1976) *How To Do Things With Words – Second Edition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Balfour, Ian (1991) "Revolutions Per Minute or the Pet Shop Boys Forever" in Jean-Claude Guédon ed. *Surfaces*, vol. 1, Montréal: Les

Presses de l'Université de Montréal: accessed online at
http://www.pum.umontreal.ca/revues/surfaces/vol1/balfour.html
on 16 July 2001

Barber, Lynn (1994) "The Not Very Innocent Neil Tennant", *The Daily Telegraph*, 10 September, *Telegraph Magazine*, pp. 39 – 43

Bateson, Gregory (2004) "A Theory of Play and Fantasy" in Henry Bial (ed.) *The Performance Studies Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 121 – 131

Baudrillard, Jean (1983) *Simulations*, Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman trans., New York: Semiotext(e)

Bellos, Alex (1996) "Desperately seeking Richey", *The Guardian*, 26 January: accessed online at http://www.crosswinds.net/~aesthetic debris/press on 2 November 2000

Benjamin, Walter (1991) *Illuminations*, ed. H. Arendt, trans. H. Zohn, New York: Schocken Books

Benveniste, Emile (1971) "Analytical Philosophy and Language" in *Problems of General Linguistics*, vol.1, trans. M. E. Meeks, Coral Gables, Fl.: University of Miami Press

Berghaus, Günter ed. (1998) "On Ritual", *Performance Research*, vol. 3, no. 3

Bernstein, Abbie (1999) "Ray Winstone: Dark Hobbies", *Back Stage West*, 9 December: accessed online at http://www.copperlily.com/ AboutRayWinstone/BackStageWest.html on 8 June 2004

Best, Steven and Douglas Kellner (1998) "Debord and the Postmodern Turn: New Stages of the Spectacle": accessed online at http://www.uta.edu/huma/illuminations/kell17.htm on 22 June 2004

Bial, Henry ed. (2004) *The Performance Studies Reader*, London and New York: Routledge

Bond, Jack dir. (1988) *It Couldn't Happen Here*, EW 1104, Picture Music International

Boniface, Susie and Ben Todd (2004) "Me and Beckham, by Rebecca Loos", *Sunday Mirror*, 11 April: accessed online at http://www.sundaymirror.co.uk/news/news/tm_objectid=14136861&method=full&siteid=106694&headline=me-and-beckham--by-rebecca-loos-name_page.html on 10 June 2004

Bono (1999) "Introduction by Bono" in *The Book of Psalms* (author unknown), Edinburgh: Canongate Books, pp. vii – xii

Bono (date unknown) "World debt angers me": accessed online at http://www.jubilee2000uk.org/jubilee2000/comment/bono1512.html on 24 November 2003

Bono and Bill Gates (2005) "Demand a better deal for the poor of the world in 2005", *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 January, p. 20

Bosch, Paul F. and André Lavergne (1997) "Quem Quaeritis Trope": accessed online at http://www.worship.ca/docs/l_quem.html on 1 July 2004

Bowie, David (1973) *Pin Ups*, EMI, catalogue number 5219030

Boyd, Brian (2002) "Preachers lay Richey to rest at last", *The Irish Times*, 30 January: accessed online at http://www.richeyedwards.net/articles/30jan02irishtimes.html on 10 February 2005

Bracewell, Michael (1995) "Pop perfection", *The Guardian*, July 15, *The Guardian Weekend*, pp. 12 – 17

Bracewell, Michael (1997) *England Is Mine: Pop Life in Albion from Wilde to Goldie*, London: Harper Collins

Bracewell, Michael (2002) "The Art of Sam Taylor-Wood" in Michael Bracewell, Clare Carolin, Jeremy Millar and Sam Taylor-Wood, *Sam Taylor-Wood*, Göttingen: Steidl, pp. 9 – 11 (non-photographic pages)

Bracewell, Michael (2003) *The Nineties: when surface was depth*, London: Flamingo, pp. 35 – 40

Bradfield, James Dean & Richey Edwards (1994) "4st 7lb" on *The Holy Bible*, EPC 4774212, Epic

Branaman, Ann (1997) "Goffman's Social Theory" in Ann Branaman and Charles Lemert eds. *The Goffman Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, pp. xlv – lxxxii

Braun, Edward (1998) *Meyerhold: A Revolution in Theatre*, Iowa City IA: University of Iowa Press

Brecht, Bertolt (1964) *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. and trans. John Willett, London: Methuen

Brockbank, Max (2003) "Heroes 2003: And the Winner is...": accessed online at http://www.time.com/time/europe/hero/poll_result.html on 17 January 2004

Brook, Peter (1990) *The Empty Space*, Harmondsworth: Penguin
Bunting, Madeleine and Oliver Burkeman (2002) "Pro Bono", *The Guardian*, *G2*, 18 March, pp. 2 – 3

Burston, Paul (1994) "Honestly", *Attitude*, August: accessed online at http://www. geocities.com/verymary94/attitude94.html on 2 June 2004

Butler, Judith (1993) *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*, London and New York: Routledge

Butler, Judith (1997) *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*, Stanford: Stanford University Press

Campbell, Vivian (1995) "Richey's Birthday": accessed online at http://mywritings.richeyedwards.net/poetry.html on 2 May 2001

Campbell, Vivian (2000a) "Five Years and 24 hours (more or less), to see 'em": accessed online at http://mywritings.richeyedwards. net /journal.html on 2 May 2001

Campbell, Vivian (2000b) "My Story – How I Discovered Richey and the Manic Street Preachers": accessed online at http://mywritings. richeyedwards.net/mystory.html on 2 May 2001

Campbell, Vivian (2000c) "Richey Days": accessed online at http://mywritings.richeyedwards.net/poetry.html on 2 May 2001

Capozzoli Jr., Michael A. (2001) "Neil Tennant Interview": accessed online at http://www.geocities.com/mcapozzolijr/petshopboys.html on 14 May 2004

Carlson, Marla (2000) "Acting and Answerability" in David Krasner ed., *Method Acting Reconsidered: Theory, Practice, Future*, London: Macmillan, pp. 81 – 96

Carlson, Marvin (1994) "Invisible Presences: Performance Intertextuality", *Theatre Research International*, vol. 19, pp. 111 – 117

Carlson, Marvin (1996) *Performance: a critical introduction*, London and New York: Routledge

Carolin, Clare (2002) "Interview with Sam Taylor-Wood" in Michael Bracewell, Clare Carolin, Jeremy Millar and Sam Taylor-Wood, *Sam Taylor-Wood*, Göttingen: Steidl, pp. 2 – 7 (non-photographic pages)

Carter, Kelly (2001) "Downey, John forge a bond from battles", *USA Today*, 17 December: accessed online at http://www.usatoday.com /life/music/2001-12-17-downey.htm on 19 April 2004

Chapman, John and Dennis Rice (2001a) "The Day I Had To Kill My Darling Daughter", *Daily Express*, 15 May, pp. 1, 10 – 11

Chapman, John and Dennis Rice (2001b) "Desperate life of tragic Manics star", *Daily Express*, 15 May, pp. 10 – 11

Chatterton, Mark (2004) *U2 The Ultimate Encyclopaedia*, London: Firefly Publishing

Cheal, David (1997) "West End wonders", *The Daily Telegraph*, 12 June: accessed at http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/ Performance/4741/savoypress.html on 10 June 2004

Clark, Herbert H. and Thomas B. Carlson (1982) "Hearers and Speech Acts", *Language*, vol. 58, pp. 332 - 373

Closs, Larry (1993) "They're Out. But Not Very", *Out*, issue unknown: accessed online at http://www.petshopboys.net/html/ interviews/othermag17.html on 12 September 2001

Cole, David (1975) *The Theatrical Event: A* Mythos*, A Vocabulary, A Perspective*, Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press

Connor, Stephen (1996) "Postmodern performance" in Patrick

Campbell (ed.) *Analysing Performance: A Critical Reader*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 107 – 124

Counsell, Colin (1996) *Signs of Performance: An Introduction to Twentieth-Century Theatre*, London: Routledge

Croydon, Margaret (1974) *Lunatics, Lovers and Poets: The Contemporary Experimental Theatre*, New York: McGraw-Hill

Curtis, Jim (1987) *Rock Eras: Interpretations of Music and Society 1954 – 1984*, Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press

Dalton, Stephen (1997) "Still-life in a disco", *The Times*, 7 June: accessed at http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/ Performance/4741/savoypress.html on 10 June 2004

Day, M.A. (2001) Personal communication quoted in Jacqueline Tivers (2002) "Performing heritage: the use of live 'actors' in heritage presentations", *Leisure Studies*, vol. 21, no. 3 – 4, July – October, pp. 187 – 200

Debord, Guy (1994) *Society of the Spectacle*, New York: Zone Books

Debord, Guy (2002) "Perspectives for conscious alterations in everyday life [1961]" in Ben Highmore ed. *The Everyday Life Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 237 – 245

Derrida, Jacques (1988) *Limited Inc.*, Evanstown, Ill.: Northwestern University Press

Diamond, Elin (1997) *Unmasking Mimesis: Essays on Feminism and Theater*, London and New York: Routledge

Dorment, Richard (2001) "Spirit of the age", *The Daily Telegraph*, 22 December: accessed online at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/2001/12/22/barich.xml on 22 May 2004

Douglas, Mary (1966) *Purity and Danger*, London: Routledge

Douglas, Susan J. (1997) 'Girls 'n' spice: all things nice?', *The Nation*, 25 August and 1 September 1997, pp. 21 – 24

Dunphy, Eamon (1988) *Unforgettable Fire: The Story of U2*, London: Penguin Books

Eade, John and Michael J. Sallnow eds. (1991) "Introduction", *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage*, London: Routledge

Eco, Umberto (1977) "Semiotics of Theatrical Performance", *TDR*, vol. 21, pp. 107 – 117

Ellis, Samantha (2003) "Look Back in Anger, May 1956", *The Guardian*, 21 May: accessed online at http://www.guardian.co.uk/print/0,3858,4673413-111384,00.html on 27 May 2004

Fallon, B. P. (1993) *Zooropa '93*, Wellingborough: Propaganda

Felman, Shoshana (1983) *The Literary Speech Act: Don Juan with Austin, or Seduction in Two Languages*, trans. Catherine Porter, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press

Field, Marcus (2003) "Stagestruck", *The Independent on Sunday*, 7 September, *LifeEtc.*, pp. 1 - 2

Fish, Stanley (1980) *Is There a Text in This Class?*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Flett, Kathryn (1997) "The art of being boring", *The Observer*, 8 June: accessed at http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Performance/4741/savoypress.html on 10 June 2004

Fowles, Jib (1992) *Starstruck: Celebrity Performers and the American Public*, Washington: Smithsonian Institute Press

Fraser, Russell A. (1976) "Introduction: The English Drama from Its Beginnings to the Closing of the Theatres" in Russell A. Fraser and

Norman Rabkin eds. *Drama of the English Renaissance Volume 1 The Tudor Period*, New York: Macmillan USA

Frith, Maxine (2005) "Police scramble to draw up plans to deal with protestors after Geldof's march plea", *The Independent*, 2 June 2005, pp. 4 -5

Frith, Simon (1988) "Pretty Vacant – John Barry' in *Music For Pleasure – Essays in the Sociology of Pop*, Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 146 – 147

Frith, Simon (1996) *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Gallagher, Stephen (2004) "Blues for Mister Kwame", *Plays International*, Vol. 19 No 7 April/May, pp. 12 – 13

Gallagher, Stephen (2005) "De nombreuses routes pour La Mecque: La diaspora africaine en Grande Bretagne dans la pièces de Kwame Kwei-Armah et Roy Williams", *Ubu – Scènes d'Europe*, No. 34, January, pp. 54 – 58

Garside, Juliette (2001) "How I helped Downey get out of rehab", *Sunday Herald*, 12 August: accessed online at http://www.sundayherald.com/print17586 on 19 April 2004

Gassner, John ed. (1987) *Medieval and Tudor Drama*, New York: Applause Theatre & Cinema Book Publishers

Gayford, Martin (2001) "Ordinary and sublime", *The Daily Telegraph*, 28 November: accessed online at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml;$sessionid$WRUDBP4S

DIDIXQFIQMFSFGGAVCBQ0IV0?xml=/arts/2001/11/29/bagay28.xm
l on 22 May 2004

Gayford, Martin (2002) "The moving picture show", *The Daily Telegraph*, 20 April 2002: accessed online at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.Jhtml?xml=/arts/2002/04/20/basam20.xml on 21 May 2004

Geddes, Jane ed. (2003) "St Albans Psalter: Page 51 Commentary": accessed online at http://www.abdn.ac.uk/stalbanspsalter/english/commentary/page051.shtml on 1 July 2004

Geldof, Bob (2005) "An open letter to the leaders of the G8", *The Independent*, 2 July 2005, p. 1

Gendler, J. Ruth ed. (1991) *Changing Light: The Eternal Cycle of Night and Day*, New York: Harper Collins

Gill, John (1995) *Queer Noises: Male and Female Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century Popular Music*, London: Cassell

Gledhill, Christine ed. (1991) *Stardom: Industry of Desire*, London: Routledge

Glover, David ed. (1999) 'Diana and Democracy', *New Formations*, no. 36

Goffman, Erving (1961) *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Hospital Patients and Other Inmates*, Harmondsworth: Penguin

Goffman, Erving (1974) *Frame Analysis*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday

Goffman, Erving (1983) "The Interaction Order", *American Sociological Review*, no. 48

Goffman, Erving (1990) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, London: Penguin Books

Goldman, Albert (1992) *Sound Bites*, New York: Random House

Goodman, Lizbeth (1996) "Feminisms and theatres: canon fodder and cultural change" in Patrick Campbell ed. *Analysing Performance: A Critical Reader*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 19 – 42

Goodwin, Andrew (1993) *Dancing in the Distraction Factory: Music Television and Popular Culture*, London: Routledge

Gracyk, Theodore (1996) *Rhythm and Noise: An Aesthetics of Rock*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press

Gregson, Stephen (1993) "Standby For Transmission – U2's Zoo TV", *Theatre Ireland*, vol. 31, pp. 25 – 27

Grieve, Lara (2001) "Sam Taylor-Wood": accessed online at http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/news_comment/artistsinprofile/taylorwood.shtml on 3 June 2004

Griffin, Annie dir. (1997) *Pet Shop Boys – Somewhere Live at the Savoy*, GEG 201, Eagle Rock Entertainment Plc

Grossberg, Lawrence (1993) 'The media economy of rock culture: cinema, postmodernity and authenticity' in Simon Frith, Andrew Goodwin and Lawrence Grossberg eds. *Sound and Vision: The Music Video Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 185 – 209

Hall, Russell (1997) "Alice Cooper", *Goldmine*, 23: 21, pp. 14 – 15

Hanhardt, John G. (2000) "The Worlds of Nam June Paik": accessed online at http://www.guggenheim.org/exhibitions/past_ exhibitions/paik/paik_top.html on 7 June 2004

Harrison, Andrew (1997) "Les Miserables", *The Guardian*, 31 May, *The Guide*, pp. 4 – 5

Hastrup, Kirsten (1998) "Theatre as a site of passage: some reflections on the magic of acting" in Felicia Hughes-Freeland ed. *Ritual, Performance, Media*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 29 – 45

Hawkins, Stan (1997) "The Pet Shop Boys: Musicology, masculinity and banality" in Sheila Whiteley ed., *Sexing The Groove: Popular Music and Gender*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 118 – 133

Heath, Chris ed. (1988) *Pet Shop Boys, annually*, Manchester: World International Publishing Ltd.

Heath, Chris ed. (1989) *Pet Shop Boys on tour MCMLXXXIX*, London: Brockum

Heath, Chris (1990) *Pet Shop Boys, Literally*, London: Viking

Heath, Chris (1993) "Bono calling Salman, Sarajevo and Elvis", *The Sunday Telegraph*, 15 August 1993: accessed at http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/infos/ information/electronic/elect_t.html on 30 November 2000

Heath, Chris ed. (1997) *Pet Shop Boys Somewhere*, London: PSB Partnership

Heath, Chris (2001) "Pet Shop Boys 1992 – 1994" issued with the audio recording Pet Shop Boys *Very/Further listening 1992 – 1994*, 7243 5 30511 2 9, Parlophone

Heath, Stephen (1986) "Joan Riviere and the Masquerade," in *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. Victor Burgin, James Donald and Cora Kaplan, New York: Methuen, pp. 45 – 61

Hentschel, Martin (2000) "Photography, painting, film: Sam Taylor-Wood and the Inflection of Art Forms", David Britt trans., in Martin Hentschel, Michael O'Pray and Sam Taylor-Wood, *Sam Taylor-Wood: Third Party*, Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Publishers, pp. 6 – 23

Hibbert, Tom (1995) "Dear John", *The Mail on Sunday*, 9 April, p. 32

Highmore, Ben (2002a) *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction*, London and New York: Routledge

Highmore, Ben (2002b) "Introduction: Questioning everyday life" in Ben Highmore ed. *The Everyday Life Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 1 – 34

Hoare, Philip (1998) "Noel Coward: Twentieth Century Star": accessed online at http://www.emirecords.co.uk/noelcoward/man.html on 26 May 2004

Holloway, Lester (2005) "Bob Geldof picks hideously white line-up for Africa gig": accessed online at http://www.blink.org.uk/Description.asp?key=7527&grp=18&cat=183 on 3 June 2005

Horton, Wendy and Jo Manning (2000) "Still crazy about Richey after all these years", *South Wales Echo*, 1 February: accessed online at http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Theater/2955/articles/1feb00southwalesecho.html on 2 May 2001

Hoskyns, Barney (1998) *Glam! Bowie, Bolan and the Glitter Rock Revolution*, Faber & Faber: London

Hoskyns, Barney (2002) "Rock's last great star", *The Observer*, 20 October: accessed online at http://observer.guardian.co.uk/magazine/story/0,11913,815352,00.html on 27 June 2004

Houlbrooke, Ralph ed. (1989) *Death, Ritual and Bereavement*, London: Routledge

Hurt, Charles (2002) "Helms Brings Hollywood to the Hill", *Charlotte Observer*, March 14: accessed online at http://bellsouthpwp.net/w/a/watt4u2/bono_and_jesse_helms on 3 April 2005

Hutchins, Christina (1999) "Poetry as Performativity and Excess: An Essay on Politics and Anti-foundational Academic Discourse, and Seven Poems on Sedimentation", *Paideusis*, Volume 2: accessed online at http://www.geocities.com/paideusis/e1n2ch.rtf on 22 June 2004

Issacharoff, Michael (1989) *Discourse as Performance*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press

Jackson, Alan (1996) "A year after Richey James Edwards disappeared, the fate of the Manic Street Preachers' guitarist is still unknown", publication and date unknown: accessed online at http://www.dcs.warwick.ac.uk/~esweb/richeyarticle.html on 2 May 2001

Jameson, Frederic (1998) *Brecht and Method*, London and New York Verso

Januszczak, Waldemar (2004) "Oh, come let us adore him...", *The Sunday Times*, 25 April, *Culture*, pp. 8 - 9

Jarman, Derek dir. (1992) *Highlights – Pet Shop Boys on tour*, MC 2080, Picture Music International

Jenks, Chris (2003) *Transgression*, London and New York: Routledge

Johnson, Richard (1999) "Exemplary Differences – Mourning (and not mourning a princess)" in Adrian Kear and Deborah Lynn Steinberg eds., *Mourning Diana: Nation, Culture and the Performance of Grief*, London: Routledge, pp. 15 – 39

Jones, Patrick (2001) *Fuse*, Cardiff: Parthian Books

Jury, Louise (2005) "Geldof urges millions to join 'long walk to justice'", *The Independent*, 1 June 2005, pp. 4 - 5

Kaplan, E. Ann (1987) *Rocking Around the Clock: Music Television, Postmodernism, and Consumer Culture*, London and New York: Methuen

Katz, Jerrold J. (1977) *Propositional Structure and Illocutionary Force*, Hassocks, Sussex: Harvester Press

Kear, Adrian and Deborah Lynn Steinberg (1999) "Ghost Writing" in Adrian Kear and Deborah Lynn Steinberg eds., *Mourning Diana: Nation, Culture and the Performance of Grief*, London: Routledge, pp. 1 – 14

Keegan, William (2000) "What British manufacturing?", *The Observer*, 19 March: accessed online at http://www.guardian.co.uk/print/0,3858,3975675-103450,00.html on 27 May 2004

Keegan, William (2001) "Manufacturing must make it", *The Observer*, 11 February: accessed online at http://observer.guardian.co.uk/business/story/0,6903,36234,00.html on 27 May 2004

Kershaw, Baz (1994) "Framing the audience for theatre" in Russell Keat, Nigel Whiteley and Nicholas Abercrombie eds. *The Authority of the Consumer*, London and New York: Routledge

Kershaw, Baz (1999) *The Radical in Performance: Between Brecht and Baudrillard*, London: Routledge

Kirby, Michael (1995) "On acting and not-acting" in Phillip B. Zarrilli ed., *Acting (Re)Considered*, London: Routledge, pp. 43 – 58

Kirk, Kris (1987) "Design for living", *Melody Maker*, 3 October, pp. 30 – 31

Koestenbaum, Wayne (1996) *Jackie Under My Skin: Interpreting an Icon*, New York: Penguin

Krasner, David (2000) "I Hate Strasberg: Method Bashing in the Academy" in David Krasner ed., *Method Acting Reconsidered: Theory, Practice, Future*, London: Macmillan, pp. 3 – 42

Kreger, Kristin (1997) "The Spanish Inquisition 1478 - 1834": accessed online at http://campus.northpark.edu/history/ WebChron/WestEurope/SpanInqui.html on 28 May 2004

Kristeva, Julia (1980) *Desire in Language*, ed. Leon Roudiez, trans. T. Gora, A. Jardine and Leon Roudiez, New York: Columbia University Press

Kull, Kalevi (1998) "On semiosis, Umwelt, and semiosphere", *Semiotica*, vol. 120 (3/4), pp. 299 – 310

Kureishi, Hanif and Jon Savage eds. (1995) *The Faber Book of Pop*, London: Faber & Faber

Lahr, John (1991) *Dame Edna Everage and the Rise of Western Civilization: Backstage with Barry Humphries*, London: Bloomsbury

Laing, Dave (1991) "A voice without a face: popular music and the phonograph in the 1890's", *Popular Music*, vol. 10: 1, pp. 1 – 9

Larcombe, Duncan (2001) "Dad Helped Girl Take Her Life": accessed online at http://www.thesun.co.uk/news/13687867 on 15 May 2001

Lefebvre, Henri (2004) "The Media Day" in *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, trans. Stuart Elden and Gerald Moore, London and New York: Continuum, pp. 46 - 50

Leffingwell, Edward (2003) "Sam Taylor-Wood at Matthew Marks – New York – "The Passion"": accessed online at http://articles.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1248/is_3_91/ai_98 541221 on 21 May 2004

Lemert, Charles (1997) "Goffman" in Ann Branaman and Charles Lemert eds. *The Goffman Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, pp. ix – xliii

Lewis, Gilbert (1982) *Day of Shining Red: An Essay on Understanding Ritual*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Longhurst, Brian (1995) 'History, Politics and Sexuality' in *Popular Music and Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press

MacAloon, John J. (1984) "Introduction: Cultural Performances, Culture Theory" in John J. MacAloon ed. *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*, Philadelphia: The Institute for the Study of Human Issues, pp. 1 – 15

Mallet, David dir. (1994) *U2: Zoo TV Live from Sydney*, PolyGram Video, catalogue number 6311503

Marranca, Bonnie (1977) *The Theatre of Images*, New York: Drama Book Specialists

Maus, Fred E. (2001) "Glamour and evasion: the fabulous ambivalence of the Pet Shop Boys", *Popular Music*, October, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 379 - 394

McCormick, Neil (2000) "Back on song", 28 October: accessed online at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/et?ac=00243047 3400780&rtmo=gw7Gnjku.../tlbono28.media/beep.txt on 17 January 2004

McCormick, Neil (2005) "The anger behind Geldof's smile", *The Daily Telegraph*, 2 June 2005, p. 13

McGinty, Stephen (2004) "Bono still hasn't found what he is looking for: debt relief", *The Scotsman*: accessed online at http://www.u2world.com/news/article.php3?id_article=20551 on 3 April 2004

Meerzon, Yana (2003) "Forgotten Hollywood: Michael Chekhov's Hollywood Film Practice viewed through Prague School Aesthetics, *Toronto Slavic Quarterly*, No. 4: accessed online at http://www.utoronto.ca/slavic/tsq/04/meerzon04.html on 28 December 2003

Memmott, Mark (2001) "Rocker leads drive to lift Third World debt", 15 June: accessed online at http://www.usatoday.com/money/ general/2001-06-14-bono.htm on 16 August 2001

Mersch, Dieter (2003) "Writing and event", *Semiotica*, 143 – 1/4, pp. 61 – 68

'Miles' (1997) "Pet Shop Boys 'Somewhere' - Savoy Theatre, June 5th 1997": accessed online at http://www.geocities.com/Sunset Strip/Performance/4741/savoy_fanrevs.html on 10 June 2004

Millar, Jeremy (2002) "The Unnaturalness of Reality" in Michael Bracewell, Clare Carolin, Jeremy Millar and Sam Taylor-Wood, *Sam Taylor-Wood*, Göttingen: Steidl, pp. 12 – 15 (non-photographic pages)

Miller, D.A. (1991) "Anal *Rope*" in Diana Fuss ed. *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 119 – 141

Moore, Suzanne (1988) "Getting a Bit of the Other – the Pimps of Postmodernism" in Rowena Chapman and Jonathan Rutherford eds. *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, pp. 165 – 192

Morris, Charles W. (1938) "Foundations of the Theory of Signs", *The International Encyclopaedia of Unified Science*, vol. 1, no. 2, Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Morris, Steven (2001) "Father killed daughter to end her misery", *The Guardian*, 15 May, p. 4

Mort, Frank (1988) "Boy's Own? Masculinity, Style and Popular Culture" pp. 193 - 224 in Rowena Chapman and Jonathan Rutherford eds. *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity*, London: Lawrence & Wishart

Mueller, Andrew (2001) "Not Just Another Useless Celebrity", *The Independent on Sunday*, *The Sunday Review*, 11 November, pp. 10 – 14

Murray, Timothy (1997) *Drama Traumas: Specters of Race and Sexuality in Performance, Video and Art*, London and New York: Routledge

Netanyahu, Benzion (1977) "The Primary Cause of the Spanish Inquisition": accessed online at http://www.art.man.ac.uk/SPANISH /courses/sp2230/Netanyahu.html on 27 May 2004

Norris, John (1995) "From despair to...where?", *New Musical Express*, 25 February: accessed online at http://www.crosswinds. net/~aestheticdebris/press on 2 November 2000

O'Pray, Michael (2000) "Sam Taylor-Wood and Michael O'Pray in Conversation" in Martin Hentschel, Michael O'Pray and Sam Taylor-Wood, *Sam Taylor-Wood: Third Party*, Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Publishers, pp. 96 – 123

O'Sullivan, Jack (1998) "Missing", *The Independent*, 6 October: accessed online via Cardiff University Electronic Library at http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/infos/information/electronic/elect_t.html on 22 May 2001

O'Hagan, Sean (2004) "Death and Glory", *The Observer*, 1 February: accessed online at http://observer.guardian.co.uk /omm/story/0,13887,1132411,00.html on 27 June 2004

Ohmann, Richard (1971) "Speech Acts and the Definition of Literature", *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, vol. 4, pp. 10 – 15

on 10 June 2004

Parker, Andrew and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1995) "Introduction: Performativity and Performance" in Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (eds.) *erformativity and Performance*, London: Routledge, pp. 1 – 18

Pearson, Roberta (2002) "Actor-Persona and Actor-Character", in Laura Vichi ed. *The Visible Man: Film Acting from Early Cinema to the Eve of Modern Cinema*, Udine: Dipartimento di Storia e Tutela die Benis Culturalis, pp. 69 – 83

Peterkin, Tom (2005) "Judge orders stylist to give back Bono's hat and trousers", *The Daily Telegraph*, 6 July: accessed online at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/07/06/nbono06.xml&sSheet=/news/2005/07/06/ixhome.html on 6 July 2005

Pettegree, Andrew (2001) "The English Reformation": accessed online at http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/state/church_reformation/english_reformation.html on 27 May 2004

Phelan, Peggy (1993) *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, London and New York: Routledge

Phelan, Peggy (1997) *Mourning Sex – Performing Public Memories*, London: Routledge

Pincus, Megan D (date unknown) "The Effect and Affect of Celebrity on The Vagina Monologues and V-Day 2001": accessed online at http://www.utu.fi/hum/mediatutkimus/affective/pincus.pdf on 28 December 2003

Porter, Joseph A. P (1979) *The Drama of Speech Acts: Shakespeare's Lancastrian Tetralogy*, Berkeley: University of California Press

Pratt, Mary Louise (1977) *Toward a Speech-Act Theory of Literary Discourse*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press

'Press Association' (2004) "Beckham not my type – Loos", 16 April: accessed at http://www.guardian.co.uk/uklatest/story/ 0%2C1271%2C-3983814%2C00.html on 8 June 2004

Price, Simon (1996) "The Return of The Manics", *Melody Maker*, 13 January: accessed online at http://www.geocities.com/Sunset Strip/Theater/2955/articles/13jan96mm.html on 2 May 2001

Price, Simon (1999) *Everything: A Book about Manic Street Preachers*, London: Virgin

Price, Simon (2004) "Manic Street Preachers: Sublime and ridiculous": accessed online at http://enjoyment.independent. co.uk/music/interviews/story.jsp?story=575980 on 12 May 2005
Quinn, Michael (1990) "Celebrity and the Semiotics of Acting", *New Theatre Quarterly*, vol. 4, pp. 154 – 161

Read, Alan (1993) *Theatre and Everyday Life: An Ethics of Performance*, London and New York: Routledge

Redhead, Steve (1990) *The end-of-the-century party: Youth and pop towards 2000*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press

Regan, Stephen (2000) "Politics and performance: the legacy of Raymond Williams" in in Lizbeth Goodman and Jane De Gay (eds.) *The Routledge Reader in Politics and Performance*, London: Routledge, pp. 49 – 54

Reid, Sue (1995) "The point of no return?", *The Sunday Times*, 6 August: accessed online at http://www.crosswinds.net/~aesthetic debris/press on 2 November 2000

Reynolds, Nigel (2004) "Sleeping with Beckham", *The Daily Telegraph*, 27 April, p. 5

Richards, Jeffrey, Scott Wilson and Linda Woodhead eds. (1999) *Diana: The Making of a Media Saint*, London and New York: I. B. Tauris

Richardson, Andy (1995) "First of All, I am God", *New Musical Express*, October 21: accessed online at http://www.yourblue room.com/media/BonoNME.txt on 17 January 2004

Richardson, Andy (1996) "The Search for Richey Manic", *Vox*, January, pp. 28 – 34: accessed online at http://articles. richeyedwards.net/jan96vox.html on 28 June 2004

Rohrerhttp, Finlo (2004) "Pet Shop Boys' score disappoints": accessed online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment /film/3652154.stm on 13 September 2004

Rosselson, Leon (1992/3) "More Than Meets the Ear", *Poetry Review* 82 (4), pp. 8 – 9

Rudnitsky, Konstantin (2000) *Russian and Soviet Theatre: Tradition and the Avant-garde*, London: Thames and Hudson

Rush, Michael (1999) *New Media in Late 20th-Century Art*, London: Thames & Hudson

Rushdie, Salman (2001), "What's it like to join U2 on-stage?", *The Sunday Times*, *Culture*, pp. 4 – 5

Saltz, David Z. (2000) "The Reality of Doing: Real Speech Acts in the Theatre" in David Krasner ed., *Method Acting Reconsidered: Theory, Practice, Future*, London: Macmillan, pp. 61 – 80

Sanders LLB, Clive (2003) "13: Section 28 Local Government Act 1988 – Abolished": accessed online at http://www.gaytimes. co.uk/gt/default.asp?topic=article&ID=8079&pub=2127 on 22 May 2004

Sapsted, David (2001) "Mother's plea as husband kills mentally ill daughter", *The Daily Telegraph*, 15 May, pp. 1, 3

Sauter, Willmar (2000) *The Theatrical Event: Dynamics of Performance and Perception*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press

Sawyer, Miranda (2001) "Happy return", *The Observer*, 11 November: accessed online at http://observer.guardian .co.uk/life/story/0,6903,591277,00.html on 19 April 2004

Schechner, Richard (1985) *Between Theater and Anthropology*, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press

Schickel, Richard (1985) *Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity*, New York: Doubleday

Schumacher-Rasmussen, Eric (2001) "Elton John Casts Robert Downey Jr. In His New Video": accessed online at http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/1445963/20010803/john_elton. jhtml on 10 June 2004

Searle, Adrian (2001) "The lady vanishes", *The Guardian*, 1 December: accessed online at http://www.guardian.co.uk/print/ 0,3858,4310826-110432,00.html on 21 May 2004

Searle, John R. (1969) *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky (1992) *Epistemology of the Closet*, Berkeley CA: University of California Press

Shank, Theodore (1982) *American Alternative Theatre*, New York: St. Martin's Press

Sierz, Aleks (2001) "Jonathan Harvey": accessed online at http://www.inyerface-theatre.com/archive9.html#b on 9 June 2004

Singer, Milton (1972) *When a Great Tradition Modernizes*, New York: Praeger

Singer, Milton ed. (1959) *Traditional India: Structure and Change*, Philadelphia: American Folklore Society

Skirvin, Francesca (2000) "Leper cult disciples of a stillborn Christ':
Richard Edwards as a meaningful in his fans' constructions of their
identities": accessed online at http://www.theory.org.uk/
manics.htm on 22 May 2001

Skrufff, Jonty (2004) "Pet Shop Boys' Chris: Why I Hate Huge Egos
(And Love Being a Casual)": accessed online at
http://www.tranzfusion.net/articles/ShowNews. asp?Newsid=3994

Smith, Richard (1994) "3 Little Words", *Outrage*, October: accessed
online at http://www.petshopboys.net/html/interviews/otherinter
10.html on 12 September 2001

Smith, Richard and Neil Tennant (2001) "West End Boys", *Gay
Times*, July 2001, pp. 41 - 44

Sontag, Susan (1966) *Against Interpretation*, New York: Delta

Sparshott, Francis (1988) *Off the Ground: First Steps to a
Philosophical Consideration of the Dance*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton
University Press

Spedding, David (2001) "Pet Shop Boys, Theatrically", *Attitude*,
June, pp. 38 - 44

Spencer, Neil (2001) "When Preachers become bores", *The
Observer (Review)*, 18 March, p. 14

Stalnaker, R. C. (1972) "Pragmatics" in Donald Davidson and
Gilbert Harman (eds.) *Semantics of Natural Language*, Dordrecht:
D. Reidel

Stanislavski, Constantin (1949) *Building a Character*, Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood tr., New York: Theatre Arts

Stimpson, Catherine R. (1990) 'Lesbian Studies in the 1990s' in Karla Jay and Joanne Glasgow eds. *Lesbian Texts and Contexts: Radical Revisions*, New York: New York University Press

Stinespring, Louise M. (2000) "Just Be Yourself: Derrida, Difference, and the Meisner Technique" in David Krasner ed., *Method Acting Reconsidered: Theory, Practice, Future*, London: Macmillan, pp. 97 – 110

Street, John (2002) "Bob, Bono and Tony B: the popular artist as politician", *Media, Culture & Society*, vol. 24: 3, pp. 433 – 441

Studer, Wayne (2001) *Pet Shop Boys Song-by-Song Commentary*: accessed online at http://www.geowayne.com/psbplease.htm on 24 September 2001

Studer, Wayne (2001) *Wayne's Little Online Book of PSB Lists*: accessed online at http://www.geowayne.com/psblists.htm on 30 August 2001

Sullivan, Caroline (1997) "West End boys, arch showmen", *The Guardian*, 6 June: accessed at http://www.geocities.com/Sunset Strip/Performance/4741/savoypress.html on 10 June 2004

Sullivan, Caroline (2000) "The Lost Boys", *The Guardian*, 28 January: accessed online at http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive /Article/0,4273,3955622,00.html on 2 May 2001

Sweeting, Adam (1992) "Preachers full of contradictions", *The Guardian*, 11 February: accessed online at http://www.crosswinds.

net/~aestheticdebris/press on 2 November 2000

Sweeting, Adam (1994) "Kurt Cobain", *The Guardian*, 9 April:
accessed online at http://www.guardian.co.uk/arts/news/obituary/
0,12723,1186994,00.html on 27 June 2004

Tate, Greg (1992) *Flyboy in the Buttermilk*, New York: Simon
Schuster

Taylor, Diana (1999) "Downloading Grief – Minority populations
mourn Diana" in Adrian Kear and Deborah Lynn Steinberg eds.,
Mourning Diana: Nation, Culture and the Performance of Grief,
London: Routledge, pp. 187 – 210

Taylor, Paul (2004) "The grand inquisitor", *The Independent*, *Arts &
Books Review*, 26 November, pp. 2 – 4

Taylor, Paul (2005) "A performer at his peak", *The Independent*,
Arts & Books Review, 14 January, pp. 2 – 4

Taylor-Wood, Sam (2004) *Sam Taylor-Wood* video interview, 5
060033 830192, Illuminations

Taylor-Wood, Sam dir. (2001) "I Want Love" video issed as part of
Elton John *I Want Love enhanced CD*, 599 706-2, Mercury Records
Ltd

Thompson, John B. (1995) *The Media and Modernity: A Social
Theory of the Media*, Cambridge: Polity Press

Tsukagoshi, Midori (1995) "Music Life Interview with Richey",
Select, date unknown: accessed online at http://crosswinds.net

/~aestheticdebris/press/richeyla.htm on 2 November 2000

Tulloch, John (1999) *Performing Culture*, London: Sage

Turnbull, Colin (1990) "Liminality: A Synthesis of Subjective and Objective Experience" in Richard Schechner and Willa Appel eds. *By Means of Performance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 50 – 81

Turner, Victor (1974) *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press

Turner, Victor (1982) *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*, New York: PAJ Publications

Turner, Victor (1984) "Liminality and the Performative Genres" in in John J. MacAloon ed. *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance*, Philadelphia: The Institute for the Study of Human Issues, pp. 19 – 41

Turner, Victor (1986) *The Anthropology of Performance*, New York: PAJ Publications

Turner, Victor (1996) *Schism and Continuity in an African Society: A Study of Ndembu Village Life*, Oxford: Berg

Turnock, Robert (2000) *Interpreting Diana: Television Audiences and the Death of a Princess*, London: British Film Institute

Tyrangiel, Josh (2002) "Bono's Mission", 23 February: accessed online at http://www.time.com/time/sampler/printout/0,8816,

212605,00.html on 1 March 2002

Utley, Tom (2004) "The Beckham conundrum: is he or isn't he?", *The Daily Telegraph*, 1 May, p. 13

Van Gennep, Arnold (1960) *The Rites of Passage*, trans. M. B. Vizedon and G. L. Caffee, Chicago: Chicago University Press

Watson, James L. (1988) "The Structure of Chinese Funerary Rites: Elementary Forms, Ritual Sequence and the Primacy of Performance" in James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski eds. *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, Berkeley, CA: University of California, pp. 3 – 19

Whittle, Simon (2002) "Demand the impossible", *Scottish Socialist Voice*, 21 February, issue 80, p. 12

Wilde, Jon (1991) *Pet Shop Boys*, London: Melody Maker

Williams, Raymond (1983) "Drama in a Dramatized Society" in *Writing in Society*, London: Verso, pp. 11 – 21

Williams, Raymond (1991) *Drama in Performance*, Buckingham: Open University Press

Williams, Robin (1998) "Erving Goffman" in Rob Stones ed. *Key Sociological Thinkers*, Houndmills and London: Macmillan Press Ltd, pp. 151 – 162

Wilshire, Bruce (1990) "The Concept of the Paratheatrical", *The Drama Review*, vol. 34, issue 4, pp. 169 – 171

Wilson, Elizabeth (1997) "The Unbearable Lightness of Diana", *New Left Review*, no. 226, pp. 136 – 145

Wire, Nicky (2005) "Nothing's ever gonna replace Richey", *New Musical Express*, 29 January, p. 31

Wockner, Rex (1994) "Pet Shop Boy Comes Out": accessed online at http://www.qrd. org/qrd/world/wockner/news.briefs/016-08.18.94 on 23 May 2004

Wohl, Anthony S. (1993) "The Re-establishment of the Catholic Hierarchy in England, 1850": accessed online at http://65.107.211.206/religion/Hierarchy_ Reestablished.html on 27 May 2004

Wright, Robert (2000) "I'd sell you suicide: pop music and moral panic in the age of Marilyn Manson", *Popular Music*, vol. 19, issue 3, pp. 365 – 385

Internet references

http://cobaniac.tripod.com/josh/id4.html: accessed online on 28 June 2004

http://direct.vtheatre.net/bio.html: accessed online on 21 January 2004

http://filmplus.org/boimx/meyer95.html: accessed online on 21 January 2004

http://guardian.imdb.com/name/nm0935653/bio: accessed online on 8 June 2004

http://homepage.ntlworld.com/andrew.ferguson1/gallery.htm: accessed online on 7 July 2001

http://members.tripod.co.uk/Confidential1973/history.html: accessed online on 30 August 2001

http://myweb.lsbu.ac.uk/~stafflag/derekjarman.html: accessed online on 26 May 2004

http://myweb.lsbu.ac.uk/~stafflag/freddiemercury.html: accessed online on 22 June 2004

http://myweb.lsbu.ac.uk/~stagglag/ianmckellen.html: accessed online on 26 May 2004

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/music/2093780.stm: accessed online on 28 December 2003

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/music/4225125.stm: accessed online on 4 February 2005

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/3610879.stm: accessed online on 8 June 2004

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/entertainment/230250.stm: accessed online on 26 May 2004

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/africa/03/aids_debate/html/default.stm: accessed online on 26 May 2004

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr//1/hi/entertainment/music/4629447.stm: accessed online on 6 July 2005

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/entertainment/music/4651387.stm: accessed online on 6 July 2005

http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/diana_one_year_on/your_thoughts/other.stm: accessed online on 30 June 2004

http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/in_depth/uk/2002/falklands/guide.stm: accessed online on 26 May 2004

http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/low/dates/stories/august/31/newsid_2510000/2510615.stm: accessed online on 30 June 2004

http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/low/dates/stories/july/13/newsid_2502000/2502735. stm: accessed online on 11 January 2004

http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/football/2988104.stm: accessed online on 8 June 2004

http://observer.guardian.co.uk/kurtcobain/story/0,12534,815366,00.html: accessed online on 27 June 2004

http://politics.guardian.co.uk/homeaffairs/page/0%2C11026%2C875944%2C00.html: accessed online on 24 May 2004

http://politics.guardian.co.uk/homeaffairs/page/0%2C11026%2C875944%2C00.html: accessed online on 26 May 2004

http://tardis.nu/~bfry/music/best/best.html: accessed online on 30 November 2000

http://www.alanread.com: accessed online on 17 March 2005

http://www.angelfire.com/hi/vlcampbell/aboutme.html: accessed online on 4 June 2001

http://www.atu2.com: accessed online on 30 November 2000

http://www.avert.org/aids.htm: accessed online on 25 May 2005

http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/audiointerviews/profilepages/cowardn2.shtml: accessed online on 26 May 2004

http://www.bbc.co.uk/cgi-perl/music/muze/index.pl?site=music&action=biography&artist_id=15472: accessed online on 7 June 2005

http://www.bbc.co.uk/cgi-perl/music/muze/index.pl?site=music &action= biography&artist_id=28542: accessed online on 8 June 2004

http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A1138600: accessed online on 8 June 2004

http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A337015: accessed online on 27 June 2004

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/thatcher_margaret.sh tml: accessed online on 26 May 2004

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/timelines/britain/post_thatcher.shtm l: accessed online on 26 May 2004

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/timelines/britain/tud_henry_sup.shtm l: accessed online on 27 May 2004

http://www.bbc.co.uk/kent/news/features/jarman.shtml: accessed online on 25 May 2005

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/arts/highlights/010103_elton.sh tml: accessed online on 7 June 2005

http://www.bonothepuppet.com: accessed online on 3 April 2005

http://www.ci.olympia.wa.us/: accessed online on 28 June 2004

http://www.copperlily.com/AboutRayWinstone: accessed online on 8 June 2004

http://www.crosswinds.net/~aestheticdebris/pics.htm: accessed online on 11 April 2001

http://www.crosswinds.net/~aestheticdebris/press.htm: accessed online 2 November 2000

http://www.crosswinds.net/~aestheticdebris/rich/debate.htm: accessed online on 2 November 2000

http://www.culture.com: accessed online on 22 June 2004

http://www.datejesus.com/sermons/cobain/suicide.html: accessed online on 28 June 2004

http://www.drugabuse.gov/Infofax/heroin.html: accessed online on 30 June 2004

http://www.gayhealthchannel.com/hivaids/history.shtml: accessed online on 26 May 2004

http://www.geneticfutures.com/cracked/info/sheet5.asp: accessed online on 27 June 2004

http://www.geneticfutures.com/cracked/info/sheet7.asp: accessed online on 27 June 2004

http://www.geocities.com/featherboas2000/home.html: accessed online on 12 June 2004

http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Bar/9929/: accessed online on 7 July 2001

http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Performance/4741/savoy_fanrevs.html: accessed online on 11 June 2004

http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Theater/2955/: accessed online on 4 June 2001

http://www.glastonburyfestivals.co.uk: accessed online on 22 June 2004

http://www.glbtq.com/arts/pet_shop_boys.html: accessed online on 23 May 2004

http://www.guardian.co.uk/0,3858,4673413-111384,00.html: accessed online on 27 May 2004

http://www.guardian.co.uk/arts/guesteditors/story/0,14481,1195508,00.html: accessed online on 4 June 2004

http://www.guardian.co.uk/gall/0,8542,683373,00.html: accessed online on 21 May 2004

http://www.guardian.co.uk/print/0,3858,4892711-111157,00.html: accessed online on 27 May 2004

http://www.hayward.org.uk/exhibitions/stw/press.html: accessed online on 4 June 2004

http://www.intotheheart.com: accessed online on 30 November 2000

http://www.jameshymanfineart.com/pages/modbrit/single/250/63.html: accessed online on 4 June 2004

http://www.le.ac.uk/arthistory/seedcorn/faq-sds.html: accessed online on 27 May 2004

http://www.livingtheatre.org/abou/history.html: accessed online on 20 July 2005

http://www.macphisto.net/article589.html: accessed online on 26 January 2004

http://www.manicstreetpreachers.co.uk/manicstreetpreachers/band/history/history[2/3/4/5/6/7].shtml: accessed online on 14 June 2004

http://www.manutd.com/bio/bio.sps?iBiographyID=2533: accessed online on 8 June 2004

http://www.members.tripod.com/~afronord/biomx/meyer95.html: accessed online on 8 July 2005

http://www.meyerhold.org: accessed online on 8 July 2005

http://www.netcomuk.co.uk/~drbob/glasto/whatisglastonbury.html: accessed online on 22 June 2004

http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08026a.htm: accessed online on 28 May 2004

http://www.nida.nih.gov/Infofax/ritalin.html: accessed online on 28 June 2004

http://www.nida.nih.gov/Infofax/RohypnolGHB.html: accessed online on 28 June 2004

http://www.nme.com/news/102277.htm: accessed online on 28 December 2003

http://www.nme.com/news/107234.htm: accessed online on 15 January 2004

http://www.nme.com/NME/External/News/News_Story/0,1004,371 26,00.html: accessed online on 21 July 2001

http://www.npg.org.uk/live/search/person.asp?search=ss&sText=s am+taylor%2Dwood&LinkID=mp14188: accessed online on 4 June 2004

http://www.petertatchell.net: accessed online on 25 May 2005

http://www.petshopboys.co.uk/chronologyBody.asp: accessed online on 30 August 2001

http://www.prioryhealthcare.co.uk/: accessed online on 22 June 2004

http://www.q4music.com/buyersguides/ListOfLists_50BestAlbumsOf TheYear.cfm: accessed online on 30 November 2000

http://www.rdjfan.com/news/2001.shtm: accessed online on 19 April 2004

http://www.richeyedwards.net: accessed online on 4 June 2001

http://www.royal.gov.uk/output/page153[154/155/156/157].asp: accessed online on 30 June 2004

http://www.salon.com/media: accessed online on 11 April 2001

http://www.savoy-group.co.uk/Savoy-Theatre/history.asp: accessed online on 8 June 2004

http://www.self-injury.net/doyousi/famous: accessed online on 8 February 2001

http://www.sftwc.com/video.asp: accessed online on 19 April 2004

http://www.staybeautifulclub.co.uk/whoweare.htm: accessed online on 12 May 2005

http://www.stonewall.org.uk/stonewall/information_bank/education/section_28: accessed online on 23 May 2004

http://www.thb.org.uk: accessed online on 12 June 2004

http://www.tht.org.uk/hiv_info/facts.htm: accessed online on 23 May 2004

http://www.u2.com/homepage/interview_wimw_detail.html: accessed online on 16 August 2001

http://www.u2.com/homepage/news 040701_1_detail.html: accessed online on 16 August 2001

http://www.u2.com/homepage/news 070702_detail.html: accessed online on 28 December 2003

http://www.u2.com/homepage/news031200_detail.html: accessed online on 16 August 2001

http://www.u2.com/homepage/news081100_detail.html: accessed online on 17 August 2001

http://www.u2.com/homepage/news081100_detail.html: accessed online on 17 August 2001

http://www.u2.com/homepage/news090601_detail.html: accessed online on 16 August 2001

http://www.u2.com/homepage/news110601_1_1detail.html: accessed online on 16 August 2001

http://www.u2.com/tours/t_nov93-dec93/tour_list_sub.html: accessed online on January 2004

http://www.u2faqs.com/live: accessed online on 18 December 2003

http://www.vh1.com/artists/az/nirvana/bio.jhtml: accessed online on 27 June 2004

http://www.yourblueroom.com/bono_stage.txt: accessed online on 17 January 2004

http://www0.bbc.co.uk/radio4/today/print/misc/guest_editor_bono _20041220.shtml: accessed online on 29 December 2004