









## ABSTRACT

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In the past, exploration of music has focused on analysis by formalists, referentialists and through social, semiotic and anthropological viewpoints including Schenkerian-Yeston (1977), Semiotic-Eco (1977), and Motivic-Ruwet (1987). Although each has its merits in the formal analysis of music, few explore genre identification. In musical genre studies the exploration of musical, paramusical (extramusical) and perceptual elements are essential to facilitate a full understanding of the subject area. Johnson in Zorn supports such a perspective in his argument for a holistic approach to musical analysis (Zorn 2000:29).

The multidisciplinary nature of music and the discourses embodied in its creation, development and dissemination utilise a range of signifiers for identification advocating the utilisation of a “hybrid” (Wickens 1999) methodology combining quantitative and qualitative analysis. This thesis focuses on the music industry through music managers, the media, the artist and the consumer. A successful holistic interpretation of music genre identification would make a substantial contribution to the work in this field. This holistic exploration is validated through qualitative interviews and focus groups supported by quantitative exploration focusing on the placing of musical episodes in specific categories. The main conclusions of the thesis relate to the key role that the media plays in music genre identification, the development of both organic and synthetic musical episodes and the way in which variables within the experimentation indicate both homogeneity and difference separating parent and sub genre identification.

Keywords: genre, musical, paramusical, perceptual, media, management, homogeneity, difference, sub-genre, categorisation

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## PREFACE

As Nick Lowe once said, "Writing about music is like dancing about architecture" (Arnold 1997:121), throughout this dissertation this quote kept reminding me of just how difficult articulating the different elements of music can be especially when dealing with a plurality of research methods.

I started my undergraduate studies in York at the physical education College majoring in human movement and minoring in English and contemporary dance. When taking up my first employment I found myself managing a sport and arts centre on the outskirts of Oxford. During this period of employment I was approached by the Manager of Dr Feelgood to promote a concert in the main sports hall. The concert sold out within days and this was my baptism in music management. During this period I also studied at City University in London where I undertook a masters in Arts Administration which further distanced my interests from the sporting world. It was during the dissertation part of my masters that I was first introduced to other aspects of music that I was not aware existed these included music sociology, musicology and aesthetics. My dissertation concentrated on the identification of aesthetic capabilities linked with management structures in the identification of funding developments in dance. Such an obtuse title and subsequent difficult research developed a grounding and further thirst for an insight into the cognitive developments within all art forms.

During my years as a postgraduate student I was lucky to benefit from several outstanding advisors in the area of arts management including Professor Eric Moody, Professor John Pick and Professor Michael Hammett. My introduction to the world of aesthetics by such notable managers and practitioners enabled me to develop the underpinning knowledge needed for further work in the linking of management with other aspects relating to artistic form. After leaving Oxford I went to work as a promoter and venue manager at one of the most successful music clubs in the UK at the time, the Pitz in Milton Keynes. Here I promoted over 3000 acts ranging from the rock act Iron Maiden to The Royal Shakespeare Company. After several years of working with top acts and opening a successful comedy club, the late nights and early mornings started to take their toll. Coupled with this, I wished for more quality time at weekends with my young family. Thus I decided to change tack and work in education. I started as a senior lecturer and gradually crept up the ladder to Professor and finally Dean. However it was during my early years at the Institution I was given the opportunity to research into music management and musicology, design music management programmes and to embark upon a PhD thesis.

I started my thesis training at the Open University under the instruction of the eminent music sociologist Professor Ruth Finnegan. Under Ruth's expert guidance I covered eight years of Sociology in two years and was then ready to start on my thesis in full. I was accepted at the University of Liverpool Institute

of Popular Music under the enigmatic and wonderful Dr Phillip Tagg. Phil showed me just how much fun music (and football) could be and we spent many hours debating punk in his flat in Liverpool. Unfortunately Phil reached a watershed with the study and felt that he could no longer proceed in his supervisory capacity as he felt that he did not have the expertise to take the study forward in the way that it was moving. Phil also left for Canada during this period and I was sorry to see a valued friend and mentor leave the country.

At this time I was attending the Ethnomusicology conference at the University of Jyväskylä giving a paper on the relationship between music management and ethnomusicology and met Professor Jukka Louhivuori who thought that he may have the answer to the continuation of my thesis development in the University Department. I was introduced to Professor Petri Toiviainen who immediately got to work on the further development of my PhD. My sessions with Petri have always been excellent and his penchant for focus is one which has enabled me to finish this study. Both Petri and Doctor Tuomas Eerola introduced me to the midi toolbox and enabled me to observe music from both a qualitative and quantitative aspect.

There are many people I must thank for their help in the development and culmination of this thesis. I would first and foremost like to express my sincerest thanks to Professor Petri Toiviainen, my supervisor, who has patiently guided me through the complexities of cognitive analysis and introduced me to the Midi Toolbox. Thank you for expending your invaluable time and help, and especially for being so easily approachable. My deepest gratitude also goes out to my second supervisor, Dr Eugenia Wickens for her support and encouragement. To Dr Philip Tagg formerly of Liverpool University (IPM) for his support and help during my time with him at the institute. To Professor Ruth Finnegan, who introduced me to Sociology at the Open University. To Miriam Moir for her patience and help with my grammatical inconsistency. To Tuomas Eerola for his enthusiasm and patient explanation of the Midi Toolbox. Professors Jukka Louhivuori and Matti Vainio for enabling me to continue with the project. To my wife and children who have had to take a back seat during the final stages of the process, thanks for all the support, I know that it has been hard. And last but not least to Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College for their support over the last decade with the development of my research, and the office staff who have put many hours in photocopying and printing various texts and diagrams.



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# 1 PROBLEMATISATION AND GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 Introduction

In the study of musical genre the exploration of musical, paramusical (extramusical) and perceptual elements (the relationship between musical style, the music industry, the artist, the consumer and the media in general) are essential to facilitate a full understanding of the subject area. Johnson in Zorn substantiates such a perspective in his argument for a holistic approach to musical analysis. He states:

Music has both an inside and an outside. Its internal concepts and terminology are necessary for understanding and describing the music itself, but they are not sufficient for explaining the transactions it makes with the surrounding world - transactions involving education, economics, class, stylistic tribalism, audience demographics, and serendipitous inspiration from unexpected sources, whether romantic landscapes or modern math (Zorn 2000:29).

It is clear from this statement that the multifunctional nature of music and the different discourses embodied in its creation, development and dissemination utilise a wide range of signifiers to identify its constituent elements. To explore the transactions between music and the surrounding world an understanding of the music industry, the media, the artist and the consumer are fundamental as these protagonists interrelate in the creation, development and dissemination of musical episodes. This is highlighted by Negus who states:

It is part of my argument that we cannot fully explore the details of the conventions, codes or rules of genres through textual analysis, nor can we begin to explain how some (and not other) genre transformations might occur without fully understanding how corporate organisation actively intervenes in the production, reproduction, circulation and interpretation of genres (Negus, 1999:28).

A comprehensive understanding of the totality of the processes involved in genre identification and development would facilitate influence over the nucleus of the creative musical process and its production. Such knowledge would enable music managers and the media to make informed genre decisions, thus placing artists in suitable pre-ordained categories. However, to exert control over the product and the process at the same instant is an almost elusive ideal. Garofalo identifies the tension and division between the product and the process, stating in the *Journal of Popular Music* that, "there is no point-to-point correlation between controlling the marketplace economically and controlling the form, content and meaning of the music" (Garofalo 1986:83). To control the economic process and the form, content and meaning of the music can only be achieved either by chance, good fortune or if the music is manufactured to a set formula which captures the mood of the audience in a set context at a given moment in time.

The identification of musical genre can be ascertained in a number of ways; these include the exploration of musical elements, the investigation of paramusical indicators and in many cases through intuitive serendipity where the subject identifies the music by association with other musical episodes already committed to memory. The examination of temporal and spatial contexts to identify genre tagging and placement are also utilised. However, the application in isolation of such elements, indicators and contexts militates against the institution of a collective or holistic view of genre identification, which employs elements from a number of diverse discourses.

In contemporary popular music, the industrial environment forms an overarching framework in which the creation, development and dissemination of music occurs. As procedures and processes inherent in such a framework govern musical genre, the notion of genre is central to industrial development. Few scholars or commentators, for example Arnold (2000) and Negus (1999), have fully explored the aspect in which music management, media development, artistic integrity and consumer behaviour are all associated with the genre identification process. Thus, there are gaps in the knowledge relating to this subject. Bennett (2000) comments on the industrial process, stating that "all the recording industry can maintain with certainty is that it is in place to package and market forms of popular music. Beyond this assertion, however, the trajectory of popular music's stylistic development and its impact upon audiences becomes rather less of an exact science...Thus, while record companies would like to think that they are able to predict which artists and musical styles will prove to be the most commercially viable this remains largely an erroneous game of intuition" (Bennett 2000:40).

However, what Bennett fails to recognise is the integrative nature of the industry and the benefits afforded by a better understanding of the interface between the industry and the market. To enable an understanding and development of musical genre identification in a creative environment, Negus recognises the need to understand the meanings embodied in not only the product, but also those attached to the practices employed when creating the

product (Negus 1999:20). It is therefore important to note from the outset of this exploration that the meaning, the form and the content of the music are inextricably linked to the processes inherent within the music industry. Without such processes music cannot be produced, promoted, marketed, sold or exploited and thus in essence cannot be fully explored or researched.

In what follows, the situating of the study takes place, combining the aims, the terms of reference and definitions pertaining to the exploration. The identification of a synopsis of the theoretical discourses follows, leading to an exploration of fresh perspectives on music genre identification and a short section on the organisation of the thesis.

## 1.1 Situating the Study

### 1.1.1 Aims

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the classification of popular musical genre using musical, paramusical and perceptual factors and is specifically focussed on the music industry through music managers, the media, the artist and the audience. A successful holistic interpretation of music genre identification would make a substantial contribution to the work in this field. However, this study not only explores genre but also its sub divisions, as genre can be divided into many sub units which often describe major or minor similarities or differences between two or more artists or musical episodes. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are applied, enabling the articulation of different discourses in relation to music genre identification. This process utilises combinational methodologies to compare and contrast scientific and perceptual exploration. A qualitative approach is utilised to collect information from the industry, the media, the artist and the consumer in relation to their perceptions of the creation, identification and development of music. A quantitative approach is utilised to compare and contrast a finite number of musical and paramusical variables inherent in two musical genres-*punk* and *nu punk*. The resulting study explores the integration of musical and paramusical factors with the perceptions of the industry, the media, the artist and the consumer, and thus examines the possibility of the development of a holistic approach to genre identification and classification.

The objective of such an exploration is to ascertain the present means of genre identification and to determine whether a more informed, structured and holistic approach has any inherent benefits for the industry, the media, the artist and the consumer who are all integral to the genre identification process. During this study, the exploration of the dichotomy between defining specifically created genre frameworks and arbitrary genre definitions is undertaken. The aims of the study are further discussed in the methodology section of the study.

## 1.1.2 Definitions and Terms of Reference

### 1.1.2.1 Introduction to the Terms of Reference

A primary concern at the core of an enquiry into specific or generic musical taxonomies is the identification of terms of reference. To create terms of reference appropriate to this study, the development of genre over the past forty years will be scrutinised. The period investigated in the introductory phase comprises the years 1963 to 2003 and encompasses both the temporal and spatial elements embodied within the development of *punk* and *nu punk*.

Musical genres are constantly in flux, as Mitchell states in his paper exploring the popular music of the last two decades:

In the years since 1986, the multiple diversifications of pop music formations and genres have continued to proliferate, often recombining in the process in new hybrid formations, so that by 1995 the range of popular music sub-genres is constantly being extended, and this has become almost impossible to quantify (Mitchell T. 1996:11).

From 1995 to the present day the proliferation and diversification of genres has increased manifold owing to the development of *dance* music, as evidenced in Kempster (1996) and Reynolds (1998) and the wide range of combinational and 'hybrid' genres created through crossover as related by Frith (1990) and Arnold (1997). There has been a dramatic increase in the division of genre into sub and sub-sub genre during this period. However, in line with this increase in sub and sub-sub genres, there has been a concomitant reduction in other genre labels no longer of use in the identification of musical types. Some have become redundant through lack of relevance, a change in nomenclature or a movement towards new and more distinct genre taxonomies. The development of recombinant genres and new 'hybrid' formations has kept the music industry in constant flux facilitating the creation of new and exciting musical entities. This element of fluidity enables the proliferation of musical genre definitions but may prevent the clear determination of a framework for genre identification, and is thus a major part of the rationale behind this study. The key concept explored in this study is musical genre and thus the first definition in these terms of reference identifies this concept, its principles and organisation.

### 1.1.2.2 Towards a Definition of Genre

To create the basis for further exploration of music genre, an explanation of genre is necessary. Musical genre is contextualised in terms of explicit principles and organisation. Fabbri states that, "Genres are units of meaning; they are cultural units, which a culture has defined as a distinctive unit, different from others" (Fabbri, 1982:134).

The differentiation of units gives rise to categorisation and identifies the accommodation of an artist or music in such categories as "basic superordinate and subordinate concepts" (Eco 1977:126). Fabbri argues that "genres emerge as names to define similarities, recurrences that members of a community made

pertinent to identify musical events” (Fabbri, 1999:10). However, Dury in Zorn refutes such a definition identifying the concept of “radical contingency” as pertinent to such exploration. He states that values pertaining to genre:

are dictated by the cultures dominant ideology, are dependent on that cultures socio-politics, and are used primarily to create dividing and defining lines between groups rather than to any basic transcendental human meaning , any intrinsic connection to human experience, perception, or psychology (Zorn 2000:336).

Such a concept is worth exploration as the development of alternative cultures within society creates division and fragmentation but the homology of the more amalgamous mass cultural developments identifies similarity and connection. If the homologous nature of marketing and umbrella categories are discarded and the fragmentary nature of genre is focused upon, the theory of radical contingency identifies a collective flaw in the overall perception of genre development and dissemination and creates a natural divide between mass and alternative music.

The wider musical community in any example of genre identification should encapsulate those in the industry and the media that produce, manage and disseminate the music, as well as the artist who creates the music and the audience who consume it. In past analyses of music, including Sharrenberg (1997), Forte and Gilbert (1982) and Yeston (1997), neither the producers nor consumers of musical episodes have been identified as important in the process of identification and analysis. Thus, whole areas related to the production and consumption of musical episodes remain relatively unexplored.

The importance of genres can be identified through their use as a ‘language’ or currency in musical, economic, technological, cultural and many other communities, and genres enable users or members of the community to communicate efficiently and effectively in musical determination and dialogue. Music is a clear “cultural case” rather than an “empirical case”: when dealing with types of music a reference point is needed within a framework of cultural norms (Fabbri 1999). However, such information becomes clouded as music can also denote technologies and economies as well as composers, managerial choices and aesthetic elements. Fabbri suggests that:

...if we accept the term category to mean a generic set of objects or events grouped according to some criteria...then we must also admit that we deal with different concepts: a) scientific taxa, which allow-according to our example- to have spiders only in the class of arachnids, and not insects; b) savage categories, which allow spiders to be insects ( as possibly fastidious little animals whose bodies and legs show distinctive junctions); c) encyclopaedic entries, which (if they are really complete and include everything in the community learnt about the object) assign spiders to the correct scientific category of arachnids, while mentioning the folk usage of calling them insects (and, by just some folks and not others, of eating them (Fabbri 1999:2).

In this context, Fabbri alludes to the complex nature of the categorisation of elements, as there are a number of categories, taxonomies or elements relating to genre working at any one time. It is therefore important to be careful with the

utilisation of such terminology in any exploration. Such taxonomic instability confuses the labelling process. For example, an artist such as Metallica may be categorised as *thrash metal* by the consumer (owing to the original incarnation of the artist), *rock* by the retailer (utilising a marketing category in which to place the artist) or *pop* by the journalist (identified through the number of phonograms of a new product sold over a short period). Although such multi categorisation distinguishes the range of possible markets it confuses the musical community as a whole, as in this case the use of nomenclature for identity by the consumer, for marketing purposes by the retailer and for ease of access by the journalist, confuses the issue of clear genre boundaries.

For genres to be clearly identified these “zones of meaning” (Fabbri 1995:137) must be explored. To give meaning to a cultural unit social conventions, codes, boundaries, semantics and representations must be explored. In the case of musical genre and its relationship with the industry, such variables are constantly in flux and thus subject to change.

If genres are identified as units of culture, which a given culture has defined as different from others, then through association a genre can also be a subcultural unit defined as distinctive from subcultural unity. A number of traits inherent in a parent genre may associate a number of subcultural units residing under the same umbrella.

The complexity of the framework utilised in the initial examination of musical genre in this study highlights the wide range of musical, paramusical and perceptual factors identified as pertinent to a possible genre framework. Clearly, the most ‘primitive’ way of identifying genre is through the sounds/looks like response which will be referred to in this study as the ‘similarity reflex’<sup>1</sup>. Such a reflex is appropriated to identify new sounds/visual concepts by comparing these new musical episodes with a bank of sound/visual ‘memories’ constructed from past musical episodes. The genre of a new musical episode will be determined by its similarity to, or difference from, (depending on whether the Fabbri (1999) or Dury (2000) perspective of genre identification is appropriated) an already existing reference point. Longhurst succinctly sums up Adorno’s views on reference points for popular music:

For Adorno popular music is part of the culture industry. An important claim that Adorno makes about popular music is that it is standardised. In his view the whole of the popular music product is standardised including types of songs, songs themselves and parts of songs. Thus, if Adorno was writing about popular music today instead of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, he might argue, first that popular music is divided into a number of standardised types: heavy metal, country, folk, blues, soul and so on, which are immediately recognisable to the audience. Second, he might maintain that the music and songs within these types are themselves standardised into a small number of different structures. Therefore a musicological analysis would show that one heavy metal track is very much like another in its essential structure and form (Longhurst 1995:4-5).

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<sup>1</sup> An explanation of the ‘similarity reflex’ can be found in Appendix 1

However, it is also clear that the popular music environment has changed unrecognisably from the period about which Adorno writes. The central focus on music as the key determinant of genre is no longer pertinent, as the rise of the music and media industries, the range of available artists and the diversity of consumer culture have fragmented this focus. The identification of both categories and names for these categories are part of the genre development process. However, why labels are created and who uses them must be considered. From a pragmatic perspective labels are created so that the industry, the media, the artist and the consumer can operate on a level of understanding where communication in regards to musical episodes can be shared, enabling the proliferation of dialogue.

The identifying determinants for a genre might be specific to a small group of artists. However, in the case of an umbrella genre, the generality of the determinants associated with it will enable the encapsulation of a wide range of suitable musical episodes. It may also be pertinent to use "equivalent meanings from other semiotic systems" (Eco 1974:103) to identify the genre/category, for example paramusical excerpts such as dress codes or iconography (Fabbri 1995).

Fornas develops the complexity of genre identification further through his statement concerning the definition of rock as a genre. He shies away from utilising the conventional, as he perceives that "actual musics do not in themselves fall unambiguously into any simple classes" (Fornas 1995b:14-111). Fornas perceives that the decision to which genre a musical episode is attributed is dependent on the set of rules appropriated, and thus this choice is "situationally bound". Fornas highlights the intersubjectivity of genre, alluding to a musical episode's identification being made from elements appropriated from more than one source or discourse. Temporality and spatial elements are also perceived to be important in the genre naming process. However, contextualisation is a key factor and the actors identified by Fornas that make the relevant genre decisions (musicians, producers, marketers and audiences) do so where and when necessary and are dependent on context.

Fornas identifies genres as socially constructed concepts, both relative and deterministic, which have shared meanings and control the various groups participating in the genre utilisation process. The identification by Fornas of the relevant decision makers in the genre process concurs with the views of Negus (1999), Robinson (1991), Storey (1994) and Moore (2001). Zorn (2000) wrote in his preface to *Arcana: Musicians on Music* that genres are tools used to "commodify and commercialize an artist's complex personal vision" (Zorn 2000:v). By such commodification and commercialisation the message is disseminated and, depending on the marketing vehicle utilised, the spread of the artist's personal vision is thus expansive or parochial. Zorn further summarises his view of genre identification stating:

This terminology is not about understanding. It never has been. It's about money. Once a group of artists, writers, or musicians has been packaged together under such a banner, it is not only easier for work to be marketed - it also becomes easier for the

audience to 'buy it' and for the critic to respond with prepackaged opinions. The audience is deprived of its right to the pleasure of creating its own interpretation, and the critic no longer has to think about what is really happening or go any deeper than the monochromatic surface of the label itself, thus avoiding any encounter with the real aesthetic criteria that make any individual artist's work possible (*ibid*:v).

Zorn describes an area of tension between academics and managers related to the dichotomy between creativity and economics or more pertinently identification for identification's sake, as opposed to identification for economic expediency. Zorn perceives that such a process degrades and ignores the actual music central to the framework by highlighting the economic worth of the musical episode. This view is an explicit tension throughout this study and features heavily in the qualitative discourse.

The group of protagonists identified by Fornas (1995<sup>a</sup>) and the practices defined by Zorn (2000) are further expanded and re-defined within this study. The redefined protagonists comprise industry professionals, the media, the artist and the consumer in line with the community outlined earlier in the text. The use of the blanket terms 'industry professionals' or the 'music industry' covers a multitude of personnel who contribute to the production and consumption of the artist products within the musical environment.

The genre rules highlighted by Fornas (1995<sup>b</sup>) contain such diverse elements as band dynamics, record catalogue separations and electronic sound manipulation, which signifies a holistic interpretation encompassing as many elements as possible to elicit a more reliable identification of genre rather than a conventional view where order is more important than relevance. Many of these 'unconventional' rules are utilised after both informal and formal identification has taken place and are therefore not pertinent in the initial placing of an artist or song in a genre category. It is clear however, that the rules governing a genre must be flexible, and in different cases (either artists or songs) it would be useful to utilise differing number of rules appropriated from a rule 'bank' or 'genre toolbox' which were thought relevant in the identification of the artist or music in question.

Style is often confused with genre; however, style implies a musical code whilst genre has a relationship to a number of codes that are inherent in a musical event. The two terms therefore cover entirely different semantic fields. O'Sullivan defines genre as the "recognized paradigmatic set into which the total output of a given medium is classified" (O'Sullivan 1994:127). Therefore, when the genre is recognised, the listener, critic, or producer will orient his or her reactions to the genre according to the expectations generated by recognising the genre in the first place

O'Sullivan relates that expectations are learnt and socially determined. He agrees with a holistic approach to genre classification through his reference to 'total output' and cites a perceptual orientation of genre, where the audience orients their reactions to the genre according to recognition (see 1.1.2.2:7). However, in the case of a genre with many sub genres differentiated by a small number of variables it may not be recognition of the genre that orients the listeners reaction, but knowledge of the individual instruments, context,



vocalisation or the opinion of media commentators that may define in which genre the artist is placed. Media opinion is the artists' window to the world and thus the dissemination of sounds, musical facts, biographies and reviews inform the public, rightly or wrongly, about the artist. As such, the power of the media cannot be underestimated (see Chapter 3 and 4.6.2).

Owing to contextual, temporal, historical and spatial irregularities it is not always certain that the genre perceived by the artist or the consumer will be the genre that the music is attributed to by the industry or the media. In the case of such musical genre, a dichotomy is created between the manipulation of the music by industry protagonists and the reflection of the consumers' actual perception of the genre category to which the artist or music should be attributed. The identification of the level of interference in genre placement is not easy to predict as the influence of the producer, the marketer, the musician or other members of an audience or peer group all have different effects on the listener, whether consciously or subconsciously. An example of such perception is quoted in *The Sunday Times Culture Magazine*. Mark Edwards states, "If Travis came from the American Midwest, they'd be hailed as alt-rock geniuses, but because they're from Scotland and have a cute wee frontman, they're dismissed as bland pop" (Edwards 2003:26). Such challenges in nomenclature are compounded by ambiguous reviews. For example in *Uncut* magazine a recent review of the re-release of Televisions' album *Marquee Moon* is detailed as "A stone-cold new wave classic. Taut dynamics, quivering guitar interplay and jarring lyrics - everything that art-punk should be" (*Uncut* December 2003:144). Within two lines, the reviewer has identified the music as both *new wave* and *art punk* confusing the reader and throwing doubt upon the validity of the classification.

It is the positioning, interrelationship, convergence and divergence of musical, paramusical and perceptual factors that decide the categorisation of an artist. In the case of Travis, the origin of the artist and the attributes of the lead singer influence the genre placing. To establish a set of rules, which encompass all possible variables within a given musical context, would be extremely difficult and therefore different commentators use different variables or rules to define genre. Thus, certain genres are described from different reference points. For example, Thorne describes *grunge* from a socio-cultural and media viewpoint: he states "Grunge (a colloquialism for dirt or squalor) was adopted by ROCK music journalists in the mid 1980s to refer to the deliberately offensive posturing of GREBO and HEAVY METAL musicians" (Thorne 1993:103). Daly and Wice view *grunge* in the context of the 'similarity reflex' stating, "'Grunge' was originally a tongue-in-cheek term for the guitar noise propagated by cultish independent label SUB POP" (Daly and Wice 1995:99).

From such examples it is apparent that when different reference points are applied to musical episodes, which encompass different sets of variables or rules, then differing perceptions of the genre can be generated. Thus a collective focus identified by all the protagonists involved is not possible and mixed genre messages occur.

The danger of not using a conventional rule system is that unconventional frameworks become fragmented. However, the utilisation of a system which is too prescriptive formalises and pigeonholes artists too freely. Fabbri states that “a musical genre is a set of musical, paramusical, social and cultural events, real or possible, whose development is moderated by a specific arrangement of socially, accepted rules” (Fabbri 1995:134). Fabbri further elucidates on the dynamic relation between expression and content and encapsulates the essence of a holistic approach, scrutinising dynamic relations between a genre’s constituent factors whilst still maintaining order through the moderation of the variables. Few genres are created immediately and often it is many weeks, months or even years before an accepted tag is applied. Often tag modification occurs as other artists are attributed to the genre. Therefore, genre is not static but develops over time within an identified context and is constantly subject to change. The assumption by commentators is that genres are dynamic patterns or paradigms comprising interrelated elements or indicators, which are not formulaic in nature, and thus cannot be determined effectively and efficiently by their intrinsic properties (Fabbri, 1980, Negus, 1999, and Storey, 1994). It has been ascertained that genres can be defined only in relation to their similarity to, or difference from, artists or music that belong to different genres and other types of music or artists from the same genre group as evidenced in the work of Fabbri (1995) and Zorn (2000) (see 1.1.2.2:5). Thus, the application of a multifunctional framework would enable a more holistic approach to genre identification. Fabbri concurs with such an approach but believes that such a multifunctional approach should apply to the “formal choices of a nineteenth century composer and to the reactions of rock concert fans” (Fabbri, 1981:53).

In his early exploration of musical genre, Fabbri’s definitions erred toward static and “rule bound” entities lacking in elasticity (Negus, 1999). Is it necessary for the same genre determinants to be used in nineteenth century music as in contemporary popular music when so many different genre determinants govern the genesis, development and identification of music *per se*? In his later work, Fabbri’s stance softens on this issue. He is aware that many commentators, especially those writing on genres based on the oral tradition impose limits on the genre rules within the community. Latterly, Fabbri sees no reason to impose limits on genre and does not perceive its extension as a problem. Exploring genre in the confines of a structured framework is difficult, as each discourse and protagonist utilised in a holistic approach works within separate sets of rules. Many of these sets are opposed or non-complimentary to each other. Acceptance of codifications and rules is essential for exploration into musical genre, hence the triangulation approach combining qualitative and quantitative research used within this study. Negus is still not convinced that Fabbri’s work is flexible enough to encompass today’s dynamic and versatile music industry. He relates that Fabbri’s acknowledgement of change pays lip service to the fluidity of genre and that the genre framework that Fabbri identifies is static, emphasising “the constraints rather than the possibilities” (Negus 1999:26). Negus concurs with the emerging view presented by Dury in

Zorn (2000) that the genre experiences of both musicians and consumers are dynamic and fluid although he acknowledges the existence of universal genre rules (Negus 1999:26).

A range of different determinants have emerged over the past decade as music has changed and diversified. The way in which music is analysed has moved from a primarily score based analysis to a more multifunctional framework. The development of a flexible identification system encapsulating many and varied variables which can be used when and if necessary would facilitate a more practicable approach to music identification. The need for flexibility is clearly identified by Johnson in Zorn who states:

But genre definitions are more than mere artificial constructs, because they create feedback loops with the real world. The niches they outline within the culture attract people who are eager to participate, and who voluntarily sort themselves into the available categories; but who also insist on customizing genre boundaries and job descriptions to fit their personalities and changing circumstances. These divisions are neither completely foolish and arbitrary, nor particularly optimal or exact. They are simply what's available, and their proper use requires flexibility and the occasional vandalism (Zorn 2000:35).

Johnson identifies that pre-ordained categories of the industry are inevitable, advocating flexibility and the appropriation of factors from other discourses and areas to enable as focussed identification as possible. Thus, the dichotomy between defining specifically created artificial genre frameworks and arbitrary definitions is highlighted, and an approach through a measured and flexible manner is recommended.

An issue associated with genre identification is multi labelling, which occurs where there is some confusion caused at the border of one genre with another (Fabbri 1995). Borders may encroach on a multitude of genre areas and thus some musical episodes may belong to one or more genre categories. An example of this is *house/techno*, which often combines with *rock*, *indie*, *thrash* and *punk*, all of which could lay claim to a sub genre inspired by the combination. Fornas explains this when he states, "Genres are not fixed essences that can evaporate. They are dynamic sets of generic rules for the shaping of musical works, and as such they are continuously transformed, according to the contexts and conditions that frame them, and the interpretations they are given" (Fornas 1995<sup>b</sup>:1-118). In a temporal continuum, an artist may move between genres or may find that they are associated with different genres or even that the changing boundaries of established genres may include or reject them through time.

When creating genre, labels are applied that it is hoped will be widely understood, or equivalent meanings from other semiotic systems or emotive associations are appropriated to enable understanding by the consumer. Genres only exist in as far as a "social group declares and enforces the rules that constitute them" (Hodge & Kress 1995:7). A change in context can change a group's interpretation of the genre and thus the terms of reference of that group.

Rules that define a genre can be related to any of the codes involved in a musical event. Therefore, the more codes that are identified and analysed the more precise the classification of the genre should be. However, if the codes used to define genre are non-specific and identification of genre standardised, then musical episodes and artists can become trapped within genre areas to which they may not belong. Therefore, codes are constantly broken, discarded or replaced with others as the musical environment exists in a constant state of flux owing to an ever-changing macro and microenvironment. In listings, on the web and in the minds of the artist and the audience, music spaces, styles and genres largely overlap the created definitions in concert with the fluidity of the music industry itself.

From experience in the music industry, it is clear that genres are fluid and dynamic, in line with the way in which the industry has developed. This supports the general argument stated by Hodge, (1995) and Fornas, (1995<sup>b</sup>), and reiterated by Negus (1999), and Dury in Zorn (2000) earlier in this chapter. By expanding the boundaries and enabling fluidity the industry, the consumer, the artists and the media gain access to, and play equally important roles in, the identification and consumption of genre, and thus become part of the defining process.

In conclusion, a definition of genre must be holistic and multifunctional, explored in context both spatially and temporally. Genre is dynamic and should not be bound by circumstances, although this is often not possible owing to the ever changing context within the musical environment. Genre must relate to all the important actors within the musical field (the artist, the industry, the media and the consumer) as well as musical, paramusical and perceptual elements not only taking place within the genre but also in conjunction with other related genres. Thus, the working definition of genre operating within this thesis comprises a fluid and dynamic raft of multifunctional musical, paramusical and perceptual factors in which development is facilitated by the progressive interface between these factors and the contextual musical environment, which comprises, although not exclusively, the industry, the media, the artist and the consumer. Although the definition of genre has been discussed, the conditions of genre codification have not. Such conditions encapsulate the interrelationship of one genre with others in the same musical system, as Fabbri states: "A new genre is not an empty space but in a musical system that is already structured. Therefore a considerable part of the rules that define it are common to other genres already existing within the system, those that individualize the new genre being relatively few" (Fabbri 1981:58). Now that a working definition of genre and the context within which genre exists has been created for this study, a definition of taxonomy will be identified.

### **1.1.2.3 The Origin of Contemporary Genre Nomenclature: Setting the Context**

The origin of the contemporary development of genre nomenclature can be traced back to the *punk* era of the mid to late 1970s. In this era, as

Hesmonadhalgh (1997) identifies that, established protagonists within the industry started to lose some of their control in regard to the naming of genre to journalists and new and up and coming innovators from the independent distributors network. These innovators needed new and unique selling positions to create a market for their artists. The insular nature of the music industry and the control it exerted on the media and popular culture at that time was exceptionally difficult to break. The popular music industry had built up a formidable array of contacts and associates over the twenty-five years since the development of modern popular music in the 1950s; these included the media, managers, venues and the means of production through record companies and the studio. However, these very contacts and associates would inadvertently enable new innovators to create an independent network of record labels, venues, studios and media representatives to loosen the conglomerate's stranglehold and create a more democratised music industry. It was the mass media that created a 'moral panic' (Frith 1991), which exposed *punk* to youth culture and thus initiated and perpetuated the development of the independent network. This network enabled access for all through the demystification of the music industry and thus "a network of production, distribution and manufacture was set up which allowed musicians from all over the UK access to the means of recording and selling their creative output" (Hesmonadhalgh 1997:256).

This new system of production gave the post-*punk* journalists, artists, managers, and consumers the chance to forge new developments in music and create an upsurge in independent genre nomenclature. The system of production and management was no longer totally under the control of the major record companies.

Within the text a number of references are made to popular music. The next section analyses what is meant by this term in the context of this study.

#### **1.1.2.4 Towards a Definition of 'Popular'**

There are a number of inconsistencies which transpire when exploring any genre classification relating to the sphere of popular music. One major incongruent relates to the definition and identification of what popular music actually is. Shuker states "To study popular music is to study popular culture": the two are inextricably linked (Shuker 1994:1). As this thesis unfolds, the notion of music and culture and their integration and development will emerge at the interface between musical/paramusical factors and genre philosophy. In the context of this thesis culture pertains to cultural production and the shaping of 'cultural economy' as related by Di Maggio (1977) and Burnett (1996), identifying the global production, consumption and distribution of cultural products and services.

Popular is derived from the Latin "*popularis*", meaning "of the people" (Sykes, J.B. 1977:859). Robinson states that the connotation of popular in the context of contemporary music is related to commercial success rather than to

appreciation and “is a measure of how many people buy a musician’s music or come to see him perform” (Robinson 1991:10). Robinson further identifies the key function of the production and marketing systems and how they are related to the commercial success of both the media and music industries.

However, if Robinson’s observations are correct, then both popular music identified as folk music and popular music identified within specific genres, areas or communities are incongruent within such a framework, as only quantitative success is equated with popularity. Hamm (1995) echoes Robinson’s sentiments in his admission that popular music mirrors the society within which it was created. This is endorsed by McLuhan’s (1965) identification of the ‘global village’ “created by the homogenizing effects of the universal availability of new electronic technologies” (Burnett 1996:1). The music business and media conglomerates are perceived to exert some form of economic control on the consumer society in which we live, and thus quantitative aspects of the music are more pertinent when focussed on economic gain and immediacy of message. However, Hamm links popularity or commercial success with inferiority. He states: “The essence and value of a piece of music resides in the text, in the music itself, not in its reception and use. Judged in this way, popular music is artistically and morally inferior to the classical repertory and is thus not deserving of serious scholarly attention. It does, however, mirror the society in which it was created more directly than does classical music” (Hamm 1995:2). Tagg (1982) creates a matrix for distinguishing between folk, classical and popular musics, which identifies a number of elements developed later in this thesis.

Hamm proceeds to relate that early in the modern era society created a distinction between elite music and that which was less technically demanding. Compared with Robinson’s observations such a view encompasses a qualitative appreciation of popular, where it is not the measurement linked to the sale of phonograms or concert tickets but the mass dissemination of the music through society by other means. Hamm’s contextualisation of elite encompasses high art and his contextualisation of popular pertains to folk music. The music performed by professionals for relatively passive audiences in this context was understood as universal and enduring, whilst the music of the people transmitted through the oral tradition was identified as regional and transient. Underlying elitist music was a perception that the value of the music resided in the composition itself and not in its reception and use.

The implication of popular as a form of music or art suggests that popular is the obverse of elite. Such an interpretation of popular pervades public and governmental bodies and the way in which they interface with the arts and entertainment industries. Arts and entertainment in advanced society have always shared an obvious duality. The arts are in many cases funded by the state in the shape of an elitist subsidised form kept alive for the masses at great expense to the public purse (Appleyard 1984). However, entertainment-the popular alternative to art-has created its own self-funding structure. In most cases, this system of funding results in a private sector mechanism, using

private patronage as an incentive. It is therefore deemed by the state not to require subsidy. This lack of subsidy is directly attributable to the nature of entertainment and its association with the mass cultural process (Dyer 1992). Conversely, there is a service motive intrinsic within the arts, where through subsidy the public is provided with the means to enjoy the arts and culture if they so wish. In the eyes of the funding bodies, this service motive within the arts outweighs the profit motive of the entertainment industry and thus infers subsidy.

The orientation of entertainment and its administration to the public ensures great investment by the private sector in marketing and promotion, which initiates high returns through the development of macro marketing techniques to mass culture (Dyer 1999).

The public subsidy to the arts affords the public the opportunity to attend the arts if they so wish. This therefore supposes that popular equates to mass cultural and minority interest equates to the arts and other elements that are subsidised. There are of course anomalies, but this scenario perpetuates for the great majority of both art and entertainment concerns.

The word popular, or the phrase popular music, attracts a multitude of meanings. Hall and Whannel in Storey state that:

pop music is regarded as the exclusive property of the teenager, admission to outsiders reserved...But of course this is nonsense. Like any other popular commercial music, teenage pop is light entertainment music intended for dancing, singing, leisure and enjoyment. It differs in character, but not in kind, from other sorts of popular music which have provided a base for commercial entertainment since the advent of jazz and before (Storey 1994:74).

The commercial manipulation and marketing of teenage *pop* music has changed such music's character almost unrecognisably. From its inception in the 1950s, *pop* music's sphere of influence and the enjoyment it brings are still relatively similar to the impact that it had on its initial creators and consumers. Hall and Whannel in Storey (1994) recognise the intention of the producer to maximise commercial profitability, and the consumer to participate in the total experience afforded by the music and its surroundings.

The differentiation of music on a commercial basis between what is popular and what is not is a tenuous division. Robinson states that Tagg differentiates popular music from *folk* or *classical* music by, "Using industrially based distinctions such as mass distribution and the use of recordings for storage and distribution, even though classical music is stored and distributed to a world audience in much the same way. Tagg also asserts that popular music primarily originates in industrialised, free enterprise societies. Yet local production of popular music occurs all over the world and in all kinds of social contexts" (Robinson et al. 1991:11).

Robinson seems to miss the point that Tagg makes here. There has to be a distinction between popular in economic and numerical terms, popular as folk music, or popular within localised genres. Tagg does this by highlighting the industrial and mass distribution theme, which immediately differentiates it

from other popular categories, as well as differentiating it from the classical music scenario in the UK. The sales of *classical* music in Western Europe and the USA are dwarfed by the sales of popular music and thus the differentiation can be made. However, if only the relative number of phonograms sold per genre is taken into consideration the appreciation of the totality of the *classical* experience is not clearly identified. For example, "The American Symphony Orchestra League reports that there are more than 27,000 symphony concerts given every year. This particular audience now numbers around 32 million patrons each season" (Baskerville 2001:4).

Such quantitative findings must be compared relative to the numbers attending *pop* and *rock* concerts, which are estimated at between 140 and 230 million attendees per year. (Pollstar 2001) If each *classical*, *rock* and *pop* concert were to be fragmented into specific genre groups rather than umbrella categories it would be interesting to see the *Figures* identifiable within each genre grouping. Consideration must also be given to the production and consumption of the '*popular classics*' which is a thriving mass cultural industry.

The global exploration of music further confuses the definition and context of popular. Nettl perceives that in each different culture popular music is defined differently. Some have small individual classifications; others have a singular definition, whilst some have multiple definitions dependent on context (Nettl 1985:85-86). The lack of an overriding framework to define what popular music is causes a great deal of difficulty in the development of terms of reference within this study. In Italy, a proposed differentiation between popular and non-popular has been attempted. Fabbri identifies the term "*musica extracolta*" which is "utilised to identify music which is not serious or classical music" (Fabbri 1995:133). This reiterates the art/entertainment conundrum stated earlier in this chapter, by making a distinction between what is termed as serious music, and the music of the masses which is seen as inferior. Frans Birrer in Middleton provides a useful summary of definitions of popular music.

1. *Normative definitions*. Popular music is an inferior type.
2. *Negative definitions*. Popular music is music that is not something else usually 'folk' or 'art' music).
3. *Sociological definitions*. Popular music is associated with (produced for or by) a particular social group.
4. *Technologico-economic definitions*. Popular music is disseminated by mass media and/or in a mass market (Middleton 1990:4).

However, as Middleton (*ibid*) states none of these definitions are satisfactory and he discusses further both the positivist approach and that of sociological essentialism, which draw on a number of Birrer's definitions. Positivist approaches, however, are quantifiable and measured on commercial grounds.



An example of this is the definition of popular based upon the amount of phonograms the artist has sold as already related in Robinson, (1991), Tagg, (1982), Storey, (1994) and Baskerville, (2001). The introduction of performance indicators to measure effectively quantifiable elements enables the judgement of popular through quantity. These measures include charts where the use of silver, gold and platinum status and their multiples signify numbers of phonograms sold. The essentialist method however is a qualitative assessment of popular. Within such an approach, popular tends not to be equated with mass or commercially, and thus popular as folk and popular as genre would sit within this category.

The essential element within all of these approaches is the creation of contrast. An example identified earlier in this chapter contrasts popular as mass entertainment with non-popular taking on the role of elitist. If the roles of the major and independent music industries are explored, in the majority of cases popular takes on the form of mass culture and non-popular becomes minority interest, in relation to the proportion of consumers buying into the product or service compared to mass interest, alternative, or underground. At this juncture, it may be pertinent to point out the meaning of the term underground which pertains to the alternative and is the antithesis of mass cultural.

The term "underground" is the expression by which clubbers refer to things subcultural. More than fashionable or trendy, underground sounds and styles are "authentic", and pitted against the mass-produced and mass-consumed. Undergrounds denote exclusive worlds whose main point is not elitism, but whose parameters often relate to particular crowds. They delight in parental incomprehension, negative newspaper coverage and that best blessing in disguise, the BBC ban. More than anything else, then, undergrounds define themselves against the mass media (Ross & Rose 1995:177).

Such a definition succeeds the original definition of underground taken from its "use to describe resistance networks during the Second World War", (Thorne, 1993:290) and as a synonym in the 1960s for counterculture and alternative society. Alternative music by its very nature has means of production, marketing strategies or genre placements and is in no sense of the word elitist, but the antithesis of such a concept. However, music classed as elitist is not so by default but by choice and context. Thus elite music runs parallel to alternative and their means of production, marketing strategies and genre placements, although entirely different from those of the mass cultural industries, share the mantle of opposition to or difference from popular.

Economic context may change the way in which an alternative culture or music is viewed bringing it into the mass cultural domain. O' Hara identifies an example of this:

We have seen that nonconformists may be praised by historians or idolised in films or literature long after the fact of their nonconformity. As for their own time, the nonconformist is labelled as a rebel, a deviant, or a trouble maker by the status quo she is going against. Corporate music and fashion magazines that banned or ridiculed *Punk* for the last twenty years now hail many bands as "ground breakers" or talented originators. Corporate music executives once disgusted by *Punk* are now

signing young bands left and right in an effort to make money off the “cutting edge” nonconformist sounds (O Hara 1999:28).

Commercially popular performance indicators are manifest tangibly through the charts exhibited in record shops, on TV, in newspapers and magazines and on the radio. However, the term popular here is relative. As well as mass cultural charts, there are also minority music charts, which identify elements such as *independent*, *black music*, *jazz*, *blues*, *classical* and *rap*. However, minority interest charts in most cases do not mirror the substantial phonogram sell through exhibited by the mass cultural charts and thus are not identified as major contributors to popular music sales. Those *independent* artists, *black* artists and *rap* artists that command a substantial sell through will appear in the mass cultural charts as well as those that house minority interest artists and music.

The term popular can be problematic as different musicologists, musicians and managers identify differing genre indicators when pigeon holing popular artists. Fabbri tests the very meaning of *pop* and popular stating that:

rock and pop are two distinct types of music, even though an English student of popular music would include rock music within the popular category. But is then pop simply a synonym, the abbreviation of popular? In Italy it most certainly is not: *musica popolare* refers only to that music which in Anglo-Saxon countries is called folk music, while pop was once synonymous with rock and today is often used to indicate English rock music of the 70s' (Fabbri 1995:132).

If *pop* and *rock* are both considered as umbrella categories then their similarity of purpose links them through title. However, if they are considered through musical, paramusical and perceptual inferences then although some musical episodes may be interchangeable between the two categories, the identification of which artists fit into which genre is relatively straightforward owing to variables including sartoriality, style and musical factors. However, such an issue is complicated globally; Hamm simplifies the identification of popular by creating broad temporal indicators for its existence. He identifies popular music as, “extending from the late eighteenth century through the first two thirds of the twentieth century, or from the industrial revolution through late capitalism” (Hamm 1995:1). Neither of these explanations are sufficient to base a definition of popular on in this study, as the first over complicates the issue by ascribing a global context. The second over simplifies popular and does not define sufficiently compartmentalised temporal periods within which genre can be assigned and compared.

It will become increasingly apparent through the exploration of genre that many of the musical genres considered do not fall into the generally accepted or discrete categories of popular music, and often agreement cannot be reached on terms of reference for these categories. What the masses and minorities class as popular will not be the same, as contexts will differ and perception of the industry, the media, the artist and the consumer will depend on a number of variables. These include textual evidence in the media, relative sales and consumer knowledge of the product or service provided.

Temporally, contextually and historically musical genres are constantly in flux. Genres may not only shift in and out of popularity, but there may also be shifts within genres themselves. These shifts are not necessarily caused by factors inherent in the genre but may be dependant on factors such as boundary expansion, the addition of new artists, the division or fragmentation of the genre, the use of music in, film and TV, or through macro environmental factors over which the industry, media, artist and consumer exert no control. An example of media influence on the position of the artist can be identified in the rise of The Rembrandts, an obscure American indie group who had one hit worldwide. The song *I'll be there for you* is the theme from the hit TV series *Friends* and catapulted the artist into the 'popular' category as the song features daily in a wide range of territories and formats including on TV, video and DVD. This example shows the power of the medium of TV, which can change the fortunes of an unknown artist. There may also be changes within a genre to which an artist is attributed.

*Brit pop* is an example of the creation of a marketing category through which to enhance a small group of artists classed initially as independent. Both Blur and Oasis are examples of artists classified as *indie* but which were marketed as *Brit pop* so that their music could be marketed in a more focussed manner. Thus an umbrella, marketing category, genre or sub genre can be formed by industrial necessity, a whim or through changing relationships between the industry, the media, the artist and the consumer. Such a movement changes the dynamic of the genre, creating a different set of norms and values.

The development of new perspectives on a specific genre of music, or the possibility that one of the artists within a minority genre produces a top ten single, could effectively shift the artist from one genre area to another i.e. *nu punk* to *pop punk*. The Rembrandts association with popular was purely coincidental and dependent on the success of a TV programme, whereas the following example shows the adaptation made by the industry and the media to develop the maximum economic potential from a genre and/or category change. The Offspring charted at number one in the week beginning 24<sup>th</sup> January 1999 with the single *Pretty Fly for a White Guy*. This success caused a number of changes to the way in which the industry, the media, the artist and the consumer perceived the band and the genre. The shipping of a large number of units across the world changed the status of the band from alternative to mainstream and their perceived genre category from *nu punk* to *pop punk*. The media and the industry adapted their marketing strategy to catapult the band into the limelight evidenced by the number of column inches, TV appearances, ticket sales and the amount of merchandising afforded to the band over a four-month period. The band members' lifestyles changed and the consumer opinion and audience demographic shifted to enable a new and younger audience to participate in concerts and product purchases (Arnold 1997).

The notion of popular music connotes and denotes different meanings and identifies alternative environments dependent on age, culture, spatial and contextual orientation and perceived knowledge of popular as a concept. In the past five decades, a greater number of people have had an influence on the

structure and development of popular music. Owing to its economic and technological transformation, these include accountants, managers and those in the media paid to plug certain genres, groups or artists. Unfortunately scholars have a tendency to utilise the 'permanent terminology' developed in the classical tradition to analyse music formally and find it difficult to shed this mantle and to utilise new and exciting unconventional tools.

Popular music for the purposes of this thesis will be classified by using the following criteria.

- The music is not created in the classical tradition.
- The music is popular either by numbers through specific genre charts or by general popular chart standards.
- The music is not subsidised but is funded by commercial means.
- The music is not classed as elitist in the formal sense pertaining to the high arts.
- Both the mass and minority media disseminate the music.
- The music is light entertainment intended for dancing, leisure, relaxation and enjoyment.
- The music is primarily youth cultural

It can also be concluded from this chapter that *pop* is not necessarily the abbreviation for popular, as much non-popular music is identified as *pop* through its sound and its genre location. However, in the case of *pop punk* the prefix *pop* alludes to high profile media attention and a more manufactured musical episode.

Now that a working definition of popular has been identified the context within which taxonomy will be viewed within this thesis is analysed.

#### 1.1.2.5 Taxonomies

Taxonomy is derived from the Greek '*taxis*' describing the principles of classification especially in biology or cognitive studies (Sykes 1977:1186). Mezzich & Solomon identify the functional role of a taxonomy as the recognition and communication of "similarities and differences between objects and events" in the universe (Mezzich & Solomon 1980:1). Although the genesis of taxonomy originated in the natural sciences, taxonomies have been used for centuries to classify elements into groups. The use of the word taxonomy in this study encompasses a wide range of other identifying characteristics including field, department, space, type, style and genre. The contemporary link between taxonomies and music is made by Hamm who identifies the dichotomy between the creation of taxonomies for musical genre "based on close textual analysis" and those which "emphasize the flexibility and overlap of genres" (Hamm 1994:143). Taxonomy implies that there are similarities and differences between elements. As Abercrombie states taxonomy is the "study of the classification of organisms according to their resemblance's and differences" (Abercrombie et al

1976:283). Taxonomy in a musical framework alludes to categorisation, order and classification and is utilised in essence to “reduce the complexity of the empirical world” (Fabbri 1999:1-2). The creation of categories obviates the problem of naming everything separately. Categories enable us to speak in terms of general areas rather than singular objects. To speak in terms of general areas however, we must place the recognition of elements in some form of context.

Fabbri (1999) explored the concept of recognition using a hypothetical model. For example there is a hypothetical table containing a Travis, a Sex Pistols and a Deep Purple CD and a subject is asked to bring the *punk* CD from the table. If the result is that the Sex Pistols CD is brought and not the Travis or Deep Purple CD it is clear that recognition of the specific genre or taxonomic grouping has taken place. Jacoby et al state that recognition is determined by the combination of an “unconscious familiarity process and a conscious intentional recollection process”, these processes enable the correct CD to be chosen (Jacoby et al 1993:140). Thus in musical recognition the unconscious familiarity with other types of music that the subject is exposed to, and the conscious recognition of types of music already familiar to the subject combine to enable the placement of the music in a particular genre.

Taxonomy is useful as an analytical tool, which invariably begins with a field, which in this case happens to be popular music as defined earlier. The field in question then divides and sub-divides into classes. These divisions and sub divisions in the case of music taxonomy are the different genre groups and their positioning in an overall taxonomy. A group and each of its constituent entities exist at a given point in time in a given place. In taxonomy, groups have locations, not distributions, and so cannot be shared or held in common (Dunnell 1971: 4-6). This is often a difficult concept to apply liberally across the main protagonists involved in the naming of musical genres, as those involved in the music industry, the media, artistic deliberations or audience perceptions may class an artist or a song in different musical genres. As a result, within taxonomy, the constraining boundaries of groups are not formal characteristics of the constituent entities, but are often reducible to temporal and spatial limits. A key element within a taxonomy, which impacts very greatly within this study, is that an object or event cannot be assigned to a pre-existing group on the basis of its formal characteristics without altering the definition of the group. However, this is dependent on the range of artists or musical episodes housed within the group that another artist or musical episode is assigned to. However, even if the definition of a group changes, the addition of an object or event is usually not enough to change the name of the genre group concerned. Paradigms do not behave in a conceptually prescriptive way; thus, assigning an object or an event, which differs, disproportionately to others in the group may encourage the fragmentation of the group into sub and sub-sub genres thus enabling one or more new characteristics to become subsumed into such sub division identities. Such an example reiterates the constant flux of genre groups. (Dunnell 1971: 4-6)

However, umbrella and marketing categories are not genres and as such an object or event can be assigned to the group without altering its definition owing to the size and the wide range of artists attributed to it. If the category *pop* was to be identified purely by the number of phonograms sold, then as such the idea of belonging to the group would have only one variable and thus identification is quantifiable. Qualifiable variables are much more difficult to discern as context, history and spatial elements all come into play. If as Kay in Mezzich & Solomon states that a taxonomy provides “a way for members to relate and behave in a culturally appropriate manner”, then can *punk* be classed as part of a taxonomy as large areas of society would disagree that *punks* act appropriately (Mezzich & Solomon 1980:3)?

It is clear that a musical genre taxonomic structure is already in existence, but the way in which such a system has been created, introduced and manipulated gives rise to a number of questions within this study. These comprise,

- Is the system for genre identification arbitrary or has it been constructed using a framework housing a series of relevant identifiers?
- To what extent are the views of the industry, the media, the artist and the consumer identified as relevant in genre definition?
- How are genre label determinants used in genre nomenclature identified?
- Is it possible to create an overall taxonomic genre framework for popular music?

From experimentation in this thesis an attempt will be made to answer these questions.

#### **1.1.2.6 The Pigeonholing of Artists and Musical Episodes**

One fundamental concept that causes debate when any analysis of musical genre is attempted is the pigeonholing of musical style. Pigeonholes have a number of uses primarily enabling the effective and efficient classification of elements, but it has to be remembered that pigeonholes are of our own making and thus it may be perceived that they do not serve any purpose in quantitative or scientific research in regards to the analysis of music. (Tagg 1995) However, where a combination of scientific and non-scientific analysis takes place the study of classification is a vitally important part of this thesis. If pigeonholes are created on a whim, then perhaps, they have no place, but if they are created by utilising known variables and reference points, such developments are a factor in this research.

These emerging questions will be addressed through both quantitative and qualitative research in this thesis. Firstly, the identification of genre label determinants will be explored to ascertain a clearer picture of the variables or determinants utilised in the genre naming process.

## 1.2 Theoretical Discourses: A Synoptic View

### 1.2.1 Genre Label Determinants and the Musical Environment

Genre label determinants are variables or concepts utilised in the identification of genre groupings. In this thesis the term variable will be used to identify these factors. From the investigation of the problematisation and the terms of reference three categories of determinant have been identified as relevant. They comprise musical, paramusical and perceptual determinants. These focus on the protagonists involved in the emission, mediation and consumption of the product and service surrounding the music.

Emitter orientation highlights those determinants associated with the emission of the music (Tagg, 1998), (Sorlin 1994). The emitters include composers, musicians, lyricists, artists, studio engineers and producers. It is the engagement of these emitters in the creation of both the product and service element of the music that influence either the formal or the informal naming of the genre.

Mediator orientation (Tagg, 1998), (Sorlin 1994) identifies those that provide the link between the producer and the consumer and includes promoters, agents, record company, managers, retailers, journalists and others working in the management and dissemination of musica products, services and the media. Without mediators, the music does not reach the consumer and the genre does not become a 'live' entity.

Consumer orientation (Tagg 1998), (Sorlin 1994) identifies those who actively consume music through the various conduits presented by the industry, the media and consumer society. These include those who buy music product, those who listen to radio or watch TV, DVD and video, those who go to concerts, those who purchase magazines, books, periodicals and comics and those who passively consume music in shops, elevators and during transit.

Determinants in all three orientations comprise musical and paramusical as well as perceptual variables. The structural aspect of music is the vehicle through which music is carried. A taxonomy of structural determinants therefore comprises variables such as "tone, timbre, rhythm, temporal organisation, sound treatment and accentuation" (Tagg 1979:4), (Tagg 1981:1-14). However, this is not an exhaustive list and variables including melody, beat, vocalisation and instrumentation all contribute to the overall musical structure of an episode. Paramusical variables include sartoriality, iconography and live performance indicators and other elements, which are connected to the emission, mediation and consumption of music but are not structural components of music itself. The importance of paramusical factors cannot be underestimated. Negus relates the story of a word association game used in interviews where when asked to reply to the mention of a genre name with the first thing that came into their head, the "most common response was for people to reply with a visual image rather than an artists name or piece of

music" (Negus 1992: 66). Thus as Negus goes on to relate "different genres of music have become associated with and signify different images, which in turn connote particular attitudes, values and beliefs" (*ibid.*).

From the wide range of emitters, mediators and consumers outlined in this chapter, it becomes apparent that to create a comprehensive selection of genre determinants is an exhaustive process. Creating an exhaustive list of interchangeable variables or determinants (from a wide range of discourses) enables a selection of the most pertinent to a specific genre to be identified as central characteristics of that genre. However, if genre is determined by its similarities to and differences from other genres, then a core framework of determinants found in all types of music must be identifiable so that a reference point can be determined that will enable the recognition process to be further developed.

Now that the terms of reference for the musical environment and the parameters of the determinants influencing musical genre have been identified, methodologies will be appropriated to enable the creation of pertinent variables during the experimental process. These methodologies and variables are identified in Chapter 2.

Through Adorno's (1977) standardisation of the popular it may be possible in part to be able to identify strict divisions between types of music which the audience identifies. However, what is clear is that the way in which music is identified today is not based solely on musical criteria. (Robinson 1991), (Negus 1999) and (Adorno 1991) suggest that the details of the popular song may be changed but the essential structure and form remain the same. Therefore, when Bruce Springsteen sings *Because the night* the overarching genre signifiers are changed but the essential structure and form of the song are the same as when Patti Smith sings it. Therefore, it could be argued that structure and form of the song are not signifiers of genre but that other musical, paramusical and perceptual elements are utilised in genre identification. Thus, in the example used, the vocal delivery, the sartorial and iconographic imagery, the context and the arrangement of the song are all very different when sung by each of the artists. However, it could also be argued that the essential harmonic, thematic and melodic structure of the song play a part in defining the genre, as it may be these variables that enable the song to be classified as either *rock*, in the case of Bruce Springsteen, or *punk* in the case of Patti Smith.

In conclusion, depending on the genre explored and whether it is actually classed as a genre or a marketing or umbrella category it may be possible to use a single criterion to identify the genre. However, in other cases identification may call upon a vast array of determinants to enable the identification of the genre being examined.

### **1.2.2 Developmental Aspects and Difficulties in Nomenclature**

The creation and development of genre labels is a difficult area for exploration primarily owing to the number of determinants or variables and the differing



protagonists involved in the naming process. The exact criteria for any musical analysis are at times dubious. As Meltzer argues in *The Aesthetics of Rock*:

The whole analysis-of-music bit sort of calls for the use of a pack of words to tack onto a pack of sounds juxtaposed with another pack of words. Every creep who has ever bothered with that has to groove on how silly, in the good sense, the whole operation has to be. How do you *talk* about music, anyway, particularly when...It's also a matter of temporality and analysis, that scene. Aristotle, the original pumper, gives you a hunk of quasi-decent explicit categories that make it so that you alter the way you see drama forever, like you see it as Aristotelian sculpture drama, which is a groove but it drags too. So you take the concept of the rock track: it's short, it's not a long tedious grinding thing-in-front-of-you that you not only have to pay attention to keep up with but where labels sort of imprison your whole temporal thing with the expectation bummer because they're so easy to stick on legitimately. But you can urinate on Sophocles anyway (the Doors do) (Meltzer 1970:128-129).

The key to clear, precise and informative genre identification is the creation of genre which defy temporal, historical, contextual and spatial criteria and thus artists and songs can be attributed to it over a long period of time. *Jazz*, *blues*, *rock* and *pop* have achieved this, although there are those commentators that would not identify these as genre but more as umbrella or marketing categories. The exploration of *jazz* identifies structural factors that cannot be transferred to many other genres, but show a genre at its most malleable. Nicholson states that T.S Elliot pointed out in respect to *jazz* that it was difficult for artists to work outside the *jazz* tradition as the malleable nature of the framework enabled the accommodation of anything that *jazz* artists performed (Nicholson 1995:105).

### 1.2.2.1 The Malleability of Boundaries

The concept of the boundaries of a genre being malleable, stretching to accommodate new elements within the music, as long as that music somehow embodied the traditional elements of the genre, is interesting.

Meltzer (1970) makes an interesting point concerning labels imprisoning music temporally. This is often the case as with *glam rock*, *progressive rock*, *baroque* or *romantic*, which identifies eras or periods, which are referenced temporally. Other types of music appearing more recently containing similar identification determinants already attributed to past genres are thought to be passé or out of context. When an old genre is recycled in a second or third incarnation a new genre tag is often deliberately created to ensure that the new artist is categorised either in a new genre/sub-genre or as retro rather than passé. Examples of this can be found in the second, third and fourth wave of *new wave* where each successive appearance of a genre originating in the early 1980s was given a separate name to elicit further sales of both original and new artists. *Brit pop* and *new wave of new wave* were also categories spawned by this process.

### 1.2.2.2 The Coining of Easily Assimiable and Identifiable Names in Context

In *dance* music, the naming of sub and sub-sub genres takes on a very 'user-friendly' form, which is devoid of all temporal determinants. In this type of music, the artist and the media have in numerous cases, stipulated the nomenclature of musical episodes by the addition of a number of factors and co-factors including prefixes or suffixes. As Reynolds states:

Although I enjoy the semantic struggles over new genre terms (and have coined a few in my time - ambient jungle, artcore, post rock, gloomcore, neurofunk) even I sometimes wonder if the endless subdivision has got out of hand. Nowhere in the turnover of new sub-styles more rapid than in house music, which is still the mainstream of Ecstasy culture in Britain, the music most clubbers dance and drug to. In 1989, 'house' was the all-encompassing general term for rave music. But in the immediately ensuing years, not only was house's primacy challenged by rival terms like 'techno' and 'hardcore' but house itself started to splinter, as an endless array of prefixes- 'tribal', 'progressive', 'handbag', and so forth - interposed themselves in front of the word in order to define precise stylistic strands (Reynolds 1998:417).

The definition of "precise stylistic strands" is difficult to achieve in many types of music, owing to the interrelationship between musical, paramusical and perceptual factors. In *dance* music, the paramusical and perceptual factors are minimised and identification is often made solely on musical variables. Thus the identification of the genre can be made in a simplified manner compared to other types of music. The development of such a simplistic identification system enables an immediacy of sub genre creation essential to the transient world of *dance* culture where audience taste is unstable and genre development is faster than in any other musical area. However, such immediacy also facilitates error, fabrication and a spiralling of names often not fit for purpose. Other types of music are less specific. For example in the genre *grunge*, there is often free movement within an artist's repertoire between *rock*, *metal* and *indie*: the artist being classified as *grunge* because the criteria identifying this genre best fits the totality of an artists' repertoire, their musical, paramusical and perceptual variables.

### 1.2.2.3 Names with More than one Meaning

In this section the term *dance* (in italics) relates to club dancing music and the term dance relates to any type of music which is used for the performance of dance by the artist or the consumer.

Within the vast array of names embraced by musical genre it is often the case that a specific name has more than one meaning creating confusion of terms. For example, the label *dance* has a wide range of separate meanings where different cultures and subcultures utilise the same nomenclature simultaneously to describe different types of music and movement. The structure and form of the genre may be different but the tag given identifies the purpose and the participatory nature of the music. Dance music is music for dancing to, for example *Latin American*, *ballroom*, *disco* and *rock 'n' roll*. It is also

UK club dancing music, *ballet* music, *tribal* music and music for *contemporary dance*. The single term *Latin American* can be divided into a number of genres and sub genres of music including *rumba*, *mambo*, *paso doble*, *bossa nova* and *cha cha cha* and is used as an overarching category to describe the music to which these dances are performed. Unfortunately, the *tango*, originating in Argentina, is classed as a *ballroom dance*, which creates an anomaly in the terminology *Latin American*. UK club *dance* music is also split into a wide range of sub divisions including, *garage*, *house* and *rave*. The one overriding factor that permeates the term dance (including *dance*) is that all of the types of music covered by the category are created either to be danced to by the audience, or to be danced to by performers. Thus the overarching terminology describes the function.

### 1.2.3 Towards the Development of a Structure for Genre Analysis

It can be argued that to understand fully the concept of genre labelling, the musical notation and the structure and composition of the music and score are as important, if not more important, than paramusical variables and the role that the industry, media, artist and consumer play in musical nomenclature. However, areas normally explored during the conventional analysis of music are not always operative or pertinent in the examination of popular music. Hamm identifies “context, function and community validation” as important and that the identification of musical genre should not rely “simply on formal and technical regulations” (Hamm 1994:144). Walser in Hamm who states that “Nowhere are genre boundaries more fluid than in popular music” (*ibid*) further supports the need for a holistic interpretation of genre. Thus, it is difficult to attribute general criteria pertaining to genre on popular musical episodes as most are created at the intersection of many genres or sub-genres. Although musical factors are important in any taxonomic structure, the research carried out in much of formal music analysis concerns the dissection of the raw musical data of highly structured classical scores, rather than less structured and in many cases simpler popular songs. Shephard and Wicke argue that:

Ideological forces have, nonetheless, resulted in an overwhelming tendency for music theorists and music analysts to take the cognitive easy path and to reduce music - conceptually - to the conditions of its sounds, a tendency which as we have noted is replicated also within historical musicology (Shephard & Wicke 1997:140).

Such analysis, concentrating only on the “condition of its sounds” does not feature paramusical or perceptual factors. In short musical analysis as conventionally practiced in the European classical tradition rarely takes into consideration a holistic view. The constant interaction of the industry, the media, the artist and the consumer with the music, and the changes in context and interpretation within such a fluid form as popular music, does not favour conventional music analysis and as such it is unsuitable for use as a tool in this study.

In past explorations of music there has been a wide range of studies on musical analysis by formalists, referentialists and through social, semiotic and

anthropological viewpoints. These analyses include (Schenkerian- Yeston (1977), Sharrenberg (1997), Forte and Gilbert (1982) Semiotic- Eco (1977), Ruwet (1987), Tagg (1993), Motivic - Ruwet (1987), Cook (1989), Reti (1978), Rhythmic Analysis- Cooper and Meyer (1960), Lester (1986), Timbral and Textual- Levy (1982), Cogan(1984), Cantometrics- Lomax (1976), Historical criticism- Treitler (1989), Performance, Yeston (1975), Schmalfeldt (1983), Phenomenological, Lochhead (1986) Encoding- Brook and Murray (1964) Notation- Leroy, Muller and Garnett (1995). Implication-realisation Meyer (1973) Set Theoretical Hasty (1980) and Emotional- Budd (1985). Although each has its merits in the formal analysis of music, only Lomax (1976) Eco (1977) and Tagg (1993) explore the possibilities of genre nomenclature. Kerman makes an interesting observation on formal musical analysis. He recognises not only the existence and worth of the study of popular music in all its forms, but also he recognises that the study of all other forms of music is pertinent alongside the study of the German masters (Kermann 1985:319).

Many of the analytical concepts associated with music, however, tend to turn studies into a quasi-scientific analysis, which becomes independent of musical performance or the study of paramusical or perceptual factors. The analysis is then left to a computer or computer programmer who has to make sense of a number of mathematical concepts and a wide range of data. These, however, only have a bearing on the written music and not on how it was conceived, the aesthetic elements inherent in such a conception, social and philosophical views of the consumer process and the artist, its performance or its appreciation.

One major concern inherent in this thesis is that any analysis of musical genre should provide an easily assimilable and applicable framework not only for musicians but also for consumers, journalists and music managers alike, creating grounds for a commonality of structure within the study of the genre. Cook states that "a mechanical comparison of the way composers treat musical forms misses the point: what matters is the aesthetic values, the approach to musical materials, that underlie the forms themselves" (Cook 1989:11-12).

The search for aesthetic value and the delivery of the more perceptual elements of music including comments from those involved in the music's production and consumption are important in any review of genre content. Cook's statement above presents the central core of what music is really about. However, to ignore structure and mechanical comparisons within a musical context would denigrate any analysis in much the same way as negating aesthetic value and delivery of perceptual elements. Paul Edward Miller in Ostransky provides an insight into the characteristics of *jazz*, which must be observed during any analysis of that music as these characteristics create a framework of reference within which *jazz* exists.

Primarily, and above everything else, jazz is music...To be sure, there exists a qualitative difference, technically, between jazz and classic. Briefly, classical music is a procedure of writing and playing according to academically recognised standards (As taught in books, schools). Jazz differs from classic in the following characteristics: (1) *Rhythm*. A rigid 4/4 beat (occasionally 2/4 or 8/8) combined with polyrhythms,

or cross rhythms more commonly known as syncopation, and the use of free rubato. (2) *Harmony*. The blues triad (dominant, sub-dominant, tonic), which has been intermixed with harmonies stemming from European traditions, including polyphony and polytonality. (3) *Figurations*. Refers chiefly to suspensions, after beats, passing tones and melodic intervals. Since the use of figurations results in the mixture of concords and discords, this accounts for the disregard of the so-called pure tone and the subsequent utilisation of what has come to be known as jazz intonation (Ostransky 1960:32-33).

Paul Edward Miller takes a more formal musical approach to the definition of the genre, defining it through its oppositional structure to classical music.

Genre is also used as a reflective tool to create categories for past and present musical divisions. An example of the use of temporal identification occurs in Mitchell (1976), where he alludes to Frith's (1987) signalling of "peak periods in post-war Anglo American rock n pop music". The first is *rock n roll*, which reached its peak in 1956-57; the second *rock*, which peaked in 1966-67; the third *punk rock*, which was at its most influential in 1976-77 and then the forms of *pop* and *hip hop* emerging in 1986 and 1987 (Mitchell 1996:11). However, all of these definitions are unstable. If we take *punk* as an example, the American forerunner of *punk* emerged several years earlier than its British counterpart and developed alongside it until the two fused. *Punk* existed as an undercurrent in the British, European and US music scene until it re emerged as *hardcore* in the mid 1980s and *nu punk* in the 1990s. In any temporal identification of music there will be discrepancies in the identification of the primary dates relating to musical periods, as musical boundaries tend to overlap and change as time passes.

Genre is not just used to define temporal periods; it is also used to define class and race, for example, the black bars of Harlem where *jazz* originated and the streets of New York and LA from where *rap* emanated. It is used to define dance, for example the *Allemana*, *Latin American* and *Rock n Roll*. It is used to define spaces for music, for example *Sonata da chiesa* (Music of the church) and *rave*. Thus, genre is more than one-dimensional: it is a layered framework comprising many meanings, values and variables.

Observing the participants in any musical community comprising songwriters, performers, consumers, media players, promoters and teachers, the rigidity in the use of the concept of genre classification causes a difficulty in both definition and development. In the view of Fornas (1995) and Negus (2000) and many other commentators, genre is both fluid and "continuously transformed". The imposed rigidity by the industry can be identified in the genre of *heavy metal*. Specific producers are often associated with the production of *heavy metal* albums. These producers have been used for years and give the album a *metal* focus. However, fluidity and transformation in other successful genres has forced the industry to experiment with different producers to create a more palatable sound and thus to appear attractive to today's consumers. *Dance*, *indie*, and *soul* producers are now being used to produce *metal* albums. This affords the music currency and increases the possibility of crossover, breaking down the rigidity of structure by introducing producers familiar with techniques of production often alien to the genres that they are producing. This

mechanism extends the genre to other audiences by the value of remix and remastering. However, this also calls into question the exact limits of the boundaries of genre and enables the boundaries of the music to be constantly extended or to remain in flux.

From the elements identified in this section, it can clearly be seen that the construction of a base for analysis is an extremely difficult task. The use of so many variables, contexts and perspectives indicate the creation of a holistic multifunctional structural framework.

#### 1.2.4 Temporal, Historical and Contextual Determinants

Genre label determinants concern the combination of temporal, contextual, historical and cyclical aspects of music. The re-emergence of a genre can mimic elements of its first incarnation, possibly recreating sartorial and structural components in a different context.

An example of this would be the emergence of *nu punk* bands, where artists included in this genre portray some of the same signifiers as US and UK *punk* bands of the mid to late 1970s but have a perceived differing philosophy and a formulaic rather than 'DIY' structure, which sets the new genre apart from the original. However, the re-emergence of a genre can change it radically, as with the case of *electronic dance* music, which mirrored the mid 1970s experimental electronic culture of Tangerine Dream and Kraftwerk, but spawned a completely new eclectic subculture embodying *rock, indie, soul, garage* and *reggae* in a wide ranging and rich subcultural diversity.

Although the new *dance* genre was based on the sounds first experimented with in the 1970s, the subculture and perception of the genre were entirely different, focusing on the total experience and the self-awareness of movement rather than a preoccupation with post-modern industrial culture (Reynolds 2000).

*Figure 1* shows the cyclical emergence of music. For example, the creation of the 1960s sound by the Beach Boys, the Beatles and the Rolling Stones has re-emerged in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s through the hybridisation of genre. In the 1980s new wave artists appropriated the 1960s guitar sound in their music to create a difference between them and other artists of that era. In the 1990s Oasis, Ocean Colour Scene and other *indie* bands utilised the sounds of the 1960s to create a retro sound which appealed across a wide audience range. Although the initial genre itself was not re-created, new genres sporting similar fashions, musical structures and perceptual similarities emerged.

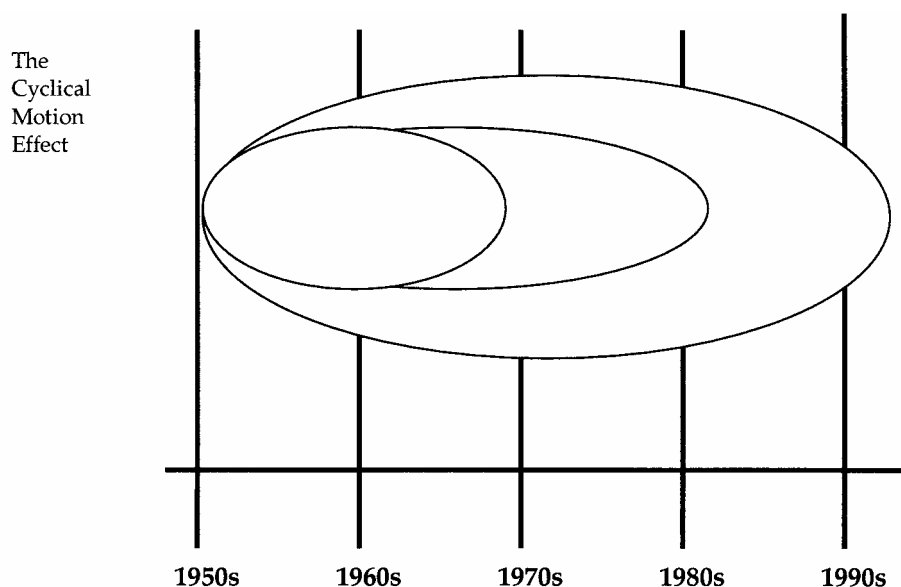


FIGURE 1 The Cyclical Motion Effect

Cyclical motion takes place when a music originating in an identified period of time re-emerges in another period of time in either the same or modified form. Peterson and Berger in Frith & Goodwin allude to such an effect (1990:141-157). Another example of this is *rock n roll* where the original form emerged in the 1950s and then re-emerged with artists like Shakin' Stevens in the 1980s and the Mavericks in the 1990s. The musical structure was the same but the lyrical content and the contexts were different.

In most cases a re-emergent genre does not mirror the original, as the social, economic and cultural context of its original incarnation are different. The contextual focus is constantly shifting. The re-emergence of genre can be engineered for a profit motive to impact upon the sell through of phonogram units, live concert tickets, merchandising or fashion accessories. However, this has to be orchestrated through a number of integrated media to enable such a development to reach maximum potential. Such a strategy was used with the emergence of *grunge*, where the emanation of a new dynamic genre was engineered in such a way as to maximise consumer awareness and appeal to a wide range of consumers. Although in its original incarnation *grunge* was new and different it soon became manipulated by the media and the industry for commercial ends.

The retention of consumer music memories enables retro music to become an increasingly marketable entity. The development of retro depends on the carriers of the music, the technology and the consumer orientation. To the music industry and the media, retro represents the use of pre existing codes, labels and determinants in the creation of a new audience and the encouragement of past audiences to show brand loyalty. The development of retro music is the catalyst for other retro developments including art, fashion and literature. These are seldom created together but have their own cycles of evolution and re-emergence. The retro genre, if it can be called a genre, is

'inhabited' by those who have more disposable income - as evidenced in chapter 3 (3.2.3), and thus are conditioned to spend more on re-issues and re-releases on CD and to attend concerts by musicians re-forming bands to coincide with the release of a retro collection. Temporal, historical and perceptual elements are all important within this thesis and will be discussed further in the findings.

## 1.3 A Fresh Perspective

### 1.3.1 Issues in Generic Determination and Definition

#### 1.3.1.1 Introduction to Issues in Genre Determination and Definition

This section explores issues which may emerge during the determination and definition of genre in music. To recap, a specific issue related to any exploration of genre taxonomy is the fluidity of musical labels and their designation. Labels appear, disappear and often re-appear at various points in time, some in the same incarnation whilst others may be used to describe other types of music or artists. Few musical genres created over the past five decades either exist or operate in the same form in which they originally operated. The addition or subtraction caused by the growth of each genre changes the values and determinants of the genre. Another element inherent in such genre fluidity is fragmentation into sub units which further complicates and expands the already existing genre framework. The narrower the genre for example *ska* and *acid jazz*, the easier it is to attribute an artist to it, as there are quite specific determinants attached to such genres. *Acid jazz* is "the marriage of vintage jazz samples and live instrumentation with DJ friendly hip hop breakbeats" (Daly & Wice 1995:13). Whereas *ska* is, "a light and fluid version of the intensely rhythmic Jamaican dance music that immediately preceded reggae. Ska was characterised by the hissing voice percussion, saxophone solos and chugging accompaniment" (Thorne 1993:248).

Both of these genres are instantly recognisable owing to their structure and subcultural unity. However, it is interesting to note that the two commentators describing the genres *ska* and *acid jazz* above use almost exclusively musical factors to identify these genres. *Ska* has a very precise musical structure, dress code and sound and therefore a small number of determinants are used to identify an artist from this genre. However, broader groupings including *indie* and *pop* comprise a multitude of determinants owing to the large populations of differing types of music attributed to them, and thus tend to house a wide range of artists.

To the consumer, musical and paramusical identifiers are far more tangible and immediate than industry or media signifiers, which are often more perceptual entities subconsciously assimilated through retail strategies and media development. The artist, the audience, the industry and the media all use



similar signifiers to establish genre, but these are often modified or subverted by the industry and/or the media channels to enable accelerated sell through and wider consumption.

### 1.3.1.2 The Broader Categories

The broader groupings of *indie* and *pop* are utilised as all encompassing entities to house a multitude of disparate musical styles. Although these can be classified separately, they generally fall into a non-specialised genre category identified by an alternative set of factors. The term *pop* for example, is often used to describe the highly commercialised music that frequents the charts (see definition of popular music on pages 29-36 Section 1.2.2) or is defined by the number of phonograms sold. The term *indie* was originally used as a primary indicator identifying music housed on independent labels, which may be classed by other members of an audience as *rock*, *grunge*, *thrash*, *indie* or *dance*. Over time, the definition of *indie* changed so that *indie* housed a certain style of guitar band. There were two reasons for this change. First the eclectic mix of artists identified on independent labels which began to interfere with more specific identification of like genre groups. Secondly, when the *second wave of new wave* appeared in the mid 1980s, a new label was needed to identify this wave as both similar and different to the first wave in 1980. Thus, the guitar sound was identified as a common theme and the term was coined. The term *indie* pertaining to the independent label still exists and is used in independent charts to identify the amount of music sold by artists on non mainstream labels. The difficulty in identifying one overarching definition for *indie* can be seen from the following definitions. There is little agreement on what *indie* music actually is owing to the disparate artists and musical episodes involved in its all-encompassing framework. Daly and Wice state that *indie* is, “noisy guitar bands who are descended from late Seventies *punk* and Eighties College rock” (Daly & Wice 1995:111, whereas Thorne states that *indie* is “white pop music inspired by mid-1960s ballads, the folksy end of the psychedelia spectrum and the more melodic and nostalgic elements of *punk*” (Thorne 1993:124). Different commentators have also tried to define the indie genre in terms of sub genres by the use of suffixes such as *indie pop* and *indie rock*. This has caused much confusion in terms of nomenclature, which is exacerbated by the use of the two labels (*indie* depicting a non-mainstream record label and *indie* defining a style of music) side by side as definitions, which are also often used interchangeably.

### 1.3.1.3 Musical Structure and Temporal Identification

A less confusing classificatory mechanism for genre is musical structure where musics such as *jazz* and *blues* can be classified directly through their musical structures. *Classical* music can be categorised by temporal and musical factors, which enable quick and easy identification. For example the sound of *baroque* music can be identified not only by the musical structure but by the instruments

used and in turn the approximate temporal period in which the music was created. These two examples underline a major issue inherent in genre identification: the multitude of different referencing systems available for the identification of musical genre. Such a wide range of techniques and the wide range of possible determinants can lead to confusion. A universal structure would perhaps enable a number of these systems to interact and correlate to create a central framework for genre determination.

#### 1.3.1.4 Popular Music Analysis-the Detractors

Another issue confronting the popular music researcher is the contempt in which popular music analysis is held from a large number of academics.

Tagg states that, "the attitude of incredulity it meets... It is often confronted with an attitude of bemused suspicion implying that there is something weird about taking 'fun' seriously or finding 'fun' in 'serious things' " (Tagg 1982:37). Hamm, when referring to academic texts on music, states that "Even recent books of this sort, including those most dedicated to establishing the legitimacy and historical importance of popular genres, still have nothing to say about the music, and thus, even though unwittingly, continue to perpetuate the myth of its inferiority" (Hamm 1995:2). Tagg refers to the attitude of others whereas Hamm, although accepting the worth of popular music analysis, still perceives inferiority in the study if the musical factors themselves are not fully explored. Adorno identifies that "Reactionary observers are only too pleased to note that the 'modern' is becoming academic" (Adorno 1985:18). Such a statement recognises the fact that those in academia are gradually facilitating 'serious' study of modern music. Recent publications by Negus (1999) and Moore (2001) focus more on the multifunctional aspects of genre, and focus heavily on musical delivery and thus have both identified the need for the serious study of popular music and realised the wide and varied classificatory factors involved with its identification.

There are a number of texts exploring the subculture, style, philosophy and politics of popular music and youth culture, for example Hebdige (1979), Polhemus (1995), and Willis (1990), but very few which focus on the music itself or the perception of all those involved in the production and consumption of the music. It is as if a practitioner's view is somewhat inferior to those of academics. In the analysis of popular music, owing to fundamental changes in society and culture including de-industrialisation, changing working patterns, the development of the commercial music industry, changes in communication and the development of equality, the musical score commands less importance than the musical, paramusical and perceptual factors making up the total experience of a musical episode (in this case the score is separated from musical and paramusical variables). Thus, many commentaries are based on sociological or philosophical foundations. In the case of *classical* music, formal analysis embodies original traditional values and refrains from the modification of these values, thus failing to enhance its merit at times as a tool with which to analyse

popular music. The fault is one which is shared, as consensus on the subject has not been reached to sufficiently address the problems inherent in such popular music analysis.

### **1.3.1.5 A Spatial and International Perspective**

Hamm (1995) states that a definition of popular music that will apply equally to the music of all nationalities is impossible to qualify. In a global context tastes, standards and cultural norms differ. Nettl (1985) and Fabbri (1985) identify the confusion caused by the exploration of global genre determinants, and even within the definition of words and phrases pertaining to popular further reiterate this. As the types of music to be studied in this thesis are primarily Western and originate in two very similar musical societies (the US and the UK), the disparate nature of popular music across nationalities is not an issue. However, in any research into global musical genre, this factor would be a key variable in the development of a global taxonomy. This also alludes to the richness and diversity of popular culture as opposed to the attenuated stance of the classical tradition. From exploration of global websites it is clear that the philosophy, sartoriality, attitude and music of *punk* is a world-wide phenomenon with *punk* 'scenes' (see chapter 3, 3.0) emerging in China, Japan, Malaysia, France, South Africa and many other countries. Although contextual elements and reasons for the 'scene' may differ, the main visual and musical determinants of the genre are relatively similar.

### **1.3.1.6 Performance and Boundary Issues**

A key to youth cultural and subcultural musical delivery is the emission and reception of the music, which is embodied within the constituents of musical performance. Performances “draw together sounds, agents, works and consumers. Each of these occupies a role within performance, and collectively they comprise the large, complex, integrated events which performances are” (Godlovitch 1998:13). In all areas of genre classification the performance of the music, the management of the performance, the interaction of the consumer and the performer and the interface between the two are vital. A clear interpretation of the performance will contribute a number of developmental variables. The performance, however, cannot be studied in isolation. In the determination of genre, music is the prime factor that binds the audience to the performer. However, the venue type, style and size, the sartorial elements and demographics of the audience, the artist and lifestyle all contribute to the development of the performance and thus play an important part in the exploration of a particular genre, especially in the identification of mass cultural or alternative genres.

As an artist becomes more established, there is an issue relating to the category movement of that artist. Secondary to this is the possible dual or multi-

labelling of genre, which can cause confusion to the consumer and the artist as well as mislabelling, which can damage the credibility of the artist.

Temporal, spatial or contextual factors may be the source of such labelling. Factors such as success in the charts, a shift in fan base caused by changes in line up, popularity or musical style, or the repackaging of the artist or the music by the record label may modify the genre in which the consumer views an artist. Genre overlapping may also result from the movement of an artist from one genre to another, whilst still being considered by a former audience to be in the original genre. Metallica is an example of a band undergoing genre change over time. The band originally attributed to the *thrash metal* genre in the early to mid 1980s and gradually metamorphosed into mainstream *rock* (an umbrella category) in the mid 1990s. However, the change was gradual and the move from one classificatory area to another did not cause the wholesale shedding of the original audience but developed a wider and more eclectic audience for the artist.

In an interview with the Metallica sound engineer at The Big Day Out 2001, he readily agreed that over the years the band had moved with the fan base. As the fan base increased the more mainstream the band became: as the music became more accessible to the mass consumer, the bigger the fan base became. However, this is not always the case. For many smaller independent artists the original audience for the genre shifts, leaving a vacuum to be filled by another audience with different cultural and contextual expectations. Often the icons associated with the original genre are perceived to have been commercially modified, creating a perceived cheapening of the experience for those originally involved. However, the new enhanced and commodified experience creates access to the wider mass audience. The experience of the shift from minority to mainstream varies from consumer to consumer according to context. Two examples of artists losing many of their original audience and replacing them with a large mass cultural audience are Blur and Oasis. Both lost many of their original audience when they moved from small independent artists to million selling commercial entities (Kemp 2000).

Although there is fluidity in genre movement, the contemporary music industry tends to institutionalise its output and labelling. Certain record companies are associated with certain genres or certain artists, individual producers, bands, singers or writers. Many individual artists are wholly identifiable with just one genre. Hence, the industry is often accused of pigeonholing artists and creating straight jackets. Once classified, artists often cannot break free from their pigeonhole for the rest of their careers. This causes a dichotomy between the purpose of the genre label identified and the systems and frameworks inherent in the economic motivation of the mass music industry.

### 1.3.1.7 Multi Label Categorisation

Artists may be labelled in more than one category. Examples of multi labelling are shown in *Figure 2*. Various reviews of new albums in copies of *Select*, *NME* and *Melody Maker* and *The Face* in 1993/94 by the listed artists fall into the three categories shown in the diagram. These tags were cited in these different periodicals over a period of twelve months. Observing reviews of albums and live concerts by Paw, Soundgarden, Monster Magnet, Morphine, Buffalo Tom and Belly, it can be seen that Paw and Soundgarden are classified as *indie*, *grunge* and *metal* in different reports and the other four artists are identified by at least two of the labels.

It could be that the reports are from temporally dissonant stages in the artist career where a change in genre is necessary. It could be the identification of different musical traits by individual journalists that place artists in different categories.

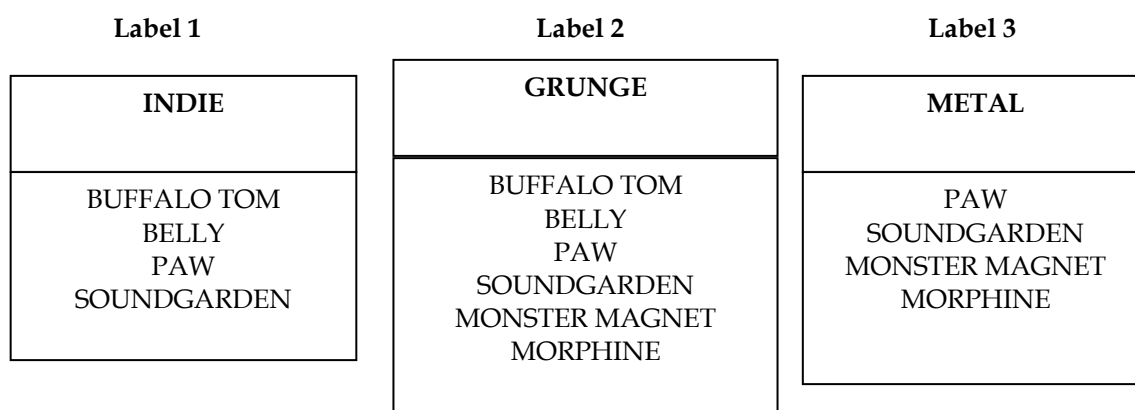


FIGURE 2 The Multi Labelling of Artists

Thus, the differentiation within each definition of a label is often the whim of a journalist, a view, which is often not qualified, and often an educated guess at the positioning of that music under a certain label. Such identifications may be made in relation to the sound, the dress, the philosophy or commercial viability of an artist, and do not have an underpinning framework on which such presumptions are made (*i.e.* no formal analysis of the artist has yet been made by the media or the industry). The differing categorisations made by journalists elicit a slow and often tentative reaction by the retailer and industry as they await a final universally accepted identification to be made. After this a measured retail response follows. An example of such a situation occurred in *punk* where the industry at the time failed to capitalise early on in the life cycle of the genre by identifying and marketing the product. This enabled new independent industry professionals to gain a foothold in a market which had not been available to them before.

The set of genres observed at a particular moment in time will determine how musical episodes are attributed to different categories. It is possible, however, that the same musical episode can belong to different genres at

different points in time. An example of dual belonging is the Puff Daddy single, *Come with me* (1998). The original version of the sampled riff, which forms the basis of the track, was taken from a track on the Led Zeppelin album *Physical Graffiti* titled *Kashmir* (1975). It was re-mixed and re-mastered twenty-three years later to form the basis of a number one single. The original version of the track portrays the emotions conceived on a trip through Kashmir by the rock band, the latter was created on a purely profit basis to sell the movie *Godzilla* to which it was the title track. This is not only a good example of the re-use of tracks in a different generic area by contemporary artists for different purposes, but it also reinforces the statement earlier in this Chapter regarding the change in context of re-interpreted and produced musical genre. It is also a reiteration of the complexity of musical genre classification.

Although sampling enhances modern popular music, it also creates multiple reference points. The release of cover versions can also create multiple referencing, thus the exact reference point for one piece of music could have several variable points of reference to different people at different times.

### 1.3.1.8 The Mushroom Effect

Often as part of a genre life cycle, and most especially in the case of *dance* music, the underground becomes the mainstream, and the division between the underground and mass culture becomes clouded and less easy to define. *Figure 3* portrays the "Mushroom Effect" (Kemp 1996b:8) which shows *dance* as an underground culture in its formative stage. During the genesis of *dance* artists and those responsible for the micro media used to disseminate information on the music controlled both the creation and means of production of the genre. These protagonists produced exiguous amounts of minority-interest music promoted through micro media. The *dance* genre (*rave* culture) attracted an inordinate amount of adverse publicity through the association of its consumption with the use of the drug *ecstasy* and its overt reference to the drug culture within its lyrical content and samples.

The Mushroom Effect can be applied as follows. As the media publicised the negative aspects of dance pinpointing illegal events and the scourge of *ecstasy*, youth culture was alerted to the underlying nature of the culture, which proceeded to attract millions of 16-30 year olds to participate in illegal rave events each weekend. The development of a moral panic by the mass media had the effect of making the subculture more available through the channels used to discredit it. As Simon Reynolds states:

All the scaremongering tabloid coverage, plus TV reports like News at Ten's expose of an Apocalypse Now warehouse party, did not have the intended effect of discouraging the youth of Britain. If anything 'it just helped it grow even bigger,' says Mark Moore. 'It was like what Bill Grundy did for the Sex Pistols.' The result was an influx of younger kids and suburbanites into the scene (Reynolds 1999:50).

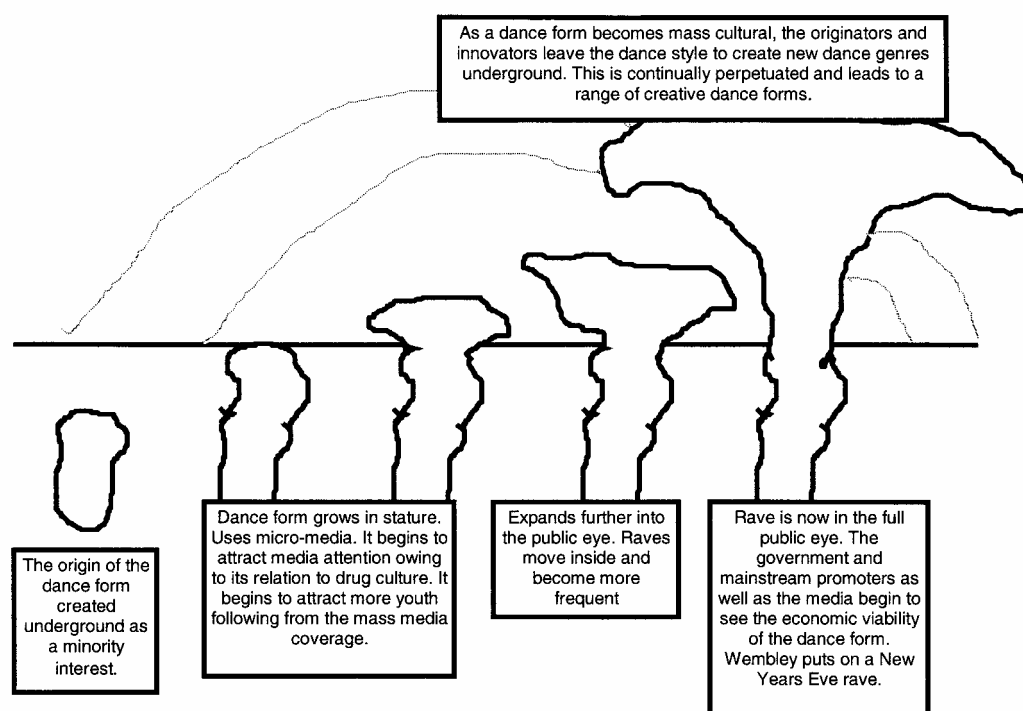


FIGURE 3 The Mushroom Effect<sup>2</sup> (Kemp 1996<sup>b</sup>)

Ross & Rose identify the way in which such a moral panic is disseminated.

While the BBC conducts its "bans", the logic of "moral panic" operates most conspicuously within the purview of the tabloids... "Moral panic" is a metaphor which depicts a complex society as a single person who experiences a sudden groundless fear about its virtue (Ross & Rose 1995:182-184).

The media turned a small underground youth subcultural activity into a mass youth cultural pastime which demonstrates the power of the media.

It must be determined here that this specifically pertains to the UK circa 1982-1996. Over a short period it became apparent to the authorities that large amounts of revenue could be generated from the development and harnessing of dance culture.

Controlled raves in venues such as Wembley were organised and thus the cultural boundaries were redefined (Kempster 1996). Macro media replaced the micro media; the style of music changed to include more mainstream elements and the once underground culture became the property of the masses.

<sup>2</sup> In text box three it is stated that raves moved from outside parties to inside events. This movement only occurred with this generic form i.e. acid house music and not with all styles of 'dance' music. For example, speed garage has never been played outside at large raves, but is played in underground clubs and clubs in holiday resorts such as Faliraki and Ayia Nappa.

It was at this stage that the original protagonists, and those firmly of the belief that the culture should return underground, deserted the new mass cultural form, “like spores from a mushroom”, and set up new forms of the original culture, fragmenting *dance* into a wide range of new forms. Each time these subdivisions of dance become subsumed into mass culture the process begins again (Kemp 1996<sup>b</sup>).

This effect not only applies to *dance* music but in many types of music formerly originating underground. Over time a change in musical context, political or cultural identity or a shift in audience demographics may enable or even force an artist or genre to become either more attractive to their existing audience or to pursue new audiences. Such a change in direction may be orchestrated to resurrect a flagging career or a loss of audience. The mushroom effect does have a marked effect on a genre moving small underground phenomena into the mass cultural sphere and thus defining both context and philosophy.

## **1.4 The Proposed Outcomes and Organisation of this Thesis**

### **1.4.1 Proposed Outcomes**

In conclusion to this Chapter, it is clear from previous sections that a holistic interdisciplinary approach to the exploration is necessary to address the wide range of issues associated with the identification of musical genre. Such issues include ritualistic, behavioural, media, managerial, musical, psychological, paramusical, perceptual, exploration of narrative structure, definitions of form and style, contextualisation, hierarchies of ordered values, language and culture and intrinsic principles and all have a fundamental role in maintaining the collective unity of a genre or its constituent parts. The range of codes and determinants distributed across different discourses leads to the use of a flexible approach where a range of determinants are utilised focusing on an identifiable core intrinsic to all genres. A supporting framework comprising a number of pertinent determinants selected from a wider flexible choice is utilised to identify contrasting features of the genre with other genre groups. By the inclusion of consumers, the media, the industry and the artist within this exploration, the views of these protagonists will provide a conduit through which a collective view of genre nomenclature can be ascertained.

### **1.4.2 The Organisation of this Thesis**

In its crudest form the development and identification of musical genre is a key determinant in ascertaining the suitability of musical episodes for commercial exploitation. In its purest form, this process may be utilised as an indicator of value, style, definition, creative output or belonging. With this in mind, the thesis is constructed in the following way.



Chapter 1 outlines the key concepts and aims of the study. The terms of reference are identified and the scene is set for further development and exploration. Chapter 2 describes the experimental setting in which the articulation of different discourses in relation to music genre identification are explored, utilising qualitative and quantitative experimentation to investigate the possibilities of the existence of an holistic approach to genre identification and classification through a triangulation of methodologies and discourses.

Chapter 3 explores the music and media industries, the artist, the consumer their relationship to musical genre and its identification. This Chapter utilises the integration of both primary and secondary research to create a balanced view of genre identification from the four perspectives outlined in the study. Chapter 4 focuses on the historical development of the two types of music explored within this study, *punk* and *nu punk*, tracing the history of the music in both the UK and the US and putting the study into context.

In Chapter 5 the quantitative results, identification and discussion is carried out and this is complemented in Chapter 6 by the qualitative results, identification and discussion. Chapter 7 concludes the thesis identifying not only the contribution to knowledge that the study makes but also the recommendations for further work and elements of tension which have arisen during the development of the study.

This thesis does not focus on the cognitive musicological elements identified through neural networks but to complement the study a selection of writings in this area can be found in the following sources. Neural networks (Weil 1999), harmonic content features (Ermolinsky 2001), musical classification through audio signals (Tzanetakis 2001), recognition memory (Ratcliff et al 2000) and audition (Llinas 1996).

## **2 METHODOLOGY: APPROACHES, ISSUES AND PROBLEMS AND THE DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIMENTAL SETTING**

### **2.0 Introduction**

This Chapter outlines the research strategy adopted, its course of development and its refinement in the light of the authors' fieldwork and management experience in the music and education industries. This Chapter initially explores the historical, temporal and contextual aspects of the experimental setting culminating in the relevance of the aspects of musical performance. A discussion of the methodological process follows and the paradigm debate is critically explored where qualitative and quantitative methodologies and their combinational attributes are discussed to ascertain the methodologies for the study. Once ascertained an examination of triangulation is developed. The domain associated with the research is identified and an exploration and tabulation of the test pieces follows proceeded by the procedure for data exploration. The methodological problems and issues encountered during the study, and how they were resolved, are also considered.

### **2.1 The Aims of the Study**

#### **Qualitative Aims**

- To collect information from the industry, the media, the artist and the consumer regarding their perceptions of how musical genre is identified
- To ascertain whether such information can elicit responses which will enable a broad understanding of music genre identification

### Quantitative Aims

- To compare and contrast similarities and differences between early and late *punk* songs
- To compare and contrast hand coded and computer analysed data
- To ascertain whether such comparisons can elicit codified elements which will enable a broad understanding of music genre identification

### Overall Aim

- To articulate different discourses in relation to music genre identification utilising qualitative and quantitative experimentation to explore the possibilities of the existence of a holistic approach to genre identification and classification

## 2.2 General Challenges Associated with the Choice of Research Methods and Paradigms

### 2.2.1 Introduction

A small body of knowledge already exists which encompasses the musical and paramusical exploration of signifiers and codes, which attribute certain musical episodes or artists to certain genres, Tagg (1997), Fabbri (1981) and Negus (1999). However, much of this knowledge is based purely on quantifiable or qualifiable data which is specified through the strict parameters of each study often militating against a holistic view owing to spatial, temporal or contextual dissonance. Musical genre development and formation is a multidisciplinary field and although many commentators explore a wide spectrum of signifiers and codes, many fail to include industrial and media elements alongside those of musical, live performance, sartorial and cultural, sociological and contextual importance.

This multidisciplinary field arises from the outcomes of the articulation of factors from discourses in specific historical contexts. A suitable methodological approach is one of triangulation (Denzin 1970) of methods and techniques necessary for the understanding of the nature of this articulation. Triangulation is the collation of information obtained from a number of data collection methods utilised as a means to increase the validity of the research.

The diverse nature of the problematisation encapsulated within this study provides the researcher with the task of contemplating methodological approaches suitable for both the epistemology and the industrial practices involved in genre nomenclature. It has become apparent already from the study that temporal and spatial factors affect both the consumer and the industry protagonists (the artist, the industry and the media). This creates a conflict of interest within the sphere of classification as often context; setting and activity are viewed differently by those involved with the naming, appreciation and

development of taxonomies within the music field. As has already been indicated, the terms of reference for this research focus on the industry, the media, the artist and the consumer. Although the industry, the media, the artist and the consumer perceive that the development of musical identity is controlled by the industries involved with music (see 3.2.3, 5.1.1.1 and 5.1.1.2 as examples of this controlling influence), it is also clear that the consumer and artist play a significant role in the identification of genre tags. The consumer patronises the artist and the artist initially creates the musical product and conveys it to the consumer. It is also important to examine the musical and paramusical elements, which form part of the genre naming process, as such factors are key components of the identification of comparisons and inconsistencies between musical episodes within both similar and dissonant musical genres.

One further issue associated with research where both qualitative and quantitative research is used is the definition of some of the terms associated with the two paradigms. One of the most pertinent, which is determined in this study, is the differing terminology used to describe the research subject matter. In qualitative research concepts are preferred to variables and in quantitative research variables are preferred to concepts. Owing to the combinational research within this thesis and the nature of the subject area explored the term variable will be utilised on all occasions.

## 2.2.2 The Historical Context

Historically both the informal and formal identification of *punk* and *nu punk* appeared on three distinct levels. Firstly, on a temporal level where *punk* and *nu punk*'s emergence were identified as bespoke temporal periods. Secondly, identification was made on a musical level for example, the distinct DIY sound of the artist, which was contextualised and utilised as a reference point for future emergence. Thirdly, identification was ascertained on a paramusical level: for example *punk*'s eclectic sartoriality which again was contextualised and regurgitated or distanced depending on the type of performer explored. Commentators on the origination and development of *punk* and *nu punk* (Hebdige 1988, Polhemus 1995, Laing 1985, Arnold 1997, and O'Hara 1999) cite these three reference points as 'instant' identifiers for these two genres.

## 2.2.3 Temporal Anomalies in a Historical Context

The music genres being studied are temporally dissonant. *Punk* in the UK was created in 1976/77 and the dynamic development of that genre took place over a four-year period between 1976 and 1980. *Punk* in the US had its genesis slightly earlier and provided UK *punk* with its framework and terms of reference. *Hardcore* evolved from *punk* and metamorphosed between 1980 and 1985 prompting the emergence of an abundance of *nu punk* artists between 1995 and 2003. Although the nucleus of the *punk* genre existed for over two decades the majority of artists engaged with the genre either ceased to function or

modified/changed their musical orientation to enable a further development within the music industry from 1980 - the advent of *new wave* - to the present day. Examples of this include Ultravox, who started life as a *punk* band in 1976 with limited success. In 1980 they changed lead singers (Midge Ure for John Foxx), changed labels (Island to Chrysalis), and genre (*punk* to *electropop*) to gain the success which had eluded them as a *punk* outfit. In fact the band metamorphosed into the antithesis of all that their previous form stood for, exchanging the angst and energy of *punk* for the bland homogenised sounds of mid eighties *electropop*.

## 2.2.4 Spatial Anomalies in an Historical Context

Although the phenomenon of *punk* in Eastern Europe is introduced in Chapter 3 the importance of the global context cannot be underestimated. Many anomalies arise when researching genre identification in a global context. For example the rise of *punk* in the Czech Republic, East Germany and Poland was set in a very different context from the development of *punk* in the US or UK. The emergence and extension of *punk* in Eastern Europe led in part to the development of a youth cultural infrastructure, which challenged the world outlook of the overarching totalitarian regimes. Youth culture was able to engage and participate in a new dynamic form of music, which questioned the very foundations of these regimes. The effect of this youth cultural infrastructure in Poland, East Germany and the Czech Republic was to unite the youth against the regimes. However, the development of such a musical form met with a much harsher response from the communist authorities than the Western governments. In Western democracies *punk* posed little threat to the stability of the countries but has seriously challenged the music industry on which it had an irreversible effect. However, *punk* in what was then termed as the Eastern Bloc was seen as subversive and a danger to the stability of the regimes. *Punk* not as a musical form but as a subversive element was one of a raft of instruments that brought the end of communist rule in Central Europe.

It is debatable whether *punk* in other European countries or as a global phenomenon has the same philosophy, attitude or effect as *punk* in Eastern Europe, the UK or the US. *Punk* within Finland and Sweden has a very similar sound to that which appears in Germany, Spain or any other European country but appropriates different signifiers, norms and values to reflect the *punk* context inherent in that particular culture. However, this is an observation extracted from a series of focus groups and is based on the overall sound of the music rather than any valid experimentation.

## 2.2.5 Aspects of Musical Performance Relevant to this Study

It is evident that all aspects of a musical performance whether audio or visual are open to study within the context of this thesis. This does not only include the empirical data ascertained by the author through qualitative and quantitative experimentation but also data obtained from other parties involved in the

process of nomenclature within the music and media industries as well as artist and audience participants in both primary and secondary contexts.

### **2.3 The Methodological Process**

Miller presents a simplistic argument stating that the key to the methodological process is to design the methodological framework suitable for a “population where large variations of both independent and dependent variables may be found” (Miller 1991:21). Such an approach would enable a large number of variables to be tested within the process thus ensuring the validity of the research. It is important to scrutinise each possible method of research, then review its central characteristics projecting forward to identify prospective outcomes. Owing to the multidisciplinary nature of the field to be studied each aspect of the research cannot be carried out in isolation as more than one technique will be used to address the problem identified, this is evidenced in Devine and Heath (1999).

The focus on the triangulation of research methods and techniques facilitates a more flexible research approach and design. In an area such as music genre very little has been written about the theory and development of its classification and thus the epistemology is very weak, the development of new theory is important. The creation of new theory and the testing of that theory would be grounded in a large body of pertinent data collected and analysed by the researcher. However, the philosophical argument that particular methods are linked to certain underpinning epistemological concepts cannot be overlooked. Theories surrounding the area of genre identification which include those pertinent to musical analysis and the development of taxonomies as a whole must also be taken into consideration in any epistemological debate. One may thus legitimately triangulate various research methods/techniques to provide a sound basis for the development of a methodological framework. The triangulation of methods will allow an understanding of the articulation of the various theoretical and applied perspectives, which underpin the epistemological development of the field (Charon 1995).

Before establishing the methodological framework to be used in the development and identification of music genre a number of elements have to be clarified. Firstly it must be established what the domain to be researched actually encompasses. To be able to identify this, the nature of the problem has to be recognised, the goal of the research determined, the guiding theoretical framework established and the appropriate techniques of researching the problem have to be developed. Alongside these the researcher must establish whether the research is concerned with middle range or grounded theory, whether it is formal or substantive. In general middle range theory is associated with theory testing whilst grounded theory is associated with theory building.

As a small body of knowledge and theory exists in the area of musical nomenclature this research deals in the main with theory building and is therefore based within the grounded theory continuum. Owing to the exiguity of subject specific knowledge the researchers' starting point is not a mass of theoretical knowledge or earlier empirical findings against which hypotheses can be derived and tested. This would suggest that the approach is that of grounded theory where theory is discovered by working with the data within the field. However, later adaptive theory may need to be explored (Hammersley 1994), (Walker 1985).

A number of such theory building research elements have been developed through first hand research experience such as Glasser and Straus' (in Layder 1993) work with the dying. These authors adopt theory building through a grounded theory approach because it is felt by these authors that "theory generation had been stultified by an over-emphasis on the verification of extant theories exemplified in the work of Merton (MRT), Parsons ('grand' social systems theory) and Blau (exchange theory)" (Layder 1993:45). Layder further states that these "theories are generally 'speculative' in nature because they have not grown directly out of research, and thus remain ungrounded. Consequently, these theories very often lack validity because they do not 'fit' the real world and thereby remain irrelevant to the people concerned" (Layder 1993:45).

It is possible within this study to explore the process of genre nomenclature within the setting of music industry theory. If this avenue were pursued the research would interface with middle range theory and thus would be formalised owing to the association with theory testing. Within this study there is scope for a wide range of comparative analysis. This analysis takes the form of both quantitative and qualitative information, which could be combined. The exact form that the data takes will be dealt with later in this Chapter. Layder states, "theory should be viewed as a constant flexible accompaniment to the incremental collection of data and the unfolding nature of the research" (Layder D. 1993:45). Layder's view is important as it deflects the emphasis laid on theory as the underpinning notion of research and expounds the notion that theory is developing or helping the development of knowledge about the subject area as the research unfolds. To become 'hung up' on theory rather than letting the data and the development give further insight into the research may cloud issues within the remit of the research.

The aim of the study facilitates the combination of theory testing with theory building to ascertain not only the elements implicit and explicit in the identification of genre but also the implications of the creation of genre identification on the protagonists involved.

The guiding theory is explored in Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis. It can be seen from those Chapters that specific theory on musical genre analysis is very limited and it is often through associated literature that information and insight come to light. The appropriate techniques to establish an experimental base and a methodological framework will be discussed next in this Chapter.

### **2.3.1 The Research Focus**

To develop a basis for the creation of a research methodology, the research focus must firstly be identified. Much of the discussion included in this section is based on Layder (1993) whose recommended approach concentrates on four areas, the context, the setting, the activity and the self. The structure of the music industry constrains the individual agency through a number of channels and tools including the instigation of gatekeepers (Hirsh 1970) and the hypodermic model (Morley 1995) (see 3.1.3.3). The power relations between the individual artist, the audience and the industry are hegemonic as identified by Gramsci in (Femia 1981), where the balance of power is maintained by the industry and made visible through the gatekeepers role which is primarily designed to control the artist and the audience (Hirsh 1970) see 3.1.3.3.

### **2.3.2 Context**

The nature of musical genre as a multidisciplinary area complicates the contextualisation of both the subject and the process and gives rise to myths surrounding the creation, circulation and consumption of popular music. These myths it will be argued originate in the articulation of a number of factors from different discourses which come to play in the process of genre nomenclature. These factors will be identified in the context of the study as macro social organisation (industry and media), the artist, the audience and the musical and paramusical factors.

#### **2.3.2.1 Macro Social Organisation**

An in depth exposition of the music industry, including media organisations and their importance in the sphere of genre nomenclature has been carried in Chapter 3 of this study. Music Industry culture resulted in structures and industrial practices, which produce not only identifiable products and services but also legal and economic practices which govern the intellectual property of these products and services and their financial development. There are legally sanctioned forms of ownership, control and distribution formed by interlocking directorships with little or no state intervention. This system is one of capitalist ownership not only of an artist's work but also of the channels and systems for the distribution of the product or service being developed. The only intervention by governmental or quasi autonomous non governmental organisations (QANGOs) is from the monopolies and mergers commission which reviews business practices and tries to thwart attempts by large companies to monopolise the market.

The overarching structures of the music industry embody aspects that create one of the largest single export commodities in the world. The capitalist economic organisation and industrial framework affect society as a whole through the regulation of prices, intellectual property and the creation of



gatekeepers who control the regulation of music in society. This is achieved by strategic processes exposing the public to limited musical episodes through the introduction of media and industry gatekeepers, which allow only those products and services which are economically viable to reach the mass consumer. Such situations in political economy show how corporate ownership encroaches on cultural practices and processes. This maximises profits from such cultural production and minimises the risk of failure for the companies involved by reducing the amount of product or service accessible to those within society (Negus 1999). Underground subcultures constantly provide new vehicles through which they challenge the corporate giants producing new channels of consumption and alternative gatekeepers. Although the power lies with the corporations who use the independents to create new ideas and then buy them or their product up so that these ideas can then be developed into profit schemes, the power base is constantly shifting in line with the fluid nature of the industry.

Within this context the media and corporate music industry are responsible for the identification of musical genre. It can be seen that for an industry, which revolves around economic viability in its decision making process that the power relations between the industry, the media, the artist and the consumer are vitally important. Genres are used by the music industry as a way of identifying markets through which to interface with the consumer as well as a conduit through which order can be established within the industry itself.

### **2.3.2.2 The Artist**

The creative activities of the artist can be viewed from both a musical and paramusical perspective as they participate in the creation, development and dissemination of music as well as the sartoriality, iconography and attributes of performance. Artists are often aware of genre boundaries and may choose to write music within a specific area already designated. However, the creative process is not simple and the creation of new sub-genre is a continual process within which artists may pursue the expansion of genre boundaries. Such a process may develop the inclusion of one genre within another or the blurring of boundaries between genre. Frith (1996:25) argues that much music production today involves musicians working within relatively stable "genre worlds". However, this is not always the case, especially within the creative areas defined by independent music. Fabbri (1995) and (1999) worked on the codes and conventions of particular musical genres; however, this outlook seems to convey a restrictive practice, which does not consider other elements when viewing the artist, such as source of inspiration, non-conventional cultural practices and unstable musical conventions. A difficulty with genre nomenclature arises when others and not the artist try to apply pre-ordained genre codes to new music. It is the interpretation of what the artist has created which signifies the genre and perhaps not what the industry dictates or codifies. New types of music have to

establish their own rules as the non-appropriation of codes for any genre makes the marketing and promotion of the music difficult, as well as making the music difficult to classify.

### **2.3.2.3 The Audience (Consumer)**

The mass audience as has already been established is only exposed to carefully monitored genres of music from the cultural industries, whereas the independent audience is able to select from a wider choice. Whether a consumer is classed as mass or independent depends on a number of variables, including age, sex, demographics, class, upbringing and exposure to music through peer group and parental influences. However, in the live industry where the overheads of production and service are usually less, more exposure is given to different types of music. The audience is made up of three initial segments: those who buy and listen to the product in their home or place of recreation, those who go out to concerts to hear their music and those who combine both of these patterns of consumption.

The audience for popular music is selective. The industry market a minimal range of music to the audience but those old enough to make their own buying decisions and life choices can easily identify and consume a wide range of genres. At an early age, (3-13) a surrogate system of buying operates where the media and music industry target parents through the exposure of a small number of artists and products to the child audience (Sutherland & Thompson 2003).

The audience is very diverse. Some will only listen to music on the fringes of popular culture, and others are totally absorbed by what is termed as commercial. Some audiences like to be told what to listen to and are content with industry practices. Others are not content with the mass cultural medium and will experiment with their music. This conflict of interest within the genre system creates a division of expectation. One part of the audience will accept already packaged and delivered genre, which they will interpret from the information cascaded from the industry and the media. The other part of the audience is active in the decision-making process shunning packaged genre and making conscious decisions to seek out suitable musical episodes from alternative music sources. Thus the active/passive consumer relationship is identified.

### **2.3.2.4 Musical and Paramusical Structure**

Rules that define genre can be related to any of the codes defined in a musical event. The more codes that are identified the more comprehensive the classification will be. The codes however, are both implicit and explicit in a number of interrelated discourses including historical, cultural, social, geographical, sartorial, psychological, political, musical and para-musical. The articulation of these separate discourses creates definitions of genre, codes and constraining elements which when applied to a specific music give an overall

definition of the genre identified. It can be determined from the secondary research in this study that differing researchers appropriate different codes to characterise and describe music.

Bringing together these articulations is an interesting challenge, as at first they seem so disparate. However, there are many levels of symbiotic development between them, which lead themselves to investigation through the triangulation of data from different sources, and an appropriate repertoire of methods and techniques.

The mass industry formally codifies genre into specific organisational departments, which are strategically managed by the conglomerates. The alternative industry also formally codifies genre but to a lesser extent, as some of these musical episodes are informally recognised and as such have a much more flexible structure. The paramusical and musical structures of *punk* and *nu punk* are explored to ascertain central and peripheral variables, which can be utilised in the identification of musical genre. It is perceived that from experimentation some universal indicators for genre identification will be determined, and that other indicators attributable to the identification of a specific genre will become apparent.

## **2.4 The Setting of the Context**

### **2.4.1 Intermediate Social Organisation**

The setting of any context can be divided into two distinct elements work and non-work. For the purposes of this exposition these categories cover the total setting of the context. (Tagg & Clarida 1996)

#### **2.4.1.1 Work:**

The work setting of the study is the music industry, comprising of private companies, labour markets, artists, managers, agents, retailers, publishers, lawyers, accountants, media players, hardware and software producers, marketers, distributors *etcetera*. From this the music industry can be divided into a number of separate areas. Product related, which relates to companies or individuals within the record and product production industries and service related which applies to those businesses within the live music and media arena. However, the wide range of industries, that now offer both a product and a service element to their business blurs the distinction between the product and service industries. The major conglomerates are good examples of such businesses where a wide range of industries are housed under one umbrella. Media companies offer a product in the form of a magazine or a DVD but also offer services to view these products such as the internet. Therefore, the

possibility of demarcation in the product and service industry no longer falls into a neat division of categories.

The music workplace consists of four different types of producer, the corporation, the independent, the public sector company and the charitable trust. The industry is constantly in flux and the power relations between the players in the industry change consistently. There has been a polarisation of the music and media industries in all areas. The majors exist at one end of the continuum and the very small players at the other. The intermediate businesses are all but extinct. Therefore, the threat of competition has been minimised to those with large amounts of capital to invest. The artists also create, develop and disseminate in a work setting but are reliant on the industry and the media to facilitate this. It is within the work setting that the majority of decisions are made in the area of genre nomenclature.

#### **2.4.1.2 Non Work:**

The non-work elements of the research context centre around the public enjoyment of artists through channels comprising listening, viewing, observing live bands, films, theatre, driving, shopping and other leisure time activities. Although as stated above these elements are regulated by gatekeepers who only allow a relatively small number of available musical episodes to reach the consumer. However, the power of the consumer is important to the industry and the interrelationship between work and non-work situations is the focus of industry and media activity.

### **2.4.2 Activity and Identity**

#### **2.4.2.1 Social and Industrial Activity**

Social and industrial activity take place between industry players (including the media) and artists, artists and consumers and the industry and the consumer as well as activity between individuals and companies working in the same industrial environment and consumer groups and groups of artists. Such activity is symbiotic with reliance by each of the protagonists on the others for the producer/consumer dynamic to operate efficiently and successfully. The media and industry carry out a distanced external interface with the consumer through the products that they create usually through some kind of retail conduit. This interface varies from the sale of CDs and tickets to the purchase of music hardware. Interface within the home is usually confined to auditory, visual stimuli or a combination of the two. In the live music industry this differs as the artist is able to interact with the audience through the live performance. However, it must also be stated here that the artist still interacts through a distanced interface through merchandising and secondary sell through. There is also an internal interface between the industries through meetings, e-mail, post, telecommunications, newsletters, reports *etc.*

The main activity with which the research in this paper is concerned is with the identification of genre. This is facilitated on a number of levels. It is perceived that the media decide what the genre represented by an artist is aided in part by the industry, they then market the artist through the media available. It is also perceived that an artist often has a genre identified when approaching a label. However, this can be modified by the industry and the media so that a pigeonhole to market the artist can be found. The consumer also has an understanding of genre identification and will often place an artist within a different genre orientation to that of the industry and this can initially cause problems for both the artist and the industry if alternative genre views are held. Often such confusion is caused by formal and informal identification codes appropriated from the two differing types of identification. It is important to focus on emergent meanings, understandings and definitions of genre as these affect and are affected by the context and the setting as these are invariably in a state of flux.

#### **2.4.2.2 Self Identity and the Individuals' Social Experience**

Self-identity and the individuals' social experience are important as we are dealing with individuals who are subjects of a wide range of discourses. These include music managers, media managers, those who analyse music, consumers and artists. The industry and the way in which music invades all of our lives through its ubiquitous nature will be investigated to ascertain how the genre of music affects these individuals.

The artist's social experience differs from that of the consumer, the media and the industry. The artist is the purveyor of the genre and therefore must take ownership of the specific genre within which they are classified. Failure to take ownership of or for an artist to act outside the norms and values of the genre will cause the consumer and in some cases the industry to question their motivation. The consumers social experience within the genre is one of ritual and set norms and values. These differ from genre to genre. There are areas of cross over within genres but more often than not different genre groups do not tolerate the norms, values and rituals of others, i.e. *Mods* and *rockers*, *skinheads* and *punks* (Hebdige 1988, Polhemus 1995).

A number of variables which influence the performer, those working in the industry, the media and the consumer, govern the individual's social experience. If a performer is successful, those working in the industry and the media supporting the artist perceive a similar success. Such success is transmitted to the consumer through constant airplay and high chart position. If the artist fails to attract sufficient consumers in their buying choices or is not favoured by the industry or media gatekeepers then the opposite effect is transmitted. However, if an artist is on an independent label then success is not an important factor to the consumer, who consumes for the sake of the art rather than popularity. However, the perception by the independent industry and the media, which support it, is mixed, as a modicum of success can develop

an artist sufficiently to build up a reputation and a small following which may support or sustain their development. To the majority of those that analyse music the agenda is related to context and the components of the music are far more important than the industrial factors although the foregoing secondary research suggests these are never the less significant.

Now that the context of the study has been explored, the paradigm debate affecting the methodologies within this study will be discussed.

## 2.5 The Paradigm Debate

One criticism of quantitative research is that it “is too reductionist in its approach to the study of behaviour, thereby losing sight of the whole picture; it oversimplifies social reality, in its stress on measurement, and that it strips away context from the data” (Punch 1998:29). Patton (1990) advocates the opposite of such an approach identifying the problems with a totally qualitative approach. The point of a thesis is to observe an area both holistically and comprehensively and to utilise either of these methodologies militates against such an approach. In recent times there has been “ a move towards détente, and an increased interest in the combination of the two approaches (Bryman 1998, 1992, Hammersley, 1992)” (Punch 1998:2). There is a long-standing epistemological debate regarding research, which centres on the value of two different competing paradigms:

- (1) logical-positivism, which used quantitative and experimental methods to test hypothetical-deductive generalisations, versus
- (2) phenomenological inquiry, using qualitative and naturalistic approaches to inductively and holistically understand human experience in context-specific settings (Patton, 1990:37).

Patton also relates that too much research, evaluation, and policy analysis is based on habit rather than situational responsiveness and attention to methodological appropriateness. He also indicates the crux of the debate on methodology; it is the appropriateness of the methodology and not the ease of use or the researchers interest or preference that is important. Within this thesis, elements from the two paradigms are processed encompassing both quantitative and qualitative methods, which focus on the topic in question and thus both paradigms merit exploration. Whilst Flick (1998) identifies the different approaches inherent in the two paradigms, Patton advocates a paradigm of choices. Such a paradigm rejects methodological orthodoxy in favour of methodological appropriateness as the primary criterion for judging methodological quality. The advocating of a paradigm of choices is not a deliberate dithering between methodologies but a conscious effort to combine systems where necessity is obvious (Patton 1990). However, the utilisation of a combination of the two paradigms is opposed to the views of Lincoln (1989) and Cooke (1991), who advocate strict use of one or other of the paradigms

stipulated. However, Briedenhann and Wickens, (in press) identify that “ Whilst Patton (1999: 9) describes evaluation as “a rich feast of different approaches”, others argue that consideration must be afforded to which methods are most likely to secure the type of information taking into account the values, level of understanding and the capabilities of those from whom information is requested (Taylor-Powell et al, 1996: 8).

The methodological thinking in this thesis was influenced by the theoretical perspective that draws attention to the similarities between qualitative and quantitative data, and that both types of data offer representations of what we as individuals perceive as our reality. As Wickens (1999) points out qualitative data offers more detail about the subject under consideration, while quantitative data provides more precision, but both give only a partial description.

In this thesis both the qualitative and quantitative methodologies focus on differing aspects of the study as the diverse nature of the subject area and the wide range of respondents identified in the exploration facilitate a combinational approach. Burgess (1984) also points out that we need to be flexible in our approach and utilise a range of methods for any problem.

The process of the study develops from induction to deduction and then verification. Such an analysis will explore articulation between micro and macro aspects of the music industry and enable a clear view of the musical and paramusical phenomena, which affect the nomenclature of musical types. Therefore, the study will not adopt a single paradigm structure but will combine the two using appropriate techniques and methods to explore the articulations within an overarching triangulation methodology. Although quantitative research has been defined as “methodologically unidimensional” (Punch 1998:139) the way in which such a methodology is used within this study is appropriate and compliments the qualitative element. The usefulness of employing both quantitative and qualitative research methods in a single investigation are discussed by several scholars (for example Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Miles and Huberman (1994).

In a multi-strategy approach to this research a purely qualitative perspective would not enable the researcher to gain a total overview of all the elements encompassed within any exposition of generic nomenclature as it does not take into consideration the investigation of particular patterns arising from volume and repetition. Owing to these characteristics, methods must be developed to enable the researcher to focus in an area of statistical significance.

From the foregoing analysis and the absence of an overarching paradigm, it is proposed that a “hybrid” (Wickens 1999) approach will be appropriated in this thesis, which affords flexibility in the combination of both qualitative and quantitative techniques.

## 2.6 The Triangulation of Methods

Morse states that:

The actual cognitive processes inherent in analysis, processes of synthesization lead to the aggregation of categories, strategies for linking categories, and decisions and processes of falsification and confirmation in theory development remain mysterious to all but the qualitative researcher (Morse 1994:24).

It is often perceived that qualitative research is 'unscientific' or 'easy' owing to the way that researchers in the past have neglected or been unable to show in detail the development of models or the construction of theory. Four cognitive processes are integral to all qualitative methods, "comprehension", "synthesis", "theorising" and "recontextualising" (Morse 1994:24).

The main challenge to this study is the lack of empirical data available in the area of musical genre taxonomy. Thus the debate about how much the researcher should learn about the setting before beginning the study is difficult to resolve. A great deal has been written on specific popular music genre but not on how popular music is actually classified.

The quantitative findings within this study almost exclusively comprise of new information processed for the first time. The qualitative element is the rationalisation and development of perceptual data from the industry, the media, the artist and the consumer. However, rather than detracting from the study the combination of qualitative and quantitative data with secondary findings gives a new direct perspective which although may identify some difficulties during synthesis enables fresh theorising and the delivery of re-contextualisation within the subject area. It is hoped that this study will not be a one off but will build theory and practice that other studies can use as a basis for further research. Pawson and Tilley (1997) state that:

In short, if the cardinal purpose of evaluations is to feed into improvements in policy and practice, they too need to be oriented to culmination. If evaluations are going to be informative they must be informed (Pawson & Tilley 1997:115).

Pawson & Tilley also suggest that culmination involves a process of "deepening, specifying, focussing and formalising" (*ibid*). Therefore, the issues developed within the synthesis that are then theorised upon and contextualised need to be robust enough to stand up to cumulative evaluation.

Research activity itself involves incursions into areas of industry and society within which the actors involved are likely to construe as belonging to the private domain. The publication of results that tend to discredit or show the industry, media artist or consumer in a less than favourable light contain a potential threat to industrial and musical partners and thus as Bell and Newby (1977) identify pose both a political and moral dilemma for the researcher. Information appropriated from some sectors of the industry will conflict with the beliefs or interests of the consumer, the media and the artist and this is



apparent throughout Chapter 5 of this thesis. The present taxonomic system employed by the industry and media is perceived to occur by some form of osmosis rather than design and as such, those involved with the present 'non-system' may or may not welcome the disclosure of such taxonomic developments.

The combinational approach of the research methodologies coupled with the secondary research in several integrated but mutually exclusive discourses enables the triangulation of approaches and information. For example, the identification of a universal quantitative musical variable within a genre of music may be underpinned by information from the industry and the media as well as being supported by focus groups, secondary literature and consumer interviews.

## 2.7 Using a Plurality of Methods

### 2.7.1 Introduction

In this thesis data was collected using a variety of techniques, each of which is discussed and analysed below. These techniques comprise group discussion, semi-structured interviews, other data sources and experimentation.

The focus of the research on both qualitative and quantitative elements will enable the researcher to identify musical, paramusical and perceptual factors, which may affect the identification of a genre. The initial combinational research techniques include free listing to identify the domain and pile sort to gauge the significance of the findings from the free listing exercise. Quantitative and qualitative methods are used in the identification and exploration of the musical and paramusical variables derived from the free listing and pile sort techniques, which includes responses detailing the rationales underpinning variable choice.

The focus groups used to create the domains contained respondents from differing musical backgrounds. These range from industry professionals to musicology students and therefore it is not anticipated that elements within the domain will affect the content validity.

Bauer & Gaskell (2000:273) sum up the conundrum relating to any research into genre using musical and paramusical elements by identifying the dimensions that characterise western musical events. These elements comprise the melody, the harmony, the rhythm, the phrasing, the dynamics, the form and the orchestration. However, Bauer & Gaskell, although alluding to cultural indicators, do not explore the a wide range of paramusical and industrial indicators associated with genre identification. It is clear that the musical factors are encapsulated in a robust and dynamic framework whereas the framework for the paramusical factors is fluid and less defined owing to the dissonance between the mathematical framework attached to the music and the

sociological framework attached to the paramusical variables. This is a clear example of the reasons why both qualitative and quantitative methods within this study are necessary.

The first step in the understanding of this complex research domain is informal/formal exploratory interviewing to define the parameters of the study (Weller & Kimball Romney 1998). It would be inopportune for the researcher to define the area of enquiry, as it is impossible for him or her to hold all the knowledge regarding the subject area. It is only from other experts in the fields of study, practitioners and consumers that the expansive framework of the domain can be constructed. The researcher therefore must obtain a clear understanding of the 'semantic' or 'cultural' domain before such interviews can take place. It is clear from the foregoing analysis that this domain is divided into two distinct areas, the first encapsulating the protagonists, businesses, artists and consumers involved in the means of musical production and consumption, and secondly the musical and paramusical factors utilised in the musical process. Therefore, it is important to obtain a wide spectrum of responses from the total 'musical world' for a pertinent domain to be created.

The items within the domain studied derive their meanings from a mutually interdependent system reflecting the way in which those with an interest, academic or otherwise, within the conceptual sphere studied will classify it (Weller & Kimball Romney 1988). As has already been stated, within the domain of this study there are a number of protagonists in mutually exclusive spheres. These spheres include but are not exclusive to musicology, music management, taxonomy, sociology, and psychology. For this research to be successful careful attention must be paid to the diversity of the domain defined.

It is possible to isolate the domain by free listing. However, such an exercise can only be a precursor to further research, as the diversity of the development of music genre nomenclature will become apparent as the thesis unfolds. Free listing and pile sort will enable the researcher to ensure that the items pertinent to the category under investigation are identified and thus delineate the boundaries of the cultural domain (Weller & Kimball Romney 1988:10). However, further discussion with protagonists will identify rationales behind the domain creation.

### **2.7.2 The Procedure for Domain Creation**

Owing to the wide and varied nature of the subject area, two differing groups of protagonists were interviewed separately to define a more focused cultural domain. The first group comprised musicologists, music theorists and sociologists, the second group music managers, media representatives, artists and consumers. A sample of one hundred group 1 respondents (including students in musicology/theory/education) and one hundred group 2 respondents (including students in music management) were asked to free list elements that they thought were especially pertinent to the identification of musical genre. These experiments were carried out in groups of twenty five

respondents as this number was identified in pilot studies as the optimum number of respondents to which information could be effectively and efficiently disseminated in the time frame established. This group size agrees with the pilot research carried out in advance of the experimentation.

All respondents taking part in the experimentation were introduced to a normalised experimental procedure and furnished with standardised information to enhance their understanding of the experimental requirements. Thus a uniformity was established in both the test procedure and the information disseminated to the respondents. From the results of the free listing the more important or salient items were clearly identified by the frequency of their appearance in the lists. The first of two indices that can be inferred from such research is the frequency. To infer the second of the two indices namely importance, a pile sort experiment was instituted (Weller & Kimball Romney 1988).

The subjects were then asked to write each element identified through the free listing process onto card and then to sort these cards into three piles. The piles created were titled important, useful and not important. The differentiation between the titles was thought to be important as the difference between useful and not important was crucial to the development of the variables used in the final study.

In the second phase of the domain identification process, groups were asked to identify rationales underpinning their choice of piles. Thus, both quantitative and qualitative elements were utilised in pile choice where respondents had to use their cognitive abilities to discern why they had chosen the groupings for each of the variables.

Once the domain had been identified, the information was used to form a basis for the development of the final variables tested by hand and computer coded analysis and formed a basis on which questions could be framed for the industry, media, artist and consumer interviews.

Now that a description of the domain creation has been detailed, a description of the qualitative research will be produced.

### **2.7.3 Description of the Qualitative Research and Procedure**

Extensive research was carried out into the most pertinent qualitative tools to be utilised in this research. The work of Bryman & Burgess (1999), Schuessler (1964), Walker (1985), Scharma et al (1984), Layder (1993) and Sellitz et al (1976) were all explored, as well as studies by other musical researchers, to ascertain the most reliable and valid methods to be utilised in the test procedure. The aim of the qualitative research is threefold. Firstly to identify factors from interviews with the industry, the media, the artists and the consumer that distinguish or create homogeneity between one type of music and another. Secondly to ascertain if there are universal indicators identifiable in musical episodes, and thirdly to combine the qualitative and quantitative exploration to ascertain their validity in determining key elements of genre definition.

17 people working in the music and media industries were interviewed during the primary research and 16 during the secondary research to supplement the lack of formal texts on the subject area. Both the primary and secondary research groups consisted of those working in the major and independent sectors employed in a wide range of industry disciplines including A&R, as artists, pluggers, record company managers, label managers, media correspondents and music writers/journalists (see appendix 6 for details of secondary research interview references and appendix 7 for details of primary research interview references). Pertinent information from audience focus groups was also utilised to afford a comprehensive perspective from both the producers and consumers of music. Responses were grouped under a number of relevant headings.

Each respondent was interviewed in a relaxed atmosphere using the same question format. The interviewer was flexible with the place of interview to give the interviewee the advantage of choosing the interview site. Most interviews lasted for between forty-five and sixty minutes allowing time for valid responses to be formed. All interviews were taped on a portable DAT machine and all respondents gave permission for the resultant data to be used in the study.

The interview questions (which are detailed with rationales for each question in appendix 8) explored the individual artist, manager or media players' views on the initiation and development of genre within the music industry.

The focus groups of consumers were interviewed in the INFX studios and their responses were recorded on DAT. The dynamics of the groups were such that open and frank discussions on elements relating to the music industry were carried out. The time for each session was unlimited. However, on each occasion the focus group session lasted for between forty-five and sixty-five minutes.

#### **2.7.4 Description of the Quantitative Research and Procedure**

The aim of the quantitative research is fourfold. Firstly to identify factors that distinguish or create homogeneity between genres of music: secondly to identify universal indicators inherent in a series of musical episodes. Thirdly to test the variables chosen by the focus groups to ascertain whether they have validity in the determination of genre definition. In the case of this study, this test will comprise of factors relating to two temporal periods of music and musical episodes identified as *punk* and *nu punk* (see 4.1.1 and 4.2.2). Fourthly to combine the qualitative and quantitative exploration to ascertain their validity in determining key elements of genre definition.

### 2.7.4.1 Identification of Quantitative Methods

In this section of the study computer coded and hand coded data were utilised to initiate the possible development of an integrated framework of musical and paramusical variables through which genre categories could be identified.

From free listing, pile sort, focus group discussions and formal and informal conversations with industry practitioners, musicologists, artists and consumers, two distinct areas for quantitative analysis emerged. The first was in a purely musical context and the second more paramusical in nature. From the very character of computer and hand-coded data, clear differences in identification method and creation of the results provided two very different data sets. The first set dictated by Midi Toolbox (Eerola & Toiviainen in press) software parameters was entirely formal and the second coded by temporal/spatial identification or by consensus was more informal. Owing to the context of the research a combination of formal and informal identification was perceived to be pertinent as both purely mathematical and perceptual concepts have a place in the identification framework.

### 2.7.4.2 Identification of Time Periods

The study was focussed on two distinct temporal periods. The musical episodes were divided into two groups: an 'early' group (1975/6-1980) and a 'late' group (1988-2003). The wider temporal second period is used to encapsulate a small number of songs between 1988 and 1995 that were thought crucial to the study by those in focus groups. However, the majority of the songs in the process fall between 1995 and 2003. The rationale behind such a split emanates from the identification and establishment of the two key periods for the development of this genre of music. The early period encapsulates artists from the initiation of *punk* through to the perceived change in music genre to *new wave* in 1980. The second period covers the rise of *nu punk* and its further development. The period over which the two temporal periods straddle charts the rise of *new wave* and its 'antithesis' *hardcore*. More information on this period and why the two periods researched were chosen in preference to the middle period can be found in Chapter 4 section 4.1.1 and 4.1.3. Both the hand coded and computer analyses were implemented using 200 pieces of *punk/nu punk* music. The next section identifies the rationales underpinning the choice of test pieces.

### 2.7.4.3 Choice of Test Pieces

The methods utilised in the choice of the test pieces for the first 100 'early' *punk* musical episodes differed greatly from those utilised in the choice of test pieces for the second 100 'late' musical episodes. The identification of a definitive list of the most wide-ranging and comprehensive *punk* and *nu punk* musical episodes was carried out in the following ways. For the first 100 pieces a compilation called *1-2-3-4* on the Universal label was used. The rationale underpinning this decision hinges on the reaction from the media, industry and consumers when

this compilation was released. Many of the major *punk* artists and writers cite this compilation as the most definitive collection of *punk* musical episodes available, including Savage (2000), respondent (14) and respondent (7). Many of the subjects in focus groups also referred to this compilation as a reference point. The compilation also contains many tracks thought by some commentators not to be *punk* at all but to cover a wider area of musical nomenclature. These two elements were considered to be important when selecting the 100 most definitive *punk* musical episodes between 1976 and 1980 as *punk* by its very nature seems to advocate both homogeneity and difference.

The second set of test pieces was selected from a free listing exercise where 200 concert attendees were asked to list their favourite *nu punk* artists and musical episodes, which they considered the most influential between 1995 and 2002. 1995 was chosen as a specific temporal point as this was deemed by those in focus groups to be the genesis of the *nu punk* genre. However, a small number of musical episodes chosen by members of focus groups which were identified as 'vital' and 'seminal' fell outside the time frame specified but were included in the second set of test pieces owing to their relevance (a list of these test pieces can be found in appendix 5). From the free listing a clear locus of bands and musical episodes was ascertained. However, owing to personal preference a consensual track listing proved illusive. Literature on recent *nu punk* musical episodes was sourced and explored. This exploration proved fruitless as a paucity of current literature on the *nu punk* phenomenon provided an obstacle in the search for a definitive list of 100 *nu punk* tracks. Therefore, the top 100 artists/bands from the free listing process were identified and placed in rank order. Individual albums and compilations housing these artists were then analysed. There are a number of record labels that provide single tracks for *nu punk* genre compilations from a large number of artists so that *nu punk* fans can own the most popular *nu punk* musical episodes on a series of compilation albums. After careful consideration and analysis a series of individual and compilation musical episodes were selected to comprise the second series of 100 musical pieces. These musical episodes were discussed in focus groups and the respondents decided by accord that they comprised the best distribution of *nu punk* episodes and were thus utilised in the experimental and testing phase.

It is clear however, that any set of 200 musical episodes may do the same job, but as this study deals with a developing process, other musical episodes can be tested against the process once it has been established. The more tracks added to the process the more significant any developing results will become.

It is clear that many of the paramusical factors associated with *punk* and *nu punk* are not encapsulated in the CD representation of the product but can be identified in the live performance from both the view of the artist and the consumer. Unlike Tagg and Clarida's work on film music where the music is studied in relation to paramusical symbols through elements including "pictures, words, atmos and sounds" (Tagg and Clarida 1996:7) the quantitative analysis in this exposition is bound by the recorded product. Hence this is

another reason why a wide range of both qualitative and quantitative evidence is needed to enable a wide interpretation of genre elements.

#### **2.7.4.4 The Test Pieces**

Details of the 200 test pieces can be found in Appendix 5.

#### **2.7.4.5 Non-Recognition Criteria**

It was not perceived a necessity to distinguish between musical episodes that respondents may be familiar with and those which they may not, as all of those respondents used in focus groups, had a reasonably eclectic musical taste and could recognise and initiate dialogue on a wide range of musical genres. Therefore, problems were not encountered with track association as in any number of groups of this magnitude the probability of group members being able to identify any or a number of musical episodes is extremely high. The parameters laid down for the instigation of focus groups do not identify any knowledge of a particular genre of music as a precursor for belonging.

A large number of the respondents had a vested interest in the research and found the project fascinating. Therefore, each of the responses to tracks or questions were carefully considered and produced. Three students with a wide knowledge of musical semantics were employed to help respondents with any difficult concepts or nomenclature that was not clearly understood. Some of the earlier responses were recorded on paper whilst the later responses were recorded on DAT in the studio so that they could be analysed at a later date.

#### **2.7.4.6 The Subjects**

The 200 musical episodes chosen were played to focus groups. Each focus group consisted of between 20 and 25 respondents (see 2.8.1 and 2.8.2 for rationales). On all occasions the tracks were played in the same order and for an unlimited number of plays. Therefore, all respondents in focus groups had no limit to the time taken in discussing the tracks. The respondents used in the development of the process were made up from a number of disparate groups, Finnish, UK, Swedish, Norwegian, German and US music management and musicology students in the UK, concert attendees, musicians, DJs and music managers. Although there were a number of difficulties in the timing and arrangement of the groups the process was conducted without any major problems.

The initial aims of this research do not include demographic comparisons, however the composition of the focus groups was split 50/50 between female and male respondents where possible, although owing to the preponderance of males working in the industry the majority of music managers were male. Female and male responses were not compared, as this was not a main focus of the study although the later DAT recordings could be utilised for such a purpose if deemed appropriate.

#### **2.7.4.7 Objective and Subjective Perspectives**

Both objective and subjective perspectives were used to ascertain results from the study. Many of the values used were objective, these included beats per second, number of lines in the chorus, number of lines in the verse, rhyming couplets in the chorus and verse, number of repeat lines and length of the song. The initial values were calculated by the researcher but two independent assistants also measured the calculations to test the validity and correctness of the results. A number of variable values were subjective and thus were ascertained from focus groups. These comprise vocalisation, deviancy scales for the name of the band and title of the song, vocalisation and the position of the instruments in the mix. The position of the instruments in the mix and the scales constructed for the other three variables were initially constructed from a specialist focus group before these scales were used by the secondary focus groups. In the secondary focus groups values were attained by consensus rather than average ratings as to use average ratings would not give a true representation of the whole group. Consensus values take longer to attain owing to respondent making decisions on how to achieve a consensus of opinion. In most cases the development of the variables was effective and efficient. The one area of dispute was the vocalisation scale where three groups had to be used to construct the scale. However, these three groups were introduced to examples from work by Leeuwen on speech music and sound where systems of sound quality were reviewed (Leeuwen 1999:125-155). In the first two instances agreement was made on the polarised factors but those in between were more difficult to agree on. Therefore, after three groupings an average assessment was made of the responses as it was too difficult for a consensus to be achieved. Therefore, 100 responses were tabulated and an average calculated for this element. In the case of the position of the instruments in the mix, three producers/engineers were asked to give their opinion on the variable coding for each of the 200 tracks. Here the consensus was straightforward, as the actual position of the instruments in the mix is audible to most protagonists. It is clear however, that there is a continuum from subjective to objective and often the integration of the two facets elicits responses rather than the dissonance.

## **2.8 Sampling Strategy**

### **2.8.1 The Qualitative Sampling Techniques Utilised in this Study**

In the qualitative analysis within this study three differing samples groups are identified. The first is an interview sample, the second is a sample for focus groups and the third a sample of those identifying variables for test pieces. The samples identified are crucial to the validity of the study. As Weller and Kimball Romney state "reliability is synonymous with consistency. It is the degree to



which an instrument, a test, a questionnaire, or an interview can retrieve the same answers when applied under similar circumstances" (Weller & Kimball Romney 1988:70). It is therefore important that both 'item reliability' (Nunnally 1998) and 'consensus' (Batchelder and Romney 1986) are explored as the three types qualitative research within this study utilises one or other of these approaches. The consensus model is utilised by those identifying variables whereas the item reliability model is utilised in both interviews and focus groups.

The rationale and logistics behind the interviews used in both primary and secondary research in the thesis point to the use of "purposive sampling" (Punch 1998:193). Purposive sampling is utilised where the respondents have been chosen deliberately for a purpose. In the case of both primary and secondary information the respondents were chosen for their knowledge of and involvement in the music industry. However, it could be construed that such sampling was also "convenience sampling" (Sokaran 1992:243) as many of the respondents were known to the author from prior engagement within the music industry. The purposive sample used is a judgement sample where the gathering of "specialised informed inputs" are being researched. The interviews were all individually administered and the purpose of the enquiry explained. Although each respondent gave permission for their names and information to be used in the study. Owing to the confidential nature of some of the responses it was decided to make the responses anonymous in the thesis text. The order of the questions was deemed to be important (Oppenheim 1992) as in the case of the artist many of the questions were asked in a different order to those asked to the industry and media protagonists. The rationale behind this was that the approach of the artist was very different from that of the industry and the media and to get the best possible responses order was important. There were no questions relating to either ethics or professionalism (Punch 1998) in any of the approaches to the respondents.

All focus groups had to be highly structured owing to the make up of the groups. The most structured being those in schools owing to the ages and behavioural aspects of the children interviewed. The researcher acted as a moderator and facilitator rather than an interviewer, and this approach enabled responses that would not normally have been available. Morgan supports this supposition stating, "the hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group" (Morgan 1988:12). An example of a primary school focus group response, which would have not been elicited under normal interview circumstances, was the focus of the primary school boys on football and the girls on music when talking about their favourite stars. It was clear from focus groups with older children and especially students and those in the industry that the situation of the focus group stimulated the respondents to elucidate on their opinions and perceptions which in a one to one interview they may have not done. The use of DAT recording facilities

(portable and studio) enabled the researcher to have a more controlling approach as note taking was not necessary.

Those identifying variables for test pieces were split into a number of groups. Those groups identifying pre ordained variables consisted of three or four respondents. In these groups the counting of beats, the identification of the number of lines in songs, the placing of instruments in the mix and the identification of rhyming couplets were carried out. The small number of respondents utilised in these groups reflected the purpose. As the responses were academic, the respondents were used to check the validity of the primary response. In groups where responses were subjective, groups of 25 respondents were utilised to identify firstly a scale to which musical episodes could be compared and then the comparison of the 200 musical episodes to the scale. In most cases, a consensus rating was used. Where this was not possible, a majority vote was utilised in the results. Taking part in all of the research groups made the researcher appreciative of the role of training in the preparation for data collection.

## **2.8.2 Problems Experienced in the Field**

### **2.8.2.1 Interview Issues**

During the qualitative analysis, the piloting of the interview questions alleviated process problems in questionnaire procedure. The questionnaire was administered to a sample of five respondents from the dance music industry. The pilot study identified the following issues.

- Ambiguities in the question format
- The highlighting of three questions where two answers were required
- The preponderance of leading questions
- Problems with the length of time the questions took to answer
- The need to record responses as taking notes was not an option

These issues were addressed at the pilot stage and the questionnaires administered to the test sample.

During the administration of the interview questionnaires to the thesis test sample, two further problems were highlighted. The first was a tendency for the interviewee to wander off the subject and to talk generally about issues in the industry. To stop this, a number of prompts were added to the interviewers sheet and utilised when this issue occurred. A second issue was the length of the interviews, which in one case lasted for over a three hour period, leading to the cancellation of a second interview. To alleviate this problem only two interviews were conducted in a day.

### 2.8.2.2 Focus Group Issues

During the focus groups a number of issues were identified. A pilot focus group of students alleviated many of the problems experienced. Focus groups were conducted with samples of fifteen and twenty-five respondents respectively. The issues identified comprised:

- Manageability of the group
- The need for very focussed questions
- The need for a series of prompts to keep the group responses flowing
- The need to record responses as taking notes was not an option

These issues were addressed at the pilot stage and the various focus groups identified within the thesis were carried out.

During the administration of the thesis focus groups one further issue was highlighted. One element in the thesis requiring a consumer orientation utilised three different focus group sample spanning three different age groups. The questions and prompts for each of these groups differed and the group with primary school pupils was especially difficult to manage and the responses had to be cleverly prompted to enable any information to be useful to the thesis. In this case a teacher had to be present at all times owing to the Children's Act. Therefore, the primary school focus group had to be carried out on a second occasion so that these issues could be addressed in the focus group format.

### 2.8.2.3 Test Piece Issues

During the analysis of the musical test pieces to ascertain variables and data for the hand coded analysis elements of the thesis a wide range of groups were utilised. There were a number of issues which arose that needed to be addressed these comprised.

- Parity of response
- Time frame
- Composition of the groups
- Standardisation of the test environment

Again utilising a pilot test these issues were addressed and the groups identified for the study were tested.

During the administration of the thesis test groups further issues were highlighted. The first issue was the need for the employment of a series of helpers who could interpret musical and paramusical text to facilitate the speedy answering of any questions arising from problems with the test procedure. A number of third year students were utilised for this purpose. Secondly, the control of the larger groups proved a difficult task as those more opinionated individuals tried to force their views and manipulate the weaker

members of the group. The facilitator in this case had to be extremely strong to stop this from happening. A further issue in the later groups was the inordinate amount of time it took to come to a consensus. However, to alleviate test groups agreeing because of outside influences, rather than coming to a focused collective response, respondents were constantly prompted.

#### **2.8.2.4 Issues and Problems with the Qualitative Approaches**

Owing to the nature of the quantitative approaches and the identification of dependent variables in the computer coded analysis the problems of identification and development were minimised. The issues arising from the qualitative development of hand coded variables for the quantitative analysis has already been covered in the previous section. The main issue in the quantitative analysis is the validity of the choice of test pieces for exploration. The rationale behind this is explored in 2.7.4.3.

### **2.9 Validity of Approaches**

One important aspect of the research is that it is valid. Do the results reflect the intended meaning? In normal circumstances to create true validity of the findings it is necessary to compare the results with other studies. If the study is replicated a number of times the results become more valid. If different approaches are used to validate the same result then this is also important.

It is the application of the methods used within the study that determines just how much confidence can be placed in the results (Weller and Kimball Romney 1988:79). Within this study, content validity is of prime importance. The construction of the methodological instrument at the outset of the study will ensure that the results from the research are as valid as possible. Redictive or criterion validity may be a stronger way of identifying the validity of the research as we are testing to predict an external criterion.

### **2.10 The Procedure for the Hand Coded Data and Computational Analysis**

#### **2.10.1 The Procedure for the Hand Coded Data**

##### **2.10.1.1 The Number of Variables Utilised**

The variables chosen as indicators for this part of the study were initially many and varied (over 150) and were firstly identified by frequency from a free listing and pile sort experiment with 200 subjects (see 2.7.2). From further dialogue with

practitioners, industry/media experts and artists, 32 signifiers (variables) were identified, some of which were musical and some paramusical. The choice of these 32 variables centred on reliability, ability to test the variable and the possibilities afforded by the creation of scales and parameters. A focus group made up of lecturers, students, industry personnel then discussed the relevance of the variables to the study, and 23 of them were chosen for the experiment, 14 hand coded and 9 computer coded.

### 2.10.1.2 Ascertaining the Responses to the Hand Coded Variables

In relation to the hand-coded data, each track was played to a focus group and each of the 14 identified variables was carefully hand coded. A value was given to each track for the 14 variables, which could be used for further quantitative analysis.

### 2.10.1.3 The Hand Coded Variables Used

- *The deviance of the artist name:* (Subjective) A deviancy scale was constructed (see appendix 3) to define level of deviancy. Each of the 200 artist names were in turn given a deviancy value from 1-10 (Total number of variables one)
- *The deviance of the song name:* (Subjective) A deviancy scale was constructed to define level of deviancy. Each of the 200 song names were in turn given a deviancy value from 1-10. It was clear from both of these deviance elements that both American and UK profanities were used and it may be that some US profanities are more deviant when used in the US and not in the UK or vice-versa (Total number of variables one)
- *The position of the instruments in the mix:* (Subjective/Objective) was felt to be vitally important. The instruments identified as being crucial to all 200 songs were guitar, vocals, drums and bass. Each song in turn was listened to and discussed and a mix notation created. It was perceived that any instrument at the front of the mix would be given a high value; an instrument in the middle would be given a medium value and an instrument at the back of the mix a low value. Therefore, a three step scale was used. Each of the four instruments was counted as a separate variable therefore in some cases where the vocals and guitar or the bass and drums were at the front of the mix they were given equal value (Total number of variables four)
- *The number of beats per second:* (Objective) As the speed of *punk* and *nu punk* is usually fast it was felt that the number of beats per second was an essential variable to explore. This was calculated by setting a metronome against the beat of the music. It was double checked using a quartz timer. The identification of the beats per second was problematic owing to monadic and dyadic beats in the same song jostling for position in the musical episode (Total number of variables one)

- *Number of lines in the verse and chorus:* (Objective) Many types of music use specific a specific number of lines in the verse and chorus. The number of lines in the verse and chorus were calculated by first of all listening to each song eight times and counting the lines this was then checked where possible with song lyric sheets found in the library and on the internet. The chorus and the verse made up two signifiers (Total number of variables two)
- *Number of rhyming couplets in verse and chorus:* (Objective) This was calculated by slowing down each track and listening to the end words of each line. In some cases this proved very difficult. However, by using song lyrics all problematic elements were solved. The rhyming couplets in the verse and chorus made up two variables (Total number of variables two)
- *Number of repeat lines:* (Objective) These were calculated by listening to each track twice and ascertaining how many times a repeat line was executed. It must be noted that the highest number of repeat lines in each song was given a value. If the value was higher than ten it was given the value of ten (Total number of variables one)
- *Length of song:* (Objective) This was used as a signifier because the usual length attributed to a *punk* song is between 2 minutes 50 seconds and 3 minutes 50 seconds. It was felt in focus groups that the length of *punk* songs had decreased since 1976 and therefore this value was thought pertinent to the study (Total number of variables one)
- *Vocalisation:* (Subjective) was given a rating from 1-10 by the focus group ranging from whispered to all vocals shouted a table of the rating system used for this can be found in appendix 2 (Total number of variables one)

### 2.10.2 Procedure for Computational Analysis

The computer-coded data analysis utilised the melody line of the first verse and chorus of each piece of music. Each of the 200 melodies was played on a keyboard attached to a computer and a midi file constructed. The 200 midi files were then analysed by the Midi Toolbox (Eerola & Toivainen, in press) using nine pre-ordained melody factors. A calculation for each facet of each track was then created and could be used in further quantitative analysis. The utilisation of melody factors was explored for two main reasons firstly that in a number of texts the absence of melody is one element that is consistently attributed to *punk* music. However secondly, and more importantly is that the Midi Toolbox has been focusing on melody factors in its initial configuration and thus testing of the process and procedure had already been carried out and was therefore validated in this thesis.

The test pieces were researched using the following methods. The following mathematical variables were used to examine the 200 tracks. These files were fed into the Midi Toolbox and the following variables calculated.

- *The variability of pitch-class distribution:* Entropy is a measure of complexity (Snyder 1990). High entropy signifies that many pitches are used in the melody with approximately equal probability. This ensures a great deal of information and the melody is not easy to predict. If the entropy is low then only a few pitches are used and it is easy to predict and therefore there is a lot of order in the music
- *The variability of interval distribution:* This variable signifies the number of different intervals used in each sample and thus the complexity of the interval structure
- *The variability of note duration distribution:* If the rhythmic variability is high this signifies a lot of different note duration's are used in the melody. This signifies rhythmic complexity. Low duration entropy is caused by a melody that has perhaps only one duration, which is rhythmically predictable
- *The rhythmic density of the melody (notes per second):* The more notes per second the higher the rhythmic density increases
- *Tonal clarity:* This indicates how well the pitch distribution of the melody conforms to the typical western distribution and thus is a measure of typicality. It is a measure of tonal clarity. It is calculated by the correlation between the pitch distribution of the melody and the Krumhansl/Kessler model (Krumhansl, 1990)
- *Pitch range:* This indicates the range of pitches in semitones used in each test piece
- *The average pitch:* This indicates the average pitch in each test piece
- *The standard deviation of pitch:* This indicates the standard deviation of pitch in each test piece
- *Pitch variety:* This indicates the number of pitches used in each test piece

Within this study fourteen hand coded variables were used (three subjective, one objective/subjective and ten subjective) and nine computer coded variables making twenty-three variables.

## 2.11 The Analysis of the Data

Once all the variables for each of the 200 songs had been calculated, the data was then analysed. Firstly each of the variables in turn was analysed in relation to the early or late grouping element. From this it was ascertained which of the variables were most significant and reliable when used to determine if the early tracks were different from the later tracks. A two-tailed t-test was used. A two-tailed t-test gives a higher probability value than a one-tailed t-test and consequently is a more conservative test. Such a test gives more validity to the results. Where high t-test values were observed a homogeneity of musical episodes could be assumed.

After each variable was tested against the early/late grouping, discriminant analysis was carried out. Discriminant analysis is a “procedure for the determination of the group to which an individual belongs” (Upton & Cook 2002:108). Firstly simple discriminant analysis was practiced and then a stepped discriminant analysis carried out. The use of a stepped analysis again gives more credence and validity to the results as it is a more valid test and larger differences must be identified to be significant. In this case whether the track belongs to the early or late group. Such an analysis shows firstly which variables are most significant in the decision to place the track in an early or late grouping and secondly which tracks fit or do not fit the early or late profile. “Discriminant analysis attempts to maximise the probability of correct allocation” (*Ibid*).

From the methodology described and the description of the experimental setting it is clear that a complex and convoluted combination of research methodologies has been created through which to review and help triangulate the data. Such a complex combinational methodology is key to a holistic approach to the study (Woolgar 1988). To simplify the methods used or to identify a singular qualitative or quantitative approach would have demeaned the study, as the wide-ranging approach would have been lost in the process of the exploration.

The validity of the findings are limited by the sample of respondents studied, by the methods used, by the biography of the researcher, and the many problems discussed above. However, as Wickens (1999) points out all “research is inevitably flawed” and all is socially constructed. Whilst this stricture undoubtedly applies to this study, nonetheless the findings are well-founded within the limits discussed above.

Now that the description of the experimental setting has been analysed the fur protagonists involved in the study and their relationship to musical genre will be explored.



### **3 THE MUSIC AND MEDIA INDUSTRIES, THE ARTIST AND THE CONSUMER, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO MUSICAL GENRE**

#### **3.0 Terms of Reference and Introduction to the Chapter**

In this Chapter the music and media industries, the artist, the consumer, and their relationship to music genre are introduced. A contextualisation of the music industry in relation to the thesis, and the interrelationships between the industry and the media are explored. Following this an investigation of both theoretical and applied perspectives on musical genre manipulation are investigated leading to an examination of fresh perspectives relating to access, manipulation and profiling relevant to musical genre.

##### **3.0.1 Terms of Reference**

Having worked in and around the music industry for over two decades and lectured in the area of music industry management for the last twelve years, much of the information within this Chapter has been accumulated from personal experience. Coupled with this knowledge, information from music industry commentators, journalists, textbooks, journals and academic papers have been combined to give an integrated account of the relationship between genre and the music industries, the media, the artist and the consumer. To supplement the lack of available integrated texts exploring music management and its relationship to genre, interviews with a number of managers and artists from the music industry have been utilised to underpin both the theoretical and practical applications in this growing area of interest. These sixteen interviewees are referenced in appendix 6.

Three focus groups were also arranged. The first at St Mary and St Giles Middle School, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire: the second at Deanshanger Secondary School, Northamptonshire, and the third at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, Buckinghamshire. A comparison between *Praise*

*You* by Fatboy Slim and *When You're Gone* by Melanie Chisholm and Bryan Adams is utilised within the exploration. Although much of the substance contained within this Chapter could be considered as pure conjecture, it is important to relate the resultant information to later qualitative and quantitative research to enable a valid and informative account to be created by the means of data triangulation.

### **3.0.2 Preamble**

The manner in which new genres of music are identified and labelled is fundamental to this study. This Chapter embarks upon an exposition of how the identification and labelling of genre is perceived to occur by protagonists in the music and media industries and then focuses on the role of the artist and the consumer in genre identification. To create terms of reference for such an exposition, the context of and involvement in the industry by the major and independent music sectors must firstly be determined. Association also implicates the consumer and the producer (in this case the artist) and thus the consumer and producer role in the identification and labelling process are explored in both the major and independent sectors.

## **3.1 The Music industry: Contextualisation and Media Integration**

### **3.1.1 The Basic Premise Behind the Management of Music**

It can be deduced from the emerging body of knowledge concerned with music management that the primary focus of the music industry is to create strategic frameworks through which both products and services associated with music can be managed, administrated and disseminated. The tension between consumer, product and market orientation within music companies is of primary concern in relation to the different strategies employed by the major and independent sectors. The primary function of any music company is to create an economically viable business perpetuating a continuation of practice in the industry. This is confirmed by Frith who states:

The industry's commercial task has not been to persuade people to do something they otherwise wouldn't (buy a record, rent a video) but to ensure that whatever they do do brings in a financial return (Frith 1990:129).

However, the link between art and commerce is, "inherently contradictory, for musicians and merchants are, in many respects, natural enemies. They seem to hold conflicting views on what music should be and do" (Baskerville 2001:3). Such conflict will become one focus of inquiry within this Chapter.

A number of artists compartmentalised into groups identified as genres governs the success of each music business. The success or failure of the business or company depends, for example, on the number of units or tickets for events or amount of merchandise sold within each of these compartments (Kemp 2000). Although this is a simplistic way of looking at the music industry, it is the basic premise on which the industry exists. Therefore, it is clear that the formation and development of genre is central to its existence. The wider and more amorphous a genre the easier it is to assign an artist to it. The more specialised the genre the fewer artists will be assigned and the more difficult it will be to create commercial viability. Therefore, a wide range of companies identified as the independent music industry services the majority of those minority genres, and the five major labels (identified later in this Chapter) service the mass interest in music. Those managers, marketers and media players that have access to the genre creation process can manipulate the market and create strategies to capitalise on and monopolise all sectors of the industry. Fifty years ago the industry was reasonably unstructured and to enter it was not a difficult task. Today's music industry is both streamlined and focused. Gatekeepers who manipulate entry to the industry control it (Negus 1992).

### **3.1.2 The Birth and Development of the Cultural Industries**

Adorno first coined the term 'cultural industries' to describe societal institutions characterising production and consumption of goods and services within organised industrial corporations. Adorno also uses the term to identify the 'standardisation' and 'censorship' practiced by these protagonists (Adorno 1947:86), but does not differentiate between corporate culture and the smaller individual business organisations. Shuker introduces the concept of competition within such industries stating that "The cultural industries are engaged in competition for limited pools of disposable income, which will fluctuate according to the economic times" (Shuker, 1994:33). By applying such definitions specifically to the music industry, it becomes apparent that the development, reiteration, re-use and sub categorisation of 'types' of music are all tools used by the industry to compete for market share. Thus by increasing the sale of products and services including CDs, music papers and magazines, live concerts and web casts, companies vie for supremacy in an ever changing market.

Crucial to such commercial development is the identification, definition and temporality of market cycles, (Kotler and Armstrong: 1994) as these have a bearing on the economic viability of artists and thus the genres serviced by the industry, perpetuating the theory that the industry and the media exert an influence over the consumer.

However, Peterson and Berger in Frith and Goodwin (1995:140-160) put an alternative theory forward which is the obverse to that of mass consumption manipulated by the major conglomerates. This theory suggests that the major

labels, which popularise and then canonise genre discovery as standard form, exploit more or less spontaneous ideas generated by the artists on subsidiaries posing as alternative labels. Thus, any new trends emerging could break through the orthodoxy of the major company structures by a subsidiary pathway and develop into a major phenomenon. However, Peterson and Berger fail to distinguish between the independent record industry and the major conglomerates where the process of identification is very different, as real and pseudo independents have mutually opposing internal structures and degrees of flexibility. Thus the simplification of these structures does not give a true picture of the industry framework. A claim that companies in the independent sector are more likely to nurture new music at street level in its original form and not the subsidiaries of major companies will be explored further, later in this chapter. Peterson and Burger also fail to recognise the role of the media in the development and identification of music genre. Bennett et al. agree that the music and broadcasting industries have a 'symbiotic' (*biol.*) relationship and exist in an environment of "mutual exploitation", but fail to identify the way in which new media technologies have destabilised mass media's monopoly on the music marketplace, and more importantly the major broadcasting industries' monopoly on broadcasting policy (Bennett et al. 1993:99). The development of a wide range of micro media and advances in technology have centralised the media's role in the delivery and dissemination of music genre to the consumer, and have created an alternative pathway to the planned and controlled framework engaged in mass media transmission.

The major companies may adhere to structured strategies where serendipity is an alien concept, but the independent companies are hotbeds of creativity fed by youth culture at street level (Polhemus 1995, Hebdige 1979). Commentators often fail to take into consideration the proliferation of manufactured artists, where the industry controls both the process and delivery of the product. This enables maximum impact on the consumer developing massive short-term gains for the industry. However, such manufactured music has little or no longevity and therefore an expansive range of manufactured artists are necessary to perpetuate such a strategy.

The music industry (major companies) believes in a corporate strategy approach to the business of music in all of its forms. Negus argues that:

the music industry is not simply a site of production. It is a corporate space within which various people attempt to manage the often-fragmented social relationships through which music is produced, consumed and given meaning. In the process corporate strategies attempt to connect the 'inside' of production (which is increasingly outside a company, with artists, producers and arrangers) to the 'outside' of consumption (which is increasingly brought into the company through various techniques of monitoring and information production) (Negus 1999:47).

However, this view does not mirror the view of all the protagonists involved in an extremely complex business environment. Those working in the independent sector view the industry from a far more creative and often pragmatic position, where marketing and economic viability are an end to a means rather than a

means to an end. This position becomes apparent in many of the excerpts from interviews within this Chapter. For example, Respondent (13) from Relentless records, states:

It's a blue collar vs white collar mentality. Indie labels appreciate the work ethic involved in creating a genuine fan base for a longer-term career of people in bands. More often than not (especially at punk labels) the employees are part of the scene. They want to play a part in the success of others to everyone's mutual benefit (more or less)...Major label employees often don't know a goddam thing about music (or business) but they do know they want to exploit product to serve their own lust for power, money and the prestige for themselves. The major music business is just like every Hollywood self-parody, except that people are stupider and have less money to play with.

This image of the industry portrays a dichotomy between the major and independent players. It is unfortunate that many academics and commentators on today's music industry, such as Shepherd and Wicke (1999), spend an inordinate amount of time on the corporate development of the major players and often ignore the integrative approach of the small independent companies.

As will become apparent as the Chapter unfolds, those employed by the major music companies perceive the independent companies (*indies*) as a way of monitoring the street and taking the best of what is new to develop for their own ends, which is contrary to Petersen and Berger's theory in Frith (1995). Fieldwork also suggests that the *indie* companies perceive the majors as 'thieves' without a care for the development of the artist (Respondent 1). This theme is further examined in this Chapter providing an insight into the myriad of opinions surrounding the creation, construction and definition of musical genres. As Negus states,

Chapple, Garofalo, Harker, George and Manuel all draw on the notion of a dynamic between independents and majors to explain one of the ways that co-optation occurs. This argument is based on the idea that the small independent companies ('indies') are more aware of and receptive to new sounds (Negus 1996:43).

Negus here appraises the significant contribution to the development of new types of music that many independent labels have made. Much of the primary research in this study supports this, where the development of integrated production and promotion strategies have enabled independent companies to have financial success whilst maintaining their independence. Such strategies assist these companies in their quest to remain alternative and to introduce further new music.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s the proliferation of sub and sub-sub genre groupings has enabled a much richer development of independent and pseudo independent labels. The maturation of such labels over a short period has created short-term gains, which have in turn pressurised the independent labels to produce new types of music and musical episodes at a faster rate to keep up with an industry searching for instant success, and this in turn has created a number of larger independents. As Franzman states:

In the past ten years, there's been the equivalent of an industrial revolution in the music business; a middle class of sorts has emerged where before there were only the wildly divergent independent and mainstream labels (Franzman 2001:1).

This "industrial revolution" has increased the development of co-optation. The co-optation of the independent artist and consumer by major labels is something difficult to avoid as those co-opting have a vast array of commercial tools with which to woo the unsuspecting independent artist or fan. An example of this can be found in Arnold, who states:

Well, it isn't a pleasant pass when grunge and/or punk fans have come to represent the perfect target market for anything, be it computers, beer, or chewing tobacco. It is, in fact, perhaps the one thing above all others to be avoided, since to be co-opted is to go from being a consumer to being the thing consumed (Arnold 1997:60).

The more economically viable and independent a company becomes and the more key artists reside on the label, the more of a threat the independent company becomes to the major conglomerates. Strategies have been created to deal with these independent companies. Negus identifies the absorption of independent companies by the major labels through a "process of amalgamation, joint venture or complete buy out as changing or re-adjusting the power relations within the music industry" (Negus 1996:43). A dichotomy is caused where the independents in a sense lose their independent nature and autonomy and become part of major corporations business development strategies whilst the "large corporation's regain or increase their share of the music market" (ibid).

Over the past thirty years, the music industry has spent enormous amounts of time, energy and money in perfecting its marketing techniques. It has made the art of selling superfluous (Kotler & Armstrong, 1994) as the industry and media have, through subterfuge, manipulated artists and consumers into positions where they are controlled without recognition.

From both primary and secondary research, it is apparent that the music industry reduces the risk of failure by planning and management strategies specifically integrated with failsafe marketing mechanisms. Inspired guesswork, hunches and intuitive serendipity are no longer benchmarks on which to contemplate either guaranteed quick return on investment or the development of long-term success. Airplay *Figures*, DJ plays and consumer research all create an interwoven network of sophisticated market intelligence techniques. There has always been a tension between production, consumption and the creation of categories. Negus states that, "One of the most obvious ways in which record company strategy attempts to resolve the problem of production and consumption is through the organisation of catalogues, departments and promotional systems according to genre categories" (Negus 1999:47).

Independents are fragmented compared to the majors. These comprise smaller units dealing with a small number or even singular genres, and thus their structure is very different from the highly organised and differentiated

departments of the major company. A staff base of perhaps one or two manage many independent companies, whereas the major conglomerates have six or seven departments employing hundreds of staff. The energies of the independents are focused on the widening of markets through strategies which encompass fragmentation and destabilisation rather than the uniformity and reductionism of the major players (Baskerville 2001).

Negus augments the underpinning of the industry by musical genre in his opinion that those interested in the identification of genres are preoccupied with the relationship between industry, text and subtext (Negus 1999). Kerman (1985) in his book on musical analysis recognises that in the analysis of popular and quasi-popular music, elements such as recording technology and marketing are as important as aspects involved with formal musical analysis. As this study neither analyses musical score nor is concerned with formal musical analysis the views of Kerman (1985) and other musicologists including Fabbri (1999) Cook (1989) and Tagg (2001) are extremely important as they each record their support for the inclusion of industrial, managerial, paramusical and technological aspects in the analysis of musical genre. Such views are of great import as they endorse the academic underpinning of the text and demonstrate that at all levels of musical dialogue commentators perceive that there is more to the identification of musical genre than the exploration of the constituent parts of music itself.

### **3.1.3 The Music Industry and its Link to Genre**

#### **3.1.3.1 Semiotics and the Industry**

Everyone has semiotic tendencies, giving and receiving signs and interpreting them to classify and codify elements of post-modern society. To encapsulate a musical genre the signs, variables, or identifiers are many and varied. Some signs may be relevant and others not, and it is up to those that define genre to use as many of these signs as necessary to identify a particular musical episode or artist. The origin of music genre nomenclature in the current industry environment is an important aspect, utilising a wide range of different signs from a number of diverse discourses. Hodge & Kress identify the complexity of the labelling process. They underline the creation of both common signifiers and individual markers. Such signifiers or markers underpin the identification of musical genre, recognisable as either universal to two or more genres or identified as unique to one specific genre characterising their collectivity or contrast. Hodge and Kress argue that:

Typically, groups are marked not with a single label but with a cluster of them. Some of these markers will have a common meaning, and the duplication functions to underline a message. Others have different meanings, modifying or contradicting other sets of signs within the complex (Hodge, R. Kress, G. 1995:79).

Such complexity characterises the boundary interference found within so many genres, where decisions on where an artist is placed may end up as an arbitrary

judgement between two or more genres rather than an informed decision in regards to a specific genre.

### 3.1.3.2 Industrial Genre Perceptions

Whilst working in the industry it became clear that a large number of industry practitioners and journalists were carefully nurturing the taxonomic development of musical genre for their own ends. This nurturing of genre tagging ensured that the industry had the potential ability to manipulate each new musical genre into a marketable concept, and thus a commercially saleable form. Therefore the motivation, perhaps, of those within record companies, publishing houses, live event companies, magazine creative departments and other product centred areas of the industry, is one of economic reliance rather than the fostering and development of talent.

The symbiotic nature of the music industry precludes the isolation of any of its constituent parts as they all rely on each other to survive. Media development and management manipulation often enable an artist to become economically saleable through a manufactured tagging system. This enables the public to identify the artist within a fixed framework initially created by the industry itself. This framework may support either an individual genre or a compartmentalised umbrella system often related to marketing, linking different kinds of music to the same category: for example *indie* and *pop*. Respondent (10) former manager of Rondor Records although not agreeing that music is totally manipulated by the industry, states:

...certainly the record companies to a large degree have a responsibility because they do manufacture certain kinds of artists, and to be honest, again, a lot of the time, that's actually not even done by the record companies. Its done by quite clever entrepreneurial managers who see the opportunity in the market place. For instance, First Avenue who have acts like Eternal and Dina Carol, and most recently the Honeys. The Honeys have been put together specifically with the idea of selling a package, i.e. beautiful faces, well dressed, palatable, listenable music, which is inoffensive, and can be marketed very well. It is very much based around a kind of sexual imagery and life style. The record companies are absolutely right in the current climate to be interested in those things. Why? Because, they will hopefully give them a quick return on their money. They know that if they have an act in that area, if they have the right kind of photos, the right kind of video, then they have got a very decent chance of being able to use channels which are already there. Examples of these channels are Saturday morning kids' television, the Box, and magazines like Smash Hits and Top of the Pops. These are used to market those acts, because they want young good looking people to appear in them which appeals to the young readership.

Respondent (10) relates that beauty, sartorial fixation and simple melodies are used by the industry to influence and captivate a market and thus manipulate choice.

However, if all musical genres were manufactured with a profit motive as their central driving force, the development of an all-encompassing genre structure for music within the industry would militate against the creative development of the artist. Thus, innovation within popular musical genre today



would no longer emanate from youth and associated cultures but would be manufactured by the industry. Popular music genre has not always emanated from youth culture: it is only in the past fifty years that youth has had a profound influence on popular music.

Owing to factors such as peer group pressure, competition from independent labels and personal choice, it is apparent that the music industry cannot totally manipulate musical preference. Such a stringent manufactured framework as mentioned in the previous paragraph would not only hinder the creative development of the artist but also reduce choice and thus destabilise consumer activity leading to the creation of an alternative music industry wielding more power than it does in its present incarnation.

Although this manipulative process has been developed in a number of musical pockets within the music industry, namely the boy and girl band phenomenon, if the process were industry wide, every record by every artist would be a hit comparative to other hits and every genre would be mass cultural. Such capitalistic tendencies err towards monopoly and thus imperialism on a global scale. The conglomerates of the music industry mirror such globalisation in their economic and cultural frameworks. The major labels do not exist in the guise of stand-alone record companies but as global corporations.

On a global scale, a very small percentage of music produced realises commercial value, yet the majority of music that we are exposed to as an audience is commercial in nature. There are thousands of musical episodes created every day, yet as an audience we are only exposed to a small fraction of these through the process of commercialisation and gatekeeping.

### **3.1.3.3 The Hypodermic and Gatekeeping Models**

'Gatekeeper' and 'hypodermic' models of media and industry orientation are both active and passive vehicles through which the media and the industry influence the choices of the consumer. Adorno and Horkheimer (1977) state that "The Culture Industry forces its productions on the public" (Adorno and Horkheimer 1979:361-362). Such force pertains to influence and the exertion of control by the industry on customer choice. Such an influence is exerted in a number of ways. Morley (1995) who introduces the hypodermic model of media influence, in which the media are seen to have the power to 'inject' their audiences with particular messages, which will cause them to behave in a particular way, identifies the exertion of control both actively and passively (Morley in Miller 1995:298). The injection of the message by the media is active but the reception is often passive as the consumer absorbs the information through a number of channels, often strategically targeted at a passive audience. Hirsch (1970) originally identified a system of industry and media gatekeepers that provide consumers with a series of messages, supporting the hypodermic model of media influence. Such gatekeepers minimise economic exposure (Burnett 1996:73). Foucault alludes to gatekeepers in his text about the control of

discourse through “mastery over its chance events” (Foucault 1981:52), which further supports the idea that companies try to eliminate chance as much as possible, obviating potential economic disaster. These messages focus on a small number of artists or musical episodes whilst denying the consumer access to others. Thus, gatekeepers regulate and control the music that the consumers see and hear and thus their purchasing decisions. As Bennett states in regards to radio:

From the listeners’ perspective, then, radio has a somewhat ambiguous place in pop pleasures. It is both our access to music (to new records in particular) but also, in consequence, often seems rather to block access to the unknown and unexpected (Bennett et al, 1993:99).

Such controlling influences pervade the gatekeeper framework where some artists gain more exposure to the consumer and others gain limited exposure through macro media channels. Thus, micro media has to be clearly focused and targeted to enable artists on alternative labels and attached to alternative or small promotions companies to compete in the marketplace.

The industrial and media gatekeepers facilitate music consumption by the audience, and it is the positioning of these gatekeepers within the economic framework of the music industry which controls musical dissemination through a ‘filter flow’ model. However, such a model does not take into consideration the changes that may occur to the product or service “as different people become involved in the acquisition, recording, marketing and promotion of artists” or genre (Negus 1992). The ‘transmission model’ utilised by Burnett, (1990); Jensen, (1984); and Ryan and Peterson, (1982) identifies the product, service, artist and genre as a holistic entity rather than the perspective of the music industry’s resemblance to a production line system. As such it is adopted by this thesis in any reference to gatekeepers or gatekeeping theory. The conglomerates have more influence and power than the independents in the dissemination of music to the consumer. The independent gatekeepers search for and employ alternative methods to target their music at the available market. Such gatekeeping strategies are conducted through an economies of scale model, where those strategies which are economically fit for purpose are used ranging from blanket marketing by the major companies to very specific and cost effective strategies by the independents, such as relationship and target marketing.

The gatekeepers carefully control the industrial framework, regulating and monitoring music releases, sales and positioning. Music not falling within the categories defined as saleable by the major label gatekeepers is not usually considered for release. Thus, many creative artists do not get the chance to release their material owing to the music being perceived as non-commercial. The artist may then release through an alternative means. This could entail either a release through an independent label, where different but less commercially focused gatekeepers regulate releases, or a release on a privately owned label. In the latter case, the artist incurs the costs of the release

themselves. However, the artist will normally preserve the artistic innovation and integrity of the work produced. It is important also to note the role of media gatekeepers who as Shuker states, “perform an influential role as gatekeepers of taste: and arbiters of cultural history, and are an important adjunct to the record companies’ marketing of their product” (Shuker 1994:78).

However, the word adjunct used here, which pertains to a subordinate role played by the media, is far from the actual role played by the media in a society underpinned by new media technologies. New technologies and micro marketing techniques are essential to the dissemination and continuation of music management strategies. Without the media, the industry cannot exert control over audience taste and buying decisions, and thus media gatekeepers are essential to industrial strategies.

The hypodermic and gatekeeper theories are complementary identifying the industry and media as partners in the development and delivery of the message. The difficulty with disseminating the musical message to the consumer is that both the media and the industry expect or wish that a homogenous audience were available, through which they could transmit a single message. However, the audience for musical genre is by design fragmented and thus is not always affected in the same way by the message. In relation to the transmission of the message, the effectiveness of advertising is measured on three levels: affective, behavioural and cognitive.

The cognitive refers to people’s ability to recall or recognise all or part of an advertisement and their comprehension of the message. The affective level refers to attitudes, opinions and emotions regarding the advertisement or parts of it. Finally, the behavioural level refers to any subsequent activity: purchase of the product, attendance at an event or any other action directly related to the message (Berneman & Kasparian 2003:40).

Thus, members of the mass audience do not identify messages in the same way and thus cognitive, affective and behavioural elements differ from genre to genre and from media to media. Schramm (1960) in his model of communication shows that only those who understand and can decode the message will be able to assimilate the information encapsulated: others will not find the message of interest or not understand how to decode it and therefore will not understand the meaning or utilise the content. The active recipient will make meanings from the message that they wish to use, but in many cases the message sent will not reach the targeted audience and thus will not be effective in transmission. Hall's (1973) encoding and decoding model amplifies the sentiments that Schramm identified by exploring the diversity contained in the message. Such exploration identified that:

- The same event can be encoded in more than one way
- The message always contains more than one potential 'reading' Messages propose and prefer certain readings over others, but they can never become wholly closed around one reading: they remain polysemic

- Understanding the message is also a problematic practice, however transparent and 'natural' it may seem. Messages encoded one way can always be read in a different way (Miller in Morley 1995:300)

To gain maximum effectiveness and efficiency, the clarity of the message is an essential component and the way in which it is coded must be easily decodable by the proposed target market. Neale (1977) further developed this theme and concluded that the development of genre and its proliferation by the industry and the media often fall foul of poor encoding and lack of specific decoding ability.

Using *dance* music as an example, where the message is very specific and targeted at a group of consumers well versed in the identification and decoding of messages specific to that genre, poor decoding does not occur. In such cases sub and sub-sub genre codes are more easily identifiable by their target market than are mass media codes, owing to the specific nature of the genre and the codes and media used. If a *dance* logo is utilised to attract an audience, the message is textless. However, those consumers participating in *dance* events will understand the meaning of the message and act accordingly: those not party to the meaning will ignore the message, as it will appear meaningless.

### 3.1.3.4 New Media and its Effect on Musical Episodes

The development of new media has increased the immediacy of the message. The use of the internet and SMS texting has enabled the practice of both blanket and target marketing in an electronic environment. Lindolf and Meyer state that:

with increasing adoption of technological add-ons for the basic media delivery systems, the messages can be edited, deleted, rescheduled or skipped past, with complete disregard for their original form (Lindolf and Meyer 1987:2).

Technological advances have both positive and negative applications. Firstly, the immediacy of a message enables the consumer to make faster purchasing decisions which increases front-end economic return. Conversely, ease of access to musical products and services can create an overload of information, increasing the possibility of losing the meaning of a specific message in the vast amount of information received amongst an ever-increasing number of musical messages.

It is perceived from the way in which both the media and the music industry work that some artists and genres are underpinned by greater resources and promoted by companies with preferential access to the major media delivery systems. Thus the musical field is dominated by power relations (Murdock 1989) (Hall 1989). However, as research into *punk* and *dance* music has uncovered, these power relations are never permanently static and the power base can shift easily depending on temporal, spatial and economic contexts (Laing 1985, Negus 1999). Such power relations, however, can in some cases marginalise alternative opposition including small record companies and

promoters. Often the polarisation of companies in the music and media industries causes further separation of values and motives and the delivery of the message, separating out the macro and micro media.

### 3.1.3.5 The Exchange Process

The exchange process of commodities is another element that affects relationships in the industry. The development of this process can determine the size of the market and often the importance of the musical genre (Appadurai, 1986). An overarching view of the media and industry process is afforded by Negus, who argues that:

Musical genres are formally codified into specific organizational departments, narrow assumptions about markets, and 'targeted' promotional practices, and this is strategically managed by recorded entertainment companies. In the process, resources are allocated to some types of music and not others; certain types of deals are done with some acts and not others. Greater investment is accorded to certain types of familiarity and newness and not others. It is part of my argument that we cannot fully explore the details of the conventions, codes or rules of genres through textual analysis, nor can we begin to explain how some (and not other) genre transformations might occur without fully understanding how corporate organization actively intervenes in the production, reproduction, circulation and interpretation of genres (Negus 1999:28).

However, it is not only the corporate activity that needs explanation, but also the nature and delivery of the independent sector. Such research will facilitate a discussion of the industry and media which is not confined exclusively to the mass industry and its audience. Other commentators on the subject (Passman, 1995, Bennett et al, 1993, Baskerville, 2001) also clarify the codification of genre and the influence of the industry upon those involved with nomenclature. How this genre tagging takes place is an important element of this thesis and this will be discussed in the next section.

### 3.1.4 Genre Tagging in the Music and Media Industries

Genre tagging practiced within the music industry has enabled journalists and managers to create their own definitive taxonomic structure or what can be termed as a universally recognised compartmentalised genre terminology, which meets the needs of both the industry and the media in terms of dialogue and categorisation. However, the people who usually define the genre areas which accommodate or to some extent define the very nature and nomenclature of a genre itself, are perhaps destroying the artistic innovation within the music scene by prescriptive analysis of what is really a 'creative' industry. Many commentators comment on the deliberate insurance of profit in capitalist industrial developments. These include (Adorno and Horkheimer 1977), (Frith 1983) and (Longhurst 1995). Frith identifies that the controlling of music to create profit is the prime mover within record companies and that style and genre are secondary to the profit motive (Frith 1983:32). Although this statement

is true of the major labels it does not always apply to the more eclectic nature of the independents. Negus explores this more eclectic interpretation of the interrelationship between the creative process and its relation to genre expectations and thus identifies the interface of this creative process with the music industry. In the development of this relationship, Frith alludes to a “web of genre expectations” (Frith 1996:94) and Negus underpins this concept by stating that:

This web is most obviously woven by the spiders of the music industry; any musician will confront these generic expectations as soon as they are subject to the attentions of music business personnel and, certainly, when within sight of a recording contract (Negus 1999:27).

The focus by many commentators on the major labels may owe its origins to the fixation of sociologists with the globalisation of culture. Thus, the number of texts dealing with major industry conglomerates and their domination of the cultural industries is a predictable outcome. The domination of the major companies is clearly shown by Negus in Longhurst, where EMI, Polygram, Sony, Warners, BMG and MCA are identified as producing “over 70 per cent of recorded pop music” (Longhurst 1983:30). Although there are now only five major companies, the percentage of music produced by them in relation to the independents is roughly the same. This also portrays a true picture of the imbalance between the major and independent companies in the music industry and reflects the actual balance of power. Hellman highlights the subordinate role of the independents where they are used as testing grounds for new artists or as symbiotic partners in the development of new music (Hellman 1988:355).

The key to the development of the conglomerate is control. By being able to control both production and consumption as much as possible at high levels the turnover and profit of the company is ensured. The independent labels tend to instigate a more direct approach where many of the rules of the major companies are reversed. Small pockets of production and consumption over one or a number of areas and territories enable these companies to survive. Kotler and Armstrong (1994), who intimate that if the market is unknown then a company should not enter it, relate the key to the major label philosophy. Thus by utilising the independents the majors can test a new market before apportioning resources to it. The relationship between the industry and the media creates and develops markets, enabling efficient and effective access for the major companies who have the resources to develop a wide consumer base. Both the utilisation of macro media and independent companies paves the way for the majors to exploit new markets.

Using *dance* music as an example, it is evident that the genre was a key determinant in the economic growth for many players in the independent music industry, amassing large profits from both product (CD) and the live (*Rave*) industry. Whereas conglomerates and the media tend to categorise artists by placing them in umbrella or marketing categories, the independent industry tends to create specific genre groupings for new music so that the consumer can

easily identify with the type of music and understand its categorisation. For example, the specific sound (uplifting), instruments used (Roland 303 or 909), or place where it originated (Frankie Knuckles' Warehouse), elicited the nomenclature for the type of music by the use of thumbnail sketches for each sub and sub-sub genre (Reynolds 1999). One specific example where the instruments used in a genre's construction relate to its defining sound is *acid house*, which can be identified by the distinctive 'squelching' sound of the Roland 303 and the 909. (Kempster 1996) It is inevitable that where music is solely reliant on the mechanical process, the music will begin to be identified by the machines that are inherent in process, as well as the artists who create it.

The way that the nomenclature for *dance* was constructed enabled the artist to contribute either consciously or unconsciously to the formation of the genre or sub-genre being created. Examples of this included *acid jazz*, *hard house*, *uplifting house*, *cheesy* and *hardcore*, where by a simple prefix or nickname the music became self evident - *cheesy* being commercial slang, and *uplifting* having an uplifting piano track in the music (Kempster, 1996). In the case of the Chemical Brothers the name of the band itself has been bastardised to create the sub-genre title identified as *Chemical Beats*. Once the independents had established *dance*, the major labels and promoters moved in picking out the most economically viable artists and exploiting them through major channels.

Artistic innovation is often curtailed by finding a genre for, or forcing an artist to fit into, a system of already pre-ordained genre areas. Once a new genre has been identified, developed and an increasing number of artists designated to it, the genre takes on the role of defining the artists within the category.

The industry tagging system can, however, also be seen as a very positive element. The system facilitates the identification of artists who may not have been a saleable commodity in their own right within their originally designated musical category. However, by identifying them within a different genre or including their music under the umbrella of a genre containing other artists that have a high sales potential, the artist may increase their own saleability. An example of this scenario is encapsulated by an assortment of artists within the *industrial metal* genre, where the combination of *dance* and *thrash* or *heavy metal* have enabled artists such as The Revolting Cocks and Cubanate to be associated with successful acts such as Ministry and Killing Joke. The crossover between the *dance* and the industrial form of *heavy metal* has also been instrumental in the development of a new and exciting genre exploited through a number of projects including the Soundtrack for the film *Spawn*. Artists as disparate as Marilyn Manson and the Sneaker Pimps, Mansun and 808 State, and Orbital and Kirk Hammett combine to create eclectic musical episodes. Through the association of the genre of industrial, obscure *metal* and *thrash* bands have become saleable not only through their own music but through an extension of their music in these projects with well known and eclectic *dance* artists. These projects have also enabled competent and well-known artists to extend their boundaries and thus their repertoire to push outward the already expanding borders of musical genre and creativity. This potential for crossover between

existing genres is a key element within the development of saleable musical form as it expands audiences and develops potential sales opportunities. Bennett identifies this eclectic trend in an interview:

But now you've got people like Leftfield or the Chemical Brothers who are quite happy to pick up very heavy metal guitar riffs and throw that into the dance mix...or Primal Scream come along and they do a rock album and then other people get hold of that and remix that stuff and eh, people will go and listen to it and they're quite happy to dance to it...I think dance music culture has allowed people to be quite open about the fact that they actually quite like a lot of different stuff. I've never been able to understand the divisions in music. I'm quite happy to go from Orbital to Jimi Hendrix (Bennett 2000:79).

Such responses underpin a philosophy of change in popular music where for the *dance* producer any type of music is fair game, and the use of different genres opens the music to many people who may not in the first place have been interested in such genre.

Over the last three decades, music has become saturated with a wide range of genre areas, the majority of which are sub categories of a few initially created genres. Owing to the constant reinvention and fragmentation of music, it is difficult to develop an entirely new genre. Thus the cross fertilization of music extends sub and sub-sub genre categories. By developing an expanding number of new sub genres, the independent industry is justifying its search for economic viability by enabling access to a wider audience and thus facilitating the means through which that audience can access a wider choice of music.

The analysis suggests that the music industry, through genre manipulation, dictates choice. Therefore, such an assumption must be empirically grounded in information derived from industry and media protagonists, artists and consumers. Thus the role of the music industry in the development of genre tagging and the development of a genre framework will become clearer from the findings and discussion developed from the experimentation within this thesis.

## **3.2 Theoretical and Applied Perspectives on Music Genre Manipulation**

### **3.2.1 The Industry/Media and its Effect on Music Genre**

Each of the major companies within the industry has a broad portfolio of interests encompassing, film (EMI), retirement home and race track ownership (MCP) and hardware, software and electronic components (Sony) to name but a few. The lesser players in the industry, usually independents, centre their business interests in one or two associated areas. These might include records (Music for Nations), computer games (Roadrunner) or videos (Castle Communications) but rarely develop outside music and media. If a large multi-



national is performing poorly in one area of business, the conglomerate has large enough resources to re-position itself. An example of such a repositioning is the de-merger of Thorn EMI in August 1996.

In the case of the independent music company focused business interests, less disposable capital and smaller profit margins make repositioning difficult. A downturn in fortune of an independent company could quickly result in insolvency. Often an eclectic, forward thinking independent will either be purchased in *toto* by a major company or be stripped of its main artists in a lucrative deal. Frith relates an example of this; he states in relation to Geoff Travis of Rough Trade that "Travis was writing from the perspective of someone who'd seen bands Rough Trade had initially developed (from Scritti Politti to the Smiths) poached by major labels as soon as their star quality became apparent" (Frith 1990:108).

Sometimes the major is interested in the creative ability of A&R staff or the number and quality of artists an independent agent has on their books. An example of this is the buying up of the artist PJ Harvey from the Too Pure label by Island Records a Polygram Music Company, for an undisclosed amount. Universal had watched the rise of PJ Harvey over a short period and had calculated her worth to them in subsequent years: thus they offered her original label a buy out for the artist.

The major label consistently brands its product, developing customer loyalty through reassurance of the product and its attributes. The issue of parity between the major companies is an important factor when an artist is offered a range of contract opportunities by a number of major conglomerates. How does an artist choose between one major label and another? Negus answers this by identifying that "sympathetic conditions" and a "supportive environment for creative work" (Negus 1999:63) are often used as levers by companies who can match each other's financial deals.

However, such "sympathetic conditions and supportive environment for creative work" are often used as empty promises to artists to lure them to a company. Many artists have become increasingly unhappy in regards to the way major labels ignore their creative work, and are interested only in profit. In conversation with respondent (2), she stated that:

I was becoming increasingly disillusioned with the record company wanting to change my original creative work into soulless hit tunes rather than leaving the music to stand or fall on its own creative ability. Therefore, I decided to produce, create and record an album specifically geared to the way I felt most comfortable with my music. The record company rejected it and refused to release any more of my work until I came up with a series of marketable hit tunes.

Eventually, after three years of wrangling, the company decided that the bands bassist could buy respondent (2) out of her contract, which then allowed her to release her own material. Although none of her new material ever reached the charts she felt that her new creative development was much more satisfying than having her music changed unrecognisably by the record company in the search for economic gain.

The major media outlets for music are TV, radio, the internet and magazines. There is a great deal of music available but little of it reaches the TV screen or major radio stations and therefore the buying patterns that occur are centred on a small amount of well-publicised artists. Although the way in which radio disseminates genre to the audience is not explored fully in this thesis, it is important to note the format system inherent in radio. Genre suitability is considered as important to ascertain whether a song is played on a specific radio station or not. This is because apart from the mass media and the large commercial stations, certain radio stations play certain formats: for example *country* or *indie* or *rock* stations. There is an inherent commercial viability in such targeting as record companies involved in the dissemination of a certain genre can target both the station and the trade publications associated with it to try to access the specific genre charts from the genre recognised by the station and the listening public (Frith 1990). The obverse of this occurs on the web, where smaller artists are exposed to audiences through existing website opportunities, increasing their profile through the access to new technologies.

An example of the way in which the music retail industry manipulates public buying patterns is highlighted in an interview with respondent (12), a mainstream artist who states:

Woolworth's are a prime example of the way that the public is being ripped off by the record industry. Woolworth's represent 40% of all singles sold in this country. When Woolworth's buy singles they demand three free singles with every one purchased. Once purchased the singles are then sold in the shops. However, if the singles are not sold they demand sale or return on all the singles including those that they have been given free with the singles purchased. This means that independent companies such as ourselves at 'Cheeky' have to be sure that the single will sell a large amount of copies ' otherwise money will be lost on a payback to Woolworth's. It is however easy for larger companies to comply with the regulations set by Woolworth's. In essence it means that large retailers like Woolworth's are discriminating against the smaller independent companies.

Respondent (12) explores the inequality of industry strategies and the manipulation through such strategies of the buying public. Many smaller companies cannot afford to have their records stocked on the shelves at Woolworth's. Therefore, no matter how good their product is it will not appear in the shop that holds the largest market share of the singles market in the country. This element of retail manipulation creates an artificially constructed chart, as 40% of customers purchasing singles from Woolworth will have the limited choice afforded by the pay to display retail system. This *Figure* may be higher depending on the retail practices of other record chains and independent stores. A similar effect is reflected in radio and TV airplay where artists on major labels have large amounts of press, promotion and plugging behind each release, exposing them to a higher proportion of airplay time than artists on independent labels. The independent labels have much smaller plugging and media resources in comparison with the major labels, and this is a distinct disadvantage when selling phonograms or other products. It is through systems like pay to display and the monopoly of the media by the major labels that make

the British Top 40 singles chart almost exclusively the domain of the major record companies.

In the past, industry manipulation has been embodied in the development of an artificially constructed chart. One example of such manipulation occurred in 1989 when one of the directors of a major label allegedly sent employees out to buy all the copies of an artists single in a number of shops, which fed information to the charts. This catapulted the single into the top ten and enabled the band to work from a much more successful base than they had previously envisaged. However, the Album which spawned the single hit the charts in August 1989 at number 46, falling straight out again a week later. Artificially constructing a high single entry did not translate into album sales. Scenarios like this put the very validity of the charts in doubt. There are many stories about artists and managers paying their way into the charts through unscrupulous pluggers and illegal financial dealings. The payola system of chart rigging has been well documented over the past three decades and the way in which the chart is constructed has changed drastically to try to stop such rigging. However, such practices still take place. In an interview with the former manager of a band with an amount of chart success, respondent (14), he intimated that, owing to discrepancies in sales in certain areas of the country for their band, Gallup was tipped off and the band were pulled from the charts and investigated. It has been clearly established from the foregoing analysis that a fair and equitable chart in the music industry is a very difficult entity to create.

The identification of the major developers of nomenclature within the music business is a difficult task. It has been stated that it is usually the industry or the media that sets in motion the process of nomenclature, it is apparent that the major developers of nomenclature are the music journalists, as their goal is to proliferate the symbiotic sales of musical product and music media. Respondent (9) a studio impresario and manager and owner of the Manor Studios in Great Linford states that:

It is in the interests of music magazines to define genres, as they need to be able to sell the artist through their magazines. If there is a lull in pop bands and an increase in indie bands doing well then NME sells more copies and Smash Hits sells less. However if there is a proliferation of pop bands and indie bands are not in the charts then the sell through is reversed. The magazines rely on being able to distinguish between genres as it is part of their selling remit to include news about certain genre areas.

The music industry has no tangible contact with its consumers apart from the music media, live events and the retailers. The mass music audience relies on music magazines, periodicals proliferated in newsagents and music shops, music television, music radio, and the ever-growing range of new media marketing tools used to sell product. Those interested in minority musics rely more on fanzines, the web and word of mouth for their music information. These micro media inform the consumer of what is being released, when and where to get it in much the same way that the mass media inform mass culture. However, the difference is that this media is genre specific and targeted at niche

markets. This difference enables focused, cost effective marketing to be practiced by the independents. The music press constantly refers to genre in album reviews and biographies, often strait jacketing an artist within a genre well before an artist's profile has been developed and released to the public. Thus the industry and media gatekeepers can manufacture a preconception of an artist or genre. However, the dominance of macro media cannot be underestimated. The spending on TV and newspapers by cultural organisations, for example, dwarfs the micro media spending on leaflets and posters. Arens identifies that advertising through posters and leaflets represents less than 1% of total media spending compared with 23% and 22% for television and newspapers respectively (Arens, 1999:246).

The manipulative structure of the music industry in the streamlining of genre and the move towards the 'airplay only chart' has caused the industry to develop a number of mechanisms through which it can perpetuate itself (CIN 1998). The development of genre is a key element in this perpetuation, because if the music industry can predict and then develop areas of genre, it can create a future for itself which can be constantly changed and developed, facilitated by its own management systems. The industry controls choice through the media by feeding the media with information on all aspects of the artist from music to personal facts. Thus, the development of a musical mass media is utilised ostensibly to promote the products of the various major conglomerates, ensuring success and power in the industry. Lull (1995) develops a theory integrating the "social circulation of media images" with commercial success and thus the spread of a dominant ideology. Lull further states that, "what catches on in television and the rest of commercial culture - especially film and music - also become widely recognized, accessible resources used by audiences to exercise cultural power" (Lull 1995:74).

Consumers use music media imagery to express their musical preferences and to influence other consumers into buying the product. Therefore, the mass cultural influence creates "communities of consumption" (*ibid*). The audience is enticed by an attractively presented message. The more money available and the more accessible the media is, the stronger the message. If a major record company invests millions of pounds in the creation of a promotional video it will target the audience through lavish, carefully created imagery to invoke a buying response. However, independent companies have to be more careful, ensuring that they can produce striking images on a lower budget specifically targeted at their focused audience.

Following the exploration of the effect that the industry and media have on musical genre there follows an explanation of the way in which the artist perceives musical genre manipulation.

### 3.2.2 The Artist's Perspective on Musical Genre Manipulation

The majority of artists engaged in the industry find fame to be transient, unless the artist continually fulfils the ever-changing demands of both the audience and the industry. Each artist would like to develop some kind of longevity or stability. However, in the present economic climate in which the employment of short-term strategies by the industry is the norm, few achieve this. As respondent (12), a mainstream artist states:

Today's music industry, which centres around the Major labels does not have longevity strategies. This is owing to the fact that the industry relies on short term planning for results.

The development of longevity within the mass music industry incurs massive investment. As the industry is constantly in flux few companies are willing to risk venture capital in the development of their artists. In the case of the manufactured band, the process is usually within one transient umbrella genre; pop. In many cases, the style of the manufactured artist is very similar to others in the same genre and then it is up to looks and paramusical factors to ensure the success of the artist. If the band fails to entice sales from the general pop fan base, it is deemed to be no longer in vogue and the band disappears into obscurity. Only those artists that develop longevity through clever product development and marketing strategies or an idiosyncratic element will be able to survive, resurrect their careers or change their genre and be successful again. An example of this is Robbie Williams, who has been able to survive in the cut and thrust industry since the demise of Take That. Tom Jones resurrected his career by appearing with a wide range of new and 'up and coming' artists. David Bowie and Madonna (Lull 1995) are examples of artists who have constantly changed over the years to ensure that their personas do not become passé and out of vogue. However, much of this survival spirit is encapsulated in clever marketing techniques, which enable the artist to survive for periods long past their expected shelf life. Conversely, the independent labels thrive on the longevity of artists, which enables the nurturing of a small number of artists in a specific genre to maximise profit over a sustained period. Loyalty to a label breeds devotion in the fan base. The fact that these artists stay true to their roots attracts loyalty from the audience.

From another perspective many musicians think that corporate culture is killing music, but as Patton in Zorn states:

We lash out at 'The Industry', blaming things like corporate structure for our shitty music - but we are the ones making it. We open the box they've given us and jump in, wrap ourselves up, and even lick the stamp (Zorn 2000:280).

A wide range of musicians can sympathise with such a view. However, conversely some musicians perceive that because the industry is allowing them to record that they should give over all rights to the aesthetics and individual creativity embodied in their music. Economic gain is the driver behind such a

concept and although the longevity of artists and genres is important to the development of regular income and profit, large earning, regular short term projects can also create substantial profits for a company. Respondent (1) the marketing director of HMV recognises a key to economic viability is the development of the consumer base: he states:

OK we have this artist, how can we build up their fan base and maximise the level of sales, both in the U.K. and possibly you have to think globally as well. So, that's really what it boils down to economic viability.

The maximisation of sales is more important in today's music environment than ever before. The wide range of new artists releasing on major and independent labels and the fragmentation of genre often means capitalising on income in a very short period. Thus, short termism can be represented in a number of industry strategies.

Elements encapsulated in short-term strategies include:

- The reduction or removal of marketing support for artists on a label whom it is perceived have not been as economically fruitful as others. For example, a company may only release one or two singles from a band and if these releases do not reach their maximum potential the company will terminate the marketing support, focusing its finances on something else that it sees as more en vogue and more profitable. An example of this was the Darling Buds whose first album was seen as a 'cash cow'. However, a subsequent release fared less well and the company pulled the financial support for the artist (Respondent 8)
- A high rate of staff turnover within music companies, where competitors recruit or poach creative staff with a proven record of accomplishment. An example of this was the head hunting of Russell Warby by other companies when he was the agent for Nirvana (Respondent 11)
- A reliance on back catalogue of both the major and independent companies to combat lean periods of new artist investment

Every record company would like to have an artist on their rosta with the same economic potential as Pink Floyd, an artist commanding high sales over three decades, and able to keep a record company afloat on the sales of a back catalogue. Respondent (4), a Director of Music for Nations who dealt with Frank Zappa's back catalogue for a number of years sold vast quantities trebling Zappa's European income from European sales over a short period (Kemp 2000:263). Having an artist such as Pink Floyd, David Bowie, Frank Zappa or the Rolling Stones enables a record company to take more chances with new artists, as part of its income is already guaranteed through back catalogue sales.

It is clear that artists rely heavily on the marketing strategies of their record companies and a positive perception by the media. Back catalogue and the ability to metamorphose are key elements, which facilitate the continued support of record companies to artists. To the major labels the profit motive is

paramount, but to a number of independents it is secondary to artistic integrity. Now that the artist perspective on musical genre manipulation has been explored, the consumer perspective on musical genre manipulation will be examined.

### 3.2.3 The Consumer Perspective on Musical Genre Manipulation

The music consumer can be categorised through the examination of a number of media variables. These variables may be conscious, which include buying choices, TV and radio preferences or choice of micro/macro media, fashion accessories and live/club priorities (Lull, 1995). On the other hand, such variables may be subconscious, triggered by adverts on billboards, music in public places, products associated with music or media technologies including computer games, many of which the consumer is seemingly oblivious to during the course of their working or recreational time (Key 1980).

Customer loyalty is created by maximising the exposure to, and interface with, the various sources of media. Magazines like *Smash Hits* feature selected singles and artists, often manufactured, lyrics of the top ten hits, life stories, histories and gig guides for the top forty artists. The word manufactured here is used in the context of artists that have been created artificially by protagonists in the music industry to fit an artificially created niche, which ensures high economic return for music companies. The artists are selected by holding auditions for the band members. Those selected, are then rehearsed, cosmetically and sartorially developed and then marketed by the company. The company responsible usually targets such artists at the 5-13 year age group (Respondent 7). The effect of this type of media exposure is twofold. Firstly, it creates young personalities (role models) which in turn create sales for singles/albums and magazines as well as bolstering ratings for children and youth TV programmes. Secondly, it perpetuates a market for music within the genres housed by the top forty. This type of strategy creates the concept of 'surrogate marketing' where the media and industry target a market without its own spending power (Kemp, 2000). This market comprises the 5-13 year old, where the media targets parents or guardians creating the concept of surrogate spend. The proliferation of the small number of popular artists on the radio, TV and in magazines ensures that such surrogate spend is clearly focused and sustained. Surrogate spend is most clearly identified in the US industry, where trackers have determined that children between the ages of 4 and 12 spend between \$11 and \$30 billion per year as a primary market (Sutherland & Thompson 2003). However:

The *influence market*, five to seven times the size of the primary market, impacts businesses far beyond any traditional notion of a "kid business." With over \$500 billion up for grabs, business needs to understand how kids influence family purchases and where they influence the most (Sutherland & Thompson 2003:113).

Thus, it is clear that the power of such a large market cannot be underestimated and that a market which creates such a substantial economic return cannot be ignored by the commercial businesses in the music industry.

On a subconscious level, marketing is in evidence everywhere that the consumer has access. This type of marketing includes billboards, theme tunes for adverts or music for films. Marketing for music surrounds the consumer and is constantly reminding them of, and reiterating the values of, albums, artists, films and products.

To explore the way in which the industry interfaces with the consumer, representatives from three different age groupings were interviewed in focus groups. The first group comprised children from 3 to 13 years as it was determined that children of this age spent the majority of their leisure time either in their own home or with their parents. The second group comprised youth between 14 and 25 as it was determined that children and young adults are influenced by their peer group and spend large amounts of their time gaining new life forming experiences away from their parents. The third group comprised adults between 25 and 45 years as it was determined that during this period of maturity most major life choices have been established and the subjects will have the largest amount of disposable income available other than during retirement. These groupings also reflect research by Frith, he states that:

The rising levels of youth employment meant too that teenagers now had relatively less spare cash and remained more financially dependent on their families. In the end, though, the effect of these material changes was not that record companies ceased to service youth but, rather, that the "youth market" began to describe new taste targets; on the one hand, 25-to-40- year-olds, the baby boomers grown up, the audience for AOR radio and Rolling stone; on the other hand, children, early teens, the audience for Smash Hits and MTV (Frith 1990:126).

After carrying out small focus group interviews in both primary and secondary schools, it became apparent that children between the ages of three and thirteen have little spending power and rely on their parents for spending support. In essence, the parents are surrogate spenders.

The relationship between the spending power and influence that children exert over parents buying choices can be identified from research by Sutherland & Thompson, which shows a rise of 16% in the influence children have in the buying of CDs by their parents between 1999 and 2001. The data also shows that children have a big influence over such purchases, as 56% of the children identified in the survey in 2001 have an influence over the buying of CDs for the family home (Sutherland & Thompson 2003:118 utilising source material from 2000/2001 Nickelodeon/Yankelovich Youth Monitor New York).

The majority of magazines read, TV programmes watched, and radio stations listened to by these children are focused upon the top forty. From the focus groups, it became apparent that the 3-13 age group are attracted by new releases for novelty value, songs with reduced vocal and instrumental development and those performed by manufactured artists constantly appearing on TV, the radio or featured in magazines such as *Smash Hits*. The



reduced use of language in much of popular music is reiterated by Ross & Rose who identify languages “subjugation to the beat” and the draining of music of its “syntax and structure” as part and parcel of contemporary popular music (Ross & Rose 1995:149). The reduction of complexity in the music and song is matched by the triviality of the information about the artist disseminated to the audience, reiterated by Frith who determines that the teenage audience does not require detailed analysis “but dream material (the photographs) and certain kinds of information (physical characteristics, likes and dislikes, some past history)” (Frith 1990:177). Although Frith’s comments were initially related to magazines in the 1960s, they are still relevant in children’s and teen’s magazines today.

The girls interviewed in the focus group tended to have an interest in every intimate detail regarding the bands and the boys tended to feign interest in *pop* music concentrating their time and dialogue on football. This creates the illusion that at this age, *pop* music is mainly a female domain. In essence, as respondent (1) states earlier in this Chapter, the constant beat and the look of the artist perpetuates them in camera, and thus the artist can be catapulted to stardom in a short period through the constant reiteration of image and sound to an impressionable audience. The use of the manufactured *pop* bands to entice children into buying product is supported by respondent (1)’s statement:

Yes, the record companies are guilty to some degree of looking for manufactured pop because of mainly economic reasons, the industry want a quick return on their investment. The period of return has become shorter and shorter over the last few years because of the extreme pressures existing within the music business, firstly because there are less jobs in the music industry than there were. There are a small group of executives who are making an awful lot of money and want to maintain their positions in the industry and that is hard to do as it’s a very competitive cultural business. So they are looking for short term solutions.

To identify the musical preferences of the 14-25 age group, focus groups took place with Music Industry Management students from Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College and secondary school pupils from Deanshanger School. Both pupils and students are engaged in their own buying decisions and income is available for this purpose from either allowances or small jobs. This income was in the main spent on CDs, magazines, DVDs, computer games or videos. Another area of spend was clothes. However, most of those aged between fourteen and eighteen were either subsidised for this activity by their parents or wholly supported in clothing purchases. The 14-25 age group have a more direct individual interface with work and leisure outside the confines of the home and parental control. Such individual activities include attending concerts and frequenting record shops where personal buying decisions are made. Consumers in the 14 to 25 age group are more widely read and well versed in music media terminology from their exposure to a more mature choice of music and fashion media. These consumers focus on more genre specific media and less on the general music media reflecting the development of their individual interests.

Sutherland & Thompson support the research carried out in focus groups as they clearly identify that the majority of children start making their own buying choices in relation to CD purchases between the ages of 13 and 17 (Sutherland & Thompson 2003:143 sourcing 1996 Roper Youth Report. Roper Starch Worldwide, Inc. New York). Whereas the 3-13 year focus group is almost exclusively educated in music in the home, and thus the stimuli are focused on the television, radio and magazines, the 14-25 focus group is almost exclusively educated away from the home in pubs, clubs, cinemas and friends' houses where collectives of youth listen, comment and discuss in peer group assemblies.

From the results of the focus groups it is apparent that the music and media industries exert less control over the buying decisions of those in the 14-25 age group than the 3-13 age group, as the spending power of this group is governed by a wider range of both micro and macro media. It is also clear that the disposable income is the property of the participant rather than their parents and this has an affect on buying decisions. The industry aggressively markets their products to this market in the marketplace through a wide range of channels. The television and radio in many cases have less influence over the 14-25 age group, although these mass media elements still play a major role in their buying decisions. From data provided by the Nickelodeon/Yankelovich report (Sutherland & Thompson 2003:84) the importance of CDs and thus music in the lives of the 12-17 year old cannot be underestimated. In the case of boys, music is the most important and in the case of girls, only clothes are more important than music.

From the results of the focus group, it can be ascertained that students and pupils between the ages of 14 and 25 make life choices, which affect their musical taste. During these years patterns of taste and consumption are formed that develop the foundations for future music purchasing choices.

As the members of this group meet new friends with differing tastes, the element of choice is introduced into their music decision making process. Thus, they are able to spend their own income incurring the responsibility of their own buying decisions. However, the wider choice does not only come from the pressure of the peer group but also from music heard outside the family home and individual preferences such as clubbing, concert going, buying magazines and a wider television preference. The choices of the 14-25 group seem to be less manipulated by the industry and the media, although manipulation is still present in the music environment.

Using student focus groups comprising mature students between 26 and 45 and information from an interview with respondent (1) the Marketing manager of HMV, it is apparent that the music industry marketers have a number of strategies aimed at the 26 to 45 age group. The marketing techniques used are specifically targeted at those with the highest disposable income and centre on the re-packaging and re-representation of the product to this group of respondents. The industry produces two major types of compilations. The first is the multi artist compilation within a specific genre or temporal period. For

example *'Greatest hits of the 60s'* which encompasses a broad choice of hits from the decade. A second more specific compilation would be *'That Summer'* which features punk tracks from 1976.

The second type of compilation is the specific band compilation, featuring the purported best tracks of a single artist. For example, U2's *'The Best Of 1980-1990'*. These two types of compilations are aimed at two totally different markets. The first market is the teen and child market where albums such as *'Now 40<sup>3</sup>'* contain up to date chart hits by a number of contemporary chart artists. These transient compilations are for sale, as the title implies, 'now', as each one is quickly surpassed and passé within weeks of release, and the next *'Now'* album then supersedes it. The decade hits albums are usually retrospectives enticing the 26-45 year old group to buy a compilation of their favourite past songs. As respondent (1) states:

...many peoples' musical taste show very little deviation after their formative years they tend to buy easily assimilable music on a CD that will enable them the ease of play not afforded by bringing out the old vinyl or tape copies of their favourite albums just to find one track.

The 'best of' compilation album is slightly different; the audience for this type of album is twofold. The hardened follower of the group who must have the CD because it has every hit the artist ever produced and some unreleased material. Secondly there are those that bought just one album when the band were current, but really liked the band. Now that the compilation has been released, they are much more comfortable in buying the CD with the best tracks that the band produced on it.

The value of the compilation market cannot be underestimated as during its peak periods (Christmas, Valentines Day, during the summer) its market share can raise close to the 50% mark. However, during periods of high sell through including the massive clearance sales of big record chain stores the sales of the compilation can dip drastically. In week 39 of 2003, 2,354,588 phonograms were sold - a 40% rise from the previous week but:

The compilation sector was much quieter; with only the Mobo album selling enough to make a Top 40 debut. Consequently, despite sales clearances, compilation sales overall were up just 5%, while compilations' share of the overall album market dipped to 17.3%, their lowest share in any of the 195 chart weeks in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, beating the 17.6% share they registered 50 weeks ago (Music Week 04/10/03).

This scenario is a cleverly designed marketing strategy aimed at manipulating the audience into buying what they already possess in another format. The second strategy associated with the development and delivery of the compilation CD is the sell through of back catalogue, which as respondent (5) states "is the bread and butter of the music industry". Touring artists feed the

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<sup>3</sup> *'Now That's what I call Music'* albums are released on a regular basis by Virgin/EMI/Polygram. They feature forty recent hits from the top 40 and are marketed and distributed by EMI. The number attributed to them i.e. 40 is the number that the series has reached.

buying of back catalogue by performing songs from former albums as well as generating an interest in their new songs. Many record companies bring out endless 'best of', 'the definitive collection or greatest *hits*' as a regular occurrence. Artists such as Bruce Springsteen, Billy Joel and the Beatles have continuous re-releases of remixed and re-mastered albums and compilations to maximise on this growing part of the industry. It is however not just the release of compilation albums that facilitates a rise in sales of a back catalogue but the reduction of previous albums during the period when an artist releases new material. For example, the reduction of Dido's *No Angel* from £14.99 to £6.99 just after the release of her new album *Life for Rent* facilitated the re-entry of the former album into the top ten of the album chart.

The exploitation of the compilation market makes up a large chunk of record company profit. However, the industry is always looking for new ways to develop already existing markets. Respondent (1) states:

From a wider perspective, obviously the industry itself is always looking to maximise all their assets by bringing out different permutations of the same product. This is essentially what the greatest hits albums are all about. If you look at the whole range of 'Now' albums or 'Hits 98/ Hits 97' what the record companies have done is to break down the groupings into sub genres to reflect the different types of music available. Whereas in the past they used to be fairly broad and encompass everything from soul to dance to pop, now you can actually get specifically related CDs which may be purely rap or purely soul, or purely garage. In a way what they are trying to do is say well OK if you're a rap fan or you are this kind of fan then this is something that you would definitely want. Whereas in the past we used to make our own compilations, which used to be fairly mundane affairs, then no one could be bothered any more. In today's consumer society, if somebody has actually created a CD for you and are saying that they have the best possible rap CD of all time to buy and its only £15 then people will obviously respond to that. Not only are you trying to develop loyalty towards an artist which increasingly seems difficult to maintain but you are actually possibly going the other way and encouraging an interest in a certain type of music so whether its artist based or whether its compilation based it doesn't matter. If the person is into rap they will buy a compilation albums as well as any of the artists that they might be into.

Owing to the success of the compilation album and the more eclectic<sup>4</sup> nature of youth today, the development of *dance*, *rap* or *soul* albums encapsulating different artists with different musical styles is becoming very popular. It means that now the audience can buy an album of eclectic *dance* music rather than buy an album by an artist where they may like only a small proportion of the music.

It is interesting to note that although there is a large body of evidence suggesting that the 26-45 age group are very susceptible to the focused marketing strategies of the industry, members of this group did not perceive that they were heavily targeted or influenced by the media.

It can be concluded from the results of the focus group interviews, that members of all three groups are susceptible to the marketing influences of the music industry and the media. However, the 3-13 age group are most

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<sup>4</sup> Respondent 12 feels that the youth of today have a more eclectic music taste than previous youth audiences. From an interview with Respondent 12 in Milton Keynes 06/01/2000.

susceptible owing to their lack of musical stimulus outside the home environment. Once a child begins to make individual informed choices, the industry and the media have to market more aggressively to capture the audience. However, after the establishment of musical life choices the audience becomes susceptible to the industries' marketing strategies related to compilations and back catalogue. There are also marketing strategies employed by the music industry aimed at increasing audiences for both old and new music. It must be stated here that this is only a snapshot of the music industry in the late 1990s and early 2000s. As with any industry involving a rapidly changing environment, emerging strategies have to be both current and dynamic. If *jazz*, *folk*, *blues* and *classical* had been the focus of this research the marketing strategies, consumers and exploration results for these types of music would have been very different from those explored. For example, the work of Nicholson (1995) explores the resurgence of jazz in the 1980s where the marketing strategies and consumer development differs greatly from the types of music explored within this thesis.

### 3.2.4 The Combination of the Protagonists and the Effect of Industrial and Media Strategies

Combining the elements of consumer, artist, media and industry, the symbiotic nature of the genre system and the influence of marketing strategies becomes evident. To elucidate in greater depth and to identify supporting evidence to demonstrate the effect of specific media strategies two singles were chosen at random, Melanie Chisholm and Bryan Adams' *When you're gone* and Fatboy Slim's *Praise You*. These two musical episodes were tracked in Music Week (see Magazines and Periodicals in the reference section) over the period from the 12<sup>th</sup> December 1998 to 6<sup>th</sup> March 1999 (see Figures 4 and 5). The former single fluctuated between number two and twenty-two in both the UK and Music Week charts and between number three and number twelve in the Pepsi chart. During the period explored it was never out of the top eight in the UK airplay chart reaching number one on three occasions.

The single remained at number one for six weeks in the ILR chart (see Figure 4), appeared on *Top of the Pops* five times, featured in the MTV charts for six weeks and had top airplay in Europe for the last two weeks of the period explored. Figures for the other weeks in the European Airplay charts were not available. The pair appeared on every major children's television programme, and Melanie Chisholm was in constant demand on chat shows as well as featuring prominently in *Smash Hits* and associated mass cultural teen magazines.

If we compare, *Praise you* by Fatboy Slim with *When you're gone* a number of differences between the two can be observed. Although this single reached number one in the UK and Music Week Charts, a place higher than Melanie Chisholm and Bryan Adams, the same decline that is experienced by Melanie Chisholm and Bryan Adams is realised in a six-week period (see Figure 5) rather than a thirteen-week period. The single only kept a place in the top five of the

ILR chart for five weeks, never reaching number one. The Melanie Chisholm and Bryan Adams single spent twelve weeks in the ILR top five, including eight weeks at number one.

Although the video for *Praise You* was voted the novelty video of the year it fared worse than the studio video of Melanie Chisholm and Bryan Adams in the MTV charts. The Melanie Chisholm and Bryan Adams single spent eleven weeks in the top five of the UK airplay charts whereas Fatboy Slim's *Praise You* only spent seven weeks in the top five, even though it reached a higher position in the charts.

The differing elements encapsulated within this exposition of the two singles provide some interesting elements for debate. The target audience for the Fatboy Slim single is a *dance* audience who buy early and whose genre is prone to quick change and transience (Redhead 1997).

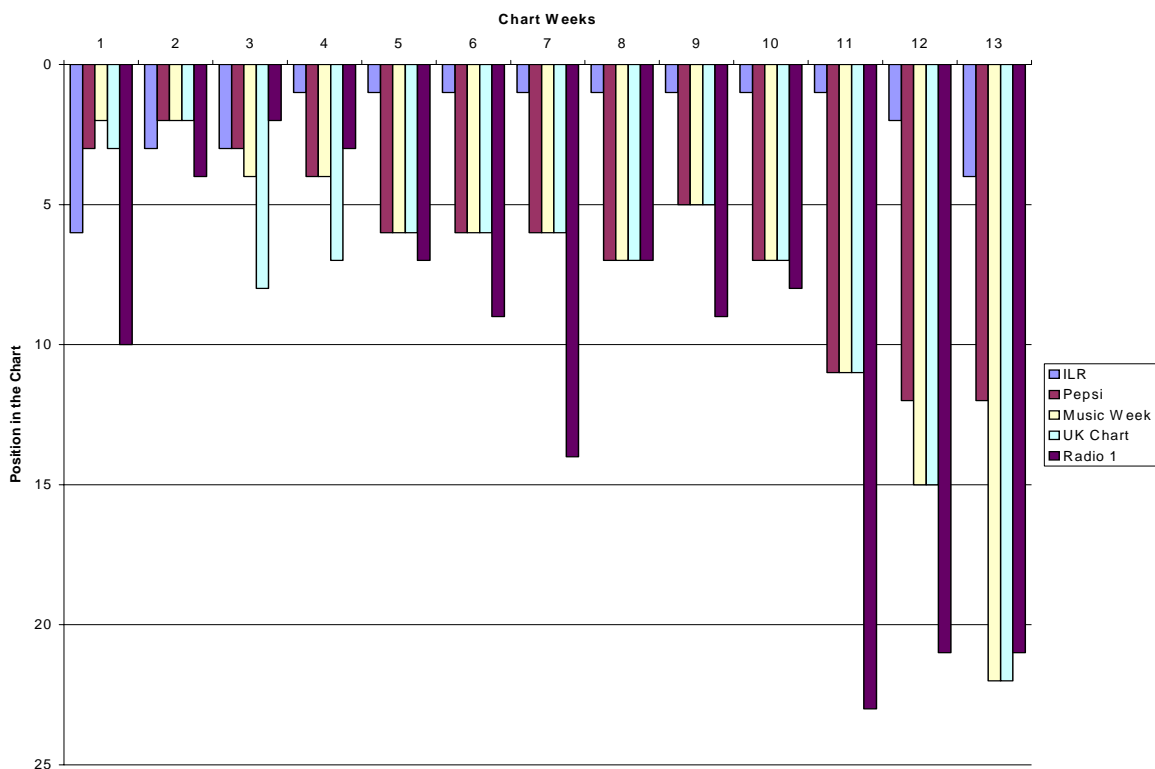


FIGURE 4 Mel B & Bryan Adams Chart Positions from 12th December 1998 to 6<sup>th</sup> March 1999

*Praise You* was being played months before its release in clubs and on Radio One<sup>5</sup>. The unit sell through<sup>6</sup> of *Praise You* was more in its first two weeks than

<sup>5</sup> Dance music DJs receive white labels of the up and coming dance singles between three and six months before they are released. This gives the DJs plenty of time to play the single in the clubs to create a vibe on the artist and to elicit advanced sales for the single. This also happens with radio play of a new single but the lead-time is shorter.

*When you're gone* in the first five. One difference in the strategies developed for *When you're gone* and *Praise You* is the differing target groups of the two artists.

The combination of one of the ex Spice Girls and a seasoned rocker creates a dual fan base covering the ages of 5-50 years old. Owing to the wide spread of the audience a number of marketing strategies are employed to target the market and to disseminate the message, enabling a steady product uptake over a sustained period. Respondent (15) identifies that the length of time an artist spends in the charts is proportionate to the number of different markets that the artist can penetrate, thus supporting the evidence of such strategies.

The market for *Praise You* is a closed singular market, which is easy to target and owing to its immediacy of buying decision and fragility, is quickly penetrated and sated. Thus the behaviour of the consumer elicits the producer and the marketer to employ two entirely different strategies to exploit the potential of each individual market.

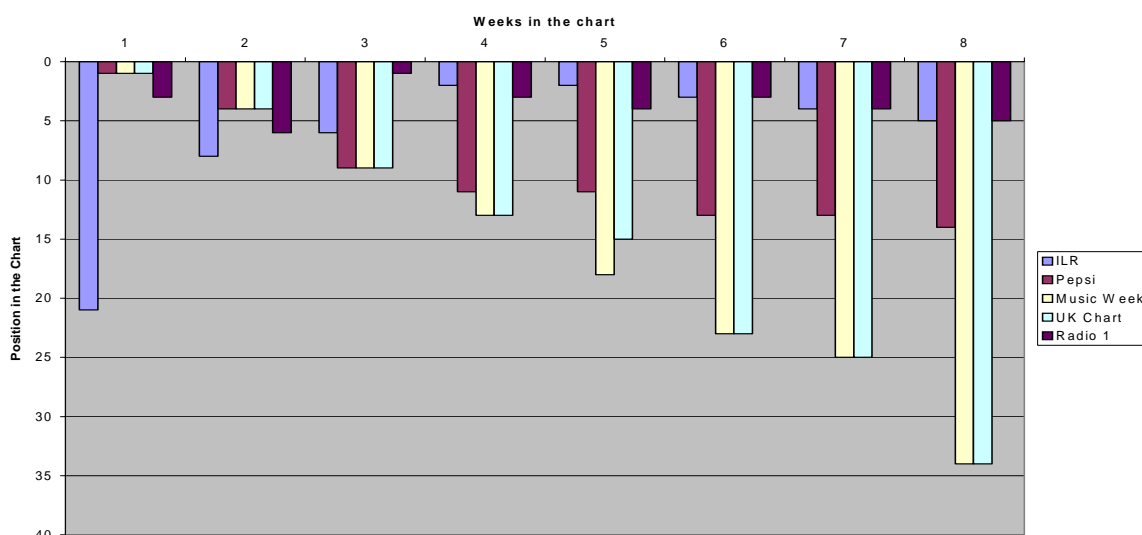


FIGURE 5 Fatboy Slim Chart Position 16th January to 6th March 1999

The visual imagery associated with the two artists was also used to good effect and best advantage. Fatboy Slim ostensibly uses samples and does not make very exciting live video. However, the use of the dance video for this track proved very effective, boosting single sales considerably. The use of the live footage in the studio of Bryan Adams and Melanie Chisholm brought together two very photogenic artists, showing their ability in the live performance and giving consumers a chance to view the single live.

From this example, the complicated structure and delicate balance between the music industry, the artist, the consumer and the media can be seen.

To substantiate this point, a conversation with respondent (9) Managing Director of the Manor Studio in Milton Keynes related:

<sup>6</sup> Unit sell through is the number of copies sold per week

In the case of Bryan Adams and Melanie Chisholm, Bryan's career was in need of a boost if he wasn't to be thought of as an old rock star. He looked for collaborations. Melanie Chisholm really wanted to prove that she could sing in her own right and this was the vehicle. Bryan Adams has a huge older audience and Melanie Chisholm a very large young audience from her time with the Spice Girls. They both have the ability to be able to target certain TV shows, magazines and radio programmes. Bryan Adams got his younger audience and Melanie Chisholm her credibility. OK it was also to do in part with the marketing machine but there is only so much a record company can do without an artist.

There are many factors apparent in the development of an artist and their elevation to the top of the charts. The power of marketing tools such as the radio cannot be underestimated as they give an artist an increasing edge in the quest for record sales. The constant airing of Bryan Adams and Melanie Chisholm's single on radio stations manipulated by the pluggers, controllers and DJs, in effect kept the single in the public 'ear' and thus vastly increased its sales. The value of *Praise You* however was transient as there was no story or really developed celebrity to hang its constant development upon. Owing to the very nature of dance music and its transient and changing focus, another musical episode quickly replaced the single. Some of the other marketing strategies employed by the music industry and their relationship with audience development will now be explored.

### 3.2.5 Other Marketing Strategies and their Relation to Audience Development

There are a number of marketing strategies that are related to audience development. One such strategy incorporates the re-releasing of old popular tracks by new or popular artists. This increases the marketability of the artist as they have both a previous audience and a new audience for the song. In many cases the old song is sampled and encapsulated in a new song. As Shuker states:

Covers have featured strongly in the charts throughout the late 1980s and into the 1990s. There is a fresh generation of listeners and a new market for the recycled song, as reissues demonstrate - for example, boosted by the film *Ghost*, the 1990 success of the Righteous Brothers' 'You've Lost Lovin' Feeling', which had originally topped the charts in 1964. Nor do covers have to simply be carbon copies of the originals. Some, such as the Chimes 1990 version of the U2 song 'I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For', are genuinely creative, reinterpreting the original song in a fresh and distinctive way (Shuker 1994:107).

Over the past five years a wide range of black artists have sampled songs by white artists and used the sample to great effect making hit after hit. Three examples of these are as follows. Salt 'n' Pepa used a sample from the Pink Floyd track *Another Brick in the wall* in their hit *Brick Track vs Gitty up*. Puff Daddy used a sample from the Led Zeppelin track *Kashmir* in his No1 hit *Come with me*, and Will Smith used a sample from the Clash track *Rock the Casbah* in his No2 hit *Will 2K*.



The development of techniques such as sampling have had a huge effect on music *per se*, as Harley in Bennett states:

As we have seen, sampling has had such a massive effect on house and hip hop not because it gave birth to those genres, but because the technology could be adapted to already existing musical methods and approaches that could use, abuse and distort digital sampling for their own iconoclastic ends (Bennett et al 1993:223).

Harley further relate the ways in which the *house* and *hip hop* musicians and producers used samplers in unconventional ways through changing technology to resist the corporate control of music. From this, it can be ascertained that both commercially viable and alternative musical episodes utilise samples in both functional and creative environments. Thus sampling is an essential aspect of today's musical culture. Chris Cutler in Frith points out that:

...the increasing use of sampling devices and pre-programmed synthesizers means that as producers musicians are, in fact consumers, working with commercial sounds that have been made for them (Frith 1990:120).

Having explored genre tagging in the music and media industries and both the artist and consumers perspective on musical genre manipulation, the study now moves on to examine the way in which the industry, the media, the artist and the audience combine in the identification and development of buying decisions.

### **3.3 A Fresh Perspective on Access, Manipulation and Profiling in Relation to Musical Genre**

#### **3.3.1 Problems of Genre Identification Caused by Industry Manipulation**

##### **3.3.1.1 Mis-Categorisation**

The general pigeonholing of bands by the music industry to maximise profits has resulted, in a number of cases in an artist being classified within the wrong taxonomic terms. Thus the artist has been identified and then tagged within a misjudged or misguided genre. This has resulted in the protagonist of the music being misunderstood or misinterpreted by his or her own audience and journalistic following. There are many examples of this. One such example is RPLA, an *indie* band who found themselves on the front cover of the *heavy metal* magazine *Kerrang* which inevitably contributed to their downfall. The band were overtly homosexual, 'came out' in the press and were ridiculed, which destroyed their credibility. The press hounded them and they faded into obscurity.<sup>7</sup> Poor press and marketing advice contributed to the downfall of

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<sup>7</sup> This band toured once in the UK in 1991 never to be taken seriously again

RPLA. *Rock* music is mainly the domain of the stereotypical womanising, heavy drinking male or female. The insistence on RPLA 'coming out' by their press company compromised their position with the audience and worldwide press, which ridiculed their stance in a particularly hostile homophobic domain.

### 3.3.1.2 Mis-Timing of Release

Another example of problems caused by industry manipulation can be seen in the following example. Timing of a release can be crucial to the success of an artist. One artist that was less successful than they might have been owing to slow A&R decisions was The House of Love. The House of Love a band with *Gothic* influences, were signed by Phonogram, and were billed as one of the hottest prospects of the 1980s. The first album took an inordinate amount of time to be released and by the time it finally reached the shelves, the band was *passé*, and instead of selling the 300,000 copies expected the album only sold 80,000. "The period from the signing of the band to their first album was three years and within this time interest had started to wane and many of the earlier core fans had grown out of the genre" (Respondent (3)). In the present fluctuating musical environment where change and immediacy are important in the establishment of artists and markets, time is of the essence and immediate action is needed to ensure a market for the artist.

### 3.3.1.3 The Manipulation of Categories for Specific Purpose

Genres such as *grunge* created geographically and contextually to identify a group of Seattle bands embodying an industrialised guitar sound (Respondent (13)), are often hijacked and re-styled by the media and the record companies to attract as much attention as possible to a musical style. If manipulated in the correct manner it could become incredibly economically viable. It had become apparent in the late 1980s that the audience figures for both rock and indie concerts and the sell through of albums in these genres was beginning to fall and market share was beginning to decline (IPFI 1997). During the late 1980s a new scene, the Seattle scene, was becoming firmly established. This scene, obviously based around the West Coast City of Seattle, encompassed such acts as Nirvana and Soundgarden. This type of music, which fell between *indie* and *rock*, was titled *grunge*. The Seattle scene then expanded to include bands from all over America and Europe subsumed by this over arching title. However, one definition states:

Under the cumulative influence of punk and seventies heavy metal (not to mention year-round rain, cheap beer and, occasionally, heroin) a cohort of Seattle bands developed a soulful hard-rock variant that was instrumental to alternative music's early nineties move overground. 'Grunge' was originally a tongue-in-cheek term for the guitar noise propagated by cultish independent label Sub Pop (Daly & Wice 1995:99).

The development of *grunge* identified a crossover audience encapsulating either or both *rock* and *indie* traits. This genre thus increased the audience for this type of band by pulling from both ends of the scale of the *indie* and the *rock* cultures<sup>8</sup>. Rather than finding their own niche in the industry the audience was placed in a position where the niche had already been identified for them and they were subsumed by it. This genre conjured up a new definable middle ground with which both an *indie* and a *rock* audience could identify.

Bands began to copy both the music and the dress of the Seattle scene hoping to become more saleable to their audience. Artists such as The Almighty changed their image completely from leather-clad rockers to tartan shirted *grunge* merchants and captured a new audience along the way. When promoting the Almighty for two concerts six months apart, the change in their attitude, dress and music made their second appearance almost unrecognisable from the first. However, *grunge* enabled artists to sell out to an alien genre where they could attract a larger audience; in most cases, this newfound fame was transient. *Grunge* was not a deep rooted genre, and as with many genres manipulated by the industry for economic purposes it did not enjoy an extended maturity phase to its lifecycle.

### 3.3.1.4 Retro Music and its Effect on Genre Categories

When exploring the wider scenario of genre deterioration, the identification and placing of new music becomes exceptionally difficult because of the proliferation of new artists encapsulating single or multiple styles of retro music.

Many of the artists in the mid 1990s incorporated images and musical nuances from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. This makes the identification of a genre much more difficult, as the genre itself may have some original and authentic influences as well as first, second and third generation influences. Within a temporal continuum this issue will become even more clouded as artists encapsulate seventh, eighth and ninth generation cultures. The cyclical motion of genre influences is well known but not well documented (See Part Three of Frith & Goodwin 1990pp125-180).

### 3.3.2 Consumer Profiling

Knowledge in regards to the makeup of the consumers attracted to certain genres is also important as it could signify future purchasing and concert attendance patterns. This in turn will affect the longevity of the artist and its historical perspective and thus may in turn temporally affect the initiation of future band projects.

The development of consumer profiling has become big business in music marketing. The majority of concerts and new CD releases contain a freepost

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<sup>8</sup> Including hardcore and pop punk.

information leaflet which when mailed back to the artist or record company builds up a profile of the consumer. This enables the record company to send further information about the artist or similar artists to the persons filling in the freepost form. This is one of the major marketing tools for artists. An example of sell through by this method took place on the 1993 Guns 'n' Roses tour (Kemp, 2000). Stuart Galbraith at MCP made sure that all members of the audience at the concert filled in a freepost return. The freepost return ensured them that the next time that Guns 'n' Roses toured they would have advanced notice to buy tickets. Well before the band were due to tour in 1994 MCP sent out 65,000 early warning notices to the people who had filled in the freepost forms and sold 75% percent of the tickets for the shows before they went on sale to the general public. It created loyalty but it also ensured that MCP gained interest in the bank between receiving the money and executing the show.

### 3.3.3 The Construction of Record Labels, New Technologies and Ease of Access

The construction of musical labels and sub-labels within record companies is linked to genre development (Negus, 1999). Major labels tend to have a wide range of artists on sub-labels so that cross collateralisation and the spreading of assets through genres means that not all the companies' assets are retained in one area. Labels will pursue with vast energies and money an artist that they know or perceive will amass them large amounts of income. Record companies will ignore artists from other genres whilst in pursuit of this goal. The *indie* label is the test bed for further developments in the industry. A number of independent labels have been successful because of a small number of large selling artists within a large roster of acts. Examples of this are Creation with Oasis, 4AD with Belly and the Breeders, Mute with Erasure and Depeche Mode, Factory with New Order and Roadrunner with Sepultura.

The majority of *punk* and *hardcore* artists release on *indie* labels. With the advent of *punk* and the development of *hardcore* there was a return to 'the three minute song' and the proliferation of *indie* labels. With the onset of new technology and the bedroom studio, ease of access to production, the creation of music was in the reach of anyone who had a computer and a keyboard. The smaller indie labels usually concentrate on one area of music. Any deviation toward another area is usually related to the former. For example, Music for Nations has always been known as a premier Independent *metal* and *rock* label. However, it has recently moved into *hardcore* and *hardcore dance*. Two new labels have sprung up (Third Eye and Devotion) but the overarching style of the music is still the same and they are connected through the independent and alternative nature of the genres.

In conclusion, it is apparent that the interrelationship between the industry, the artist, the media and the audience is a multi-disciplinary framework reliant on the integration of the four groups of protagonists. The focus of both the industry and the media is the development of integrated

marketing strategies and their resultant effect on consumer development and behaviour.

The re-releasing of old tracks and developments in sampling inherent through new technologies are supported by the ease of access to recording and producing contemporary music. Innovation within the music industry and the search to identify new funding opportunities has created challenges in the classification and development of musical genre. The identification of genre utilising the incorrect terminology, the postponing of a product release and the artificial creation of genres and sub genres have had an impact on both the artist and consumer, which creates a knock on effect for the industry and the media. The encapsulation of old and new styles in the same musical piece has confounded and confused the critics and journalists given the task of pigeon holing the genres.

It can be ascertained from this Chapter that the music industry and the media exert a certain amount of manipulative pressure on both the artist and the audience to proliferate artists and genres. Through the manipulation of the boundaries of genre and the creation of a fluid framework, the major players in the industry and media have been able to exert influence on the placing of an artist and the buying choices of the audience. The construction of the industry/media genre framework influences the musical environment in the following ways:

- By the artificial construction of charts
- By enabling a small number of artists and songs to receive an inordinate amount of airplay on the major and commercial stations
- By placing specific acts on children's shows in peak time
- By an approach, that controls the choices made by certain age groups within the audience
- By the development of marketing strategies to reap maximum economic benefit

The artist has been able to manipulate the industrial and media framework in a number of ways.

- In certain genres i.e. *dance*, the artist has been able to facilitate the choice of generic nomenclature
- By declining to write what is termed as popular music for the major label
- By choosing to release product on independent or private labels
- The introduction of new technologies has enabled musicians and non-musicians to create music easily in the home environment
- Artists are able to combine with artists from other genres in projects to produce new music and to extend the boundaries of genre form

However, many of the elements related to the influence of the artist are only acceptable in the independent sector.

Although the audience has freedom to choose which musical products it buys into there are a number of pressures inherent in purchasing decisions. These include:

- Freedom of choice
- Peer pressure
- Surrogate buying
- Gatekeeper strategies
- Hypodermic media models
- Ease of access to new technologies

From this Chapter it is clear that each of the four protagonists involved in the symbiotic relationship within music is crucial in the identification of genre and its development. From production to consumption where artists are placed is important to all aspects of a developing genre framework.

## 4 PUNK, HARDCORE AND NU PUNK: A TRIANGLE OF ALTERNATIVE YOUTH CULTURE

### 4.0 Introduction

The exploration of musical genre in this study focuses on *punk* and *nu punk*. The determination of whether the two genres are incorporate or independent facilitates a robust rationale enabling the exploration of a holistic, critical and analytical approach in the quest to distinguish explicit principles pertinent to musical genre identification. Although it could be argued that the two types of music identified might be termed as umbrella or marketing categories appropriated to house a wide range of genres and sub genres, for the purpose of this thesis they are identified as individual genres.

Those writing from an academic and journalistic viewpoint disagree on the degree of similarity and difference between *punk* and *nu punk*. For example, Hopkins (1997) perceives them to differ in form and content and Arnold (1997) perceives them to be broadly similar in style, sound and construction. However, to compound this O'Hara perceives *punk* as having "the explicit aim of trying to destroy all boxes and labels" which makes this study all the more challenging as such a view both unites and disassociates the two perceived genres (O'Hara 1999:11). Thus, it can be ascertained that an exploration of a wide range of aspects pertaining to these genres, including musical, paramusical and perceptual variables will elicit a combined qualitative and quantitative response to create a valid and balanced view of this problematisation.

There are many misnomers perpetuated by academics, sociologists and musicologists, which relate to *punk*. These chronicle the identification of a wide range of geneses, reappearances and reincarnations where exploration of the music and the style of *punk* overshadows or replaces a more discursive, critical analysis of the sense of "community", the sharing of "ideas" and the creation of change "both personal and in the world" afforded by *punk* (*ibid*). The dialogue within this Chapter will integrate both superficial and elaborate interpretation

through equation, thus exploring a balanced multi-functional and multi-disciplinary approach.

To identify how *punk* differs from many previous genres, an explanation of 'scene' is important. Will Straw in Frith identifies a 'scene' as "that cultural space in which a range of musical practices co-exist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross fertilisation" (Frith 2001:372). However, the advent of *punk* modified the definition of 'scene', to a more pragmatic and focused approach identifying the developing infrastructure which supports the music as key to such a scene (O'Connor 2002:226). This change in the interpretation of the 'scene' shifts the identity of space from a cultural domain to a creative domain. The tension between culture and infrastructure is explored in the articulation of the means of production of *punk* and *nu punk* later in this Chapter.

This Chapter is structured so that terms of reference can be explored which distinguish subculture, tags, temporal periods, the body of knowledge and reference points for the two genres, identifying an underpinning knowledge base through which to explore the origin and naming of the two genres identified. From this exploration, musical, para-musical and perceptual elements can be ascertained as well as the similarities and differences between the two genres.

## 4.1 Terms of Reference

### 4.1.0 Punk as a Subculture

Simon Frith in Gelder & Thornton states: "before *punk*, popular music was rarely a matter of theoretical concern" (Gelder & Thornton 1997:166). In fact, popular music *per se* was "deemed to be of dubious legitimacy in the realms of research and higher education" (Tagg 1997:1). Tagg further states that "certainly, the study of popular music has, in the few places it exists and is known, revolutionised the analysis of music in much the same way as ethnomusicology has challenged traditional theories of music since the start of the century" (*ibid*). *Punk* challenged the traditional analysis of music in a number of ways. Firstly, through the effect that its genesis had on the music industry, where *punk* challenged the capitalist music production and management of the time as evidenced by Negus (1999). Secondly, the social and philosophical concepts initiated during *punk's* initial development attracted new theory and knowledge, as indicated by Hebdige (1991) and Polhemus (1999). Thirdly, the audience were not in their original incarnation, mass cultural but underground and sartorially different to any previous subculture, as referenced in Savage (1991). Fourthly, the music was created and performed by musicians and non-musicians alike, which broadened the perspective of the



genre, as evidenced in Dettmar and Richey (1999). Thus *punk* was musically, paramusically and perceptually different from other musical cultures and subcultures which had preceded it.

Initially the theoretical developments concerned with subculture were conducted in the 1970s and 1980s by a number of notable sociologists, including Hebdige and those under the banner of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCCS). This work was further refined in the 1990s. Clark, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts (1995) describe subcultural groups as focussed around certain activities and values and also as having “a distinctive enough shape and structure to make them identifiably different” (Hall and Jefferson 1976:13) (Clarke et al in Gelder & Thornton 1997:100). It is clear from such commentaries that *punk* embodies the features, identifying it as a subculture however, such definitions lead to the over use of the term to accommodate a number of elements relating to any interrelationship between music, youth and style. Thus, a number of questions about the validity of the work of Hebdige and the sociologists housed in the BCCCS in the 1970s and 80s have surfaced over the past decade.

The reason why the development of the theory of subculture as a dominant and highly influential paradigm in the 1970s and 1980s attracted criticism was that it focused on “representation” and ignored other discourses involved with youth cultural development (Cohen 1986:20). Subculture also focussed on “resistance” and “opposition”, creating an “unbalanced concentration” (O’Sullivan et al 1994:308). An over identification with “working class” and the male gender (McRobbie 1980:37) was also apparent. Bennett relates in *Popular Music and Youth Culture*, that over the last fifteen years there has been a decline in the interest in subcultural theory and the sociology associated with youth culture is more “receptive to the plurality of issues and circumstances” pertaining to youth rather than the imposition of a “singular discourse” upon any exploration (Bennett 2000:11). Redhead supports this, explaining that Hebdige’s theory of subculture “was always debatable when applied to pre-1979” and that it no longer served a purpose after 1979. The fragmentation of audiences into sub and sub sub genres between 1980 and 2000 makes subcultural theory difficult to sustain. Subculture is subsumed in youth culture and is either originally or eventually grounded in niche or umbrella markets created by the industry (Redhead 1997:103). As identified by McRobbie (1989) these subcultural styles are created as part of the media, which can be seen in *pop punk*, where ripped and bleached clothes are sold over the counter as readily available items, obviating the need to create a DIY style by enabling this to occur in the first place. Such practices restrict the development of new theory and practice by creating pseudo, ready-made, off the peg youth cultures. As Straw in Frith et al (2001) identifies, the first subcultures were a vehicle through which revolution was born. However, contemporary subcultures are exposed to stylistic longevity strategies, which feed the commercial market so that their original incarnation is the antithesis of their new derivation. Once music transformed peoples’ lives, now it tends to describe “particular ways of consuming goods” (Frith et al 2001:67). In

After *Subculture* a collection of critical studies in youth culture edited by Bennett and Harris (2003) there is reference to subculture as being significant to research on youth style, deviance and popular culture but the text concentrates on new work related to youth culture which rejects, refines or reinvents the subcultural concept.

Both Hebdige and the BCCCS considered subcultures to be the sole preserve of the young, white, working class male. As Hebdige states, “[*Punk*] emanated from the recognisable locales of Britain’s inner cities ... It issued out of nameless housing estates” (Hebdige 1991:65). However, *punk* was not in a global sense restricted to the young, the white or the working class (Clarke 1981), (Moore 2001). Cutler identifies *punk* as being middle-class with an art school genesis and that the only forms of working class *punk* were those attracted to *Oi* music, part of the British “Fascist movement” (Cutler 1991:125). US *punk* grew out of the art house tradition and UK *punk* mirrored this in places through art school bands. *Punk* in Eastern Europe was “an integration of classes within a supposed classless society” (Koral 1998:2). Such information explodes the working class theory engendering a wider scope of definition and genesis for the genre.

The definition of subculture is further obfuscated by context. The BCCCS and Hebdige both considered subcultures to be groups that “...exist[ed] outside the mainstream” (Bennett 1999:604). However, this does not necessarily mean that such activities and values do not exist in mainstream culture as evidenced in the development of minority subcultures such as *dance*, *indie* and *nu punk*, which in one form or another became assimilated into mass culture and their icons, dress codes, style, and music accepted and appropriated by the masses.

As well as identifying *punk* as a subculture, Hebdige also relates the homological relationship between *punks*’ constituent parts – from the “trashy cut up clothes” to the “frantically driven music”, reinforcing the theme of anarchy and difference running through the movement (Hebdige 1991:114). However, Moore states [*punk*] “gathers its meaning by association”, (Moore 2001:194) and is not a reassembly of “appropriated objects”. As *nu punk* developed, it was perceived that as, in many cases of recent [youth] subcultural development, the arbitrary nature perceived to be associated with many of the meanings appropriated by [youth] sub and sub-subcultures engender a modified or qualified homology (Middleton 1990). Even the key cultural artefacts or icons associated with *nu punk*: the snowboard, the skateboard and the mini bike, are arbitrary, picked up by artists who just happen to use them as part of their everyday rituals. They are not in most cases appropriated specifically for the genre, subgenre or subculture but because they are part of the alternative ‘extreme’, sports ‘scene’ associated with youth cultural activity.

Although the boundaries of what constitutes a subculture seem to be rather fluid, it is clear that such entities exist. Hebdige identified a subculture encompassing *punk*, which was linked to *punk rock* music, more so than most subcultures are to their associated music. *Punk* was used to express the “...adopted values [of] anarchy, surrender and decline” (Hebdige 1991:64). It is

clear from this that there are two points of tension within the identification of a subculture: the first pertains to whom the entity encompasses and the second pertains to its homology. To qualify, both the belonging to and the homology of the subculture is key in the further development of this thesis. Miles in (Redhead 1997) identifies *punk* as not being “homologically coherent” as it was the locus of a number of musical perspectives and regurgitated subcultural identities which blurred the homology as definition was difficult.

To facilitate a wider exploration of a holistic approach to the genres of *punk* or *nu punk* the appropriation of terms, which neither constrict nor restrict the discourses housed within this study, will be utilised. Therefore, the wider concept of youth culture rather than that of subculture will be explored, encompassing arbitrary concepts and objects assimilated by sub or sub sub genres, and identifying where pertinent recognisable locales, cross class assimilation, context, historical factors and elements from other discourses. The use of the terms subculture and the bracketed sub (sub) between youth and culture will be used in the thesis to differentiate between mainstream or mass culture and alternative culture.

#### 4.1.1 Identifying a Tag and a Temporal Period for the Genres in this Study

Although the tag *punk* is relatively, although not wholly, incontestable, the identification of a genre tag for *nu punk* is difficult to both quantify and qualify as a wide range of tags have been applied to the primary and subsidiary genres of the music over the past decade. Much of this multi labelling can be attributed to its post-modern identity, where boundaries are blurred and codes are mixed or appropriated from a wide range of sources and elements of high and popular culture (McGuigan 1992:236). These multi tags include *hardcore*, *crustcore*, *agit pop*, *pop punk*, *new punk*, *second wave punk* and *third wave punk*.

It is clear that there are three temporal periods peculiar to *punk* that emerge from literature and dialogue spanning the last thirty years. These three phases roughly span the periods 1975-1980, 1980-1995 and 1995-2003. The phases are temporal umbrellas, which house, especially in the latter case, an ever-expanding group of genres. Simplistically, the artists encapsulated in the initial phase can be termed as *punk*, the secondary as *hardcore* and the tertiary as *nu punk*. However, none of these periods are mutually exclusive and there is temporal cross over between all three. Isolation of the former and latter phases from the medial in the exploration of genre in this study created a separation of the primary and tertiary periods enabling clarity and temporal distance, thus reducing partly, but not wholly, temporal crossover. The emergence and development of *hardcore* is not particularly well documented and contains a number of contradictions and imponderables. Thus the exploration of this genre is minimised in the text and has not been selected as a primary source of exploration. An explanation of the three genres can be found in appendix 1. Such a rolling programme of reinvention and development over a period of time is alluded to by Dettmar and Richey who state that “*Punk* reproduces itself by ceaselessly assaulting its own foundations”,

causing change and modification to its original structure, norms and values to adapt to the changing musical environment (Dettmar and Richey 1999:31).

*Nu punk* is identified in this study as the collective genre tag for the latter temporal umbrella period (1995-2003) for a number of reasons. Firstly, the all-encompassing nature of the title spans both artists emerging during the second (1980-1995) and originating and developing during the third (1995-2003) wave of *punk*. Secondly, those in focus groups perceived that the name best described the genre, and thirdly the music press generally describes many of the artists and types of music explored in the study using this tag. Fourthly, managers of five independent *punk* labels were consulted and their consensus was that *nu punk* covered all aspects of the music that they produced and marketed during the period identified. However, artists associated within the genre would not contribute to a title discussion, as they perceived that the music they played was unique and defied all classification.

For the purpose of experimentation in this study, the genre of *punk* described by the initial temporal period will be identified as 'early *punk*' and the genre of *nu punk* indicated by the latter temporal period will be described as 'late *punk*'.

#### **4.1.2 Identifying the Body of Knowledge**

Early *punk* seems on first inspection to have a clear and definitive philanthropic body of knowledge. The way in which *punk* differed from other preceding genres has attracted a wealth of text and dialogue from which to extract pertinent information. On the other hand, *nu punk* involves a number of contradictions and binary stereotypes that seem to cloud the issue of its mapping and development. The roots and development of the sub genres embraced by *nu punk* are still in general at an evolutionary stage. Therefore, a very small body of scholarly literature regarding the genre is available to the researcher, and thus much of the information relating to late *punk* relies on interviews and articles in music papers such as NME and Melody Maker, which underpins or supplements the academic and musical texts available. The wide range of named reference points and perceived incarnations of *nu punk* also militate against easy identifiable and validated information. The development of *punk* over the last three decades is also documented in the text and much of this Chapter relates to observations made as a venue manager and promoter of *punk* artists, as well as *punk* research carried out in the Czech Republic.

#### **4.1.3 The Difficulties in Establishing Reference Points for Punk and Nu Punk**

The disagreement on the degree of similarity and difference between *punk* and *nu punk* has already been registered in the introduction to this Chapter. However, if *punk* and *nu punk* are explored as two mutually exclusive and idiosyncratic areas of musical practice, two very different processes encompassing distinct chronological, historical and contextual boundaries in

terms of political juxtaposition and social constructs are exposed for exploration. However, both conflicting and consistent perspectives obscure such investigation. There are, for instance, conflicting arguments relating to US/UK *punk* and *nu punk* based on claims of authenticity.

The media identifies the similarities in the overall sound of the two genres by citing musical reference points and comparing both vocal and instrumental elements. This is compounded by the media's interchangeable use of the genre tags. The similarity of "mediascape" and "idioscape" (Appadurai 1996) utilised by both the producers and consumers of the two genres as conduits through which *punk* and *nu punk* are disseminated identify another aspect of homogeneity. The mass media disseminates both popular original *punk* and *nu punk*, whereas fanzines and alternative record stores are utilised to disseminate the alternative message (O'Connor 2002:226). The different macro and micro environmental factors affecting the context within which the two genres are explored also causes both conflicting and homogenous perspectives. For example, macro elements such as economic effect and legal developments may be universal to both genres but political intent and social structure may differ.

A range of micro media resources, including a wide range of Internet pages have already been identified as tools through which *punk* descriptors are disseminated to the consumer. One *punk* and *nu punk* website clearly understands the problem of universal nomenclature. It states:

While one person's hardcore *punk* is another's true fluff, *punk* bands now haunt the radio stations and venues. Each band has a host of people trying to pin them down to get a workable and just definition [for the genre] (Albini 1999:2).

Other websites cite definitions, which provide consumers with subjective tags.

An example of this is shown in *Figure 6*. The descriptors or 'thumb nail sketches' identified in *Figure 6*, utilise a combination of musical, paramusical and perceptual factors in the quest to create a definitive terminology through which the descriptors can be relayed to other interested parties. The universal indicators embody specific sound and difference from other types of music.

'Anarchism', 'crust', 'working class', 'rock out', 'hardcore', 'rockabilly', 'alternative' and 'skate' are all descriptors pertaining to alternative, difference and rebellion. However, commentators often disagree in their identification tags. Albini (1999:2) in *Figure 6*, identifies *Emo* as relating to bands creating "emotionally charged pain induced" music, whereas O'Connor identified *Emo* as typified by "changes in tempo" and showing "musical complexity" (O'Connor 2002:226).

Category	Descriptor
<b>77 Punk</b>	This category is for bands that have that awesome punk sound from '77.
<b>Anarcho</b>	This category is for bands that believe in anarchism and/or sing about it.
<b>Crust</b>	This is for all ya'll crusty punks out there. Crust Punk 4ever
<b>Emo</b>	This category is for emotionally charged, pain induced punk music
<b>Hardcore</b>	This is for bands who rock out the hardcore sound
<b>Oi</b>	This category is for punk bands that have that working class punk sound.
<b>Pop Punk</b>	This is for bands that play that sugar coated punk that should not be punk but is called punk anyway.
<b>Riot Grrl</b>	This category is for singers and/or bands who promote being a Grrl
<b>Straight Edge</b>	This category is for bands who live life without poison there for sXe
<b>Rock 'n' Roll</b>	This category is for bands who have that rockabilly or similar sound
<b>Skate Punk</b>	This category is for skater punks who have their own punk sound which I call Skate Punk

FIGURE 6 Punk Band Descriptors (*Punk: Bands* 1999:2).

The theme of a holistic interpretation of genre is further developed by Gurewitz in Arnold who states that *punk* is not just a musical experience but also one, which is "physical", "spiritual", "visceral" and "perceptual" (Arnold 1997:104). Gurewitz relates that all *rock'n'roll* by its very nature embodies rebellion. *Punk* attracted youths who wanted to distance themselves from the 'safe' and 'corporate' areas of rock and heavy metal music, and move into an area which was vital, different and rebellious. By doing this, they moved themselves away from the mainstream and into the alternative. Gurewitz is of the opinion that *punk rock* was, and still is, the same in whatever guise it appears. *Punk's* essential difference from the majority of other musical genre is its alternative and rebellious nature and its non-conformity. This opinion is supported by Andersen in O'Hara, who perceives *punk* not as a sartorial state, a fashion, rebellion against parents or society or even a music, but as "an idea that motivates your life". A *punk* community is a support mechanism, which forms a conduit for the expression of creativity, through art, music, fanzines and other media (O'Hara 1999:36). Greg Graffin the vocalist and songwriter with Bad Religion, a pioneer of *hardcore punk*, further supports this opinion. Graffin believes that *punk* is much more than music; it is a way of life. However, he does not agree that *nu punk* embodies such an ethos, as he perceives that *nu punk* has a penchant for style and lacks "substance" (Graffin 1998:1).

The co-opting of *nu punk* artists by corporate rock companies tends to negate much of the *punk* ethos, creating economic gain from alternative cultures. However, such a strategy can backfire, alienating alternative audiences from the mainstream, creating fragmentation rather than homogenisation. In such cases, alternative audiences are more likely to gravitate towards genres, which satisfy their need for self-expression and rebellion away from corporate culture.

It is important that the emergence and development of *punk* is not just seen as stylistically motivated. Every young person goes through a stage of

rebellion, but *punk* is about becoming individual and choosing individual interests rather than those prescribed by society (Graffin 1998:3). Attached to any culture there are those who fully immerse themselves in the mass cultural aspects pertaining to it and those who exist on the periphery. Owing to the nature of those who write about categories and culture, there are sociologists, musicologists, industry and media representatives who try to label everything, precipitating generalised categories. Such protagonists are not separating the levels of interest within the youth culture or music, but amalgamating them and creating homogeneity rather than difference, which is both easier to tag and exploit. It is through rebellion against such homogeneity that alternative genres emerge. Rebellion is, and always will be, a key characteristic of *punk*, whether it is a rebellion against the norms and values of society (Lydon 1993) or "contesting the boundaries of a skateboard area" (Polhemus 1995:86-88). How, and to what extent people conform is down to how involved with countercultures and youth cultures they become. For example to some, escaping from the home into the world of crowd surfing is perceived as rebellion, to others alternative, dress, alternative behaviour and difference from the norms and values of mass society is perceived as revolution. Such differences highlight the flexible and dynamic nature of *punk* and the alternative options which it affords.

Owing to the flexible and dynamic nature of contemporary popular music an original genre tag will often either change or be modified by the addition of a prefix or suffix. Examples of this include *77 punk*, *pop punk* and *skate/skater punk*. These either describe styles of *punk* from a certain era or by using a prefix define further the type of music through one or more identifying factors. Such a tagging system differentiates one sub genre from other sub genres of *punk*, perhaps emerging in different eras or through differing articulations. *Punk* is not the only music to utilise this system, *dance* music has adopted this type of tagging to enable quick fragmentation of the music to keep in line with the fluidity and fickleness of youth cultural taste. This simple but effective system enables an audience to identify with a specific artist in a specific genre or sub genre effectively and efficiently (see 1.2.2.2, 1.2.2.3 and 3.1.4 for further examples of the utilisation of the suffix and prefix to define genre).

The use of the prefix and suffix as identification codes highlights – through the wide range of fragmented sub genres – that, as stated earlier, and is reiterated throughout this Chapter, the *punk* audience/community has been divided. This division effectively separates those who follow ‘true’ *punk* philosophies – engaging with *punk* beyond the remit of the music and the style – from those who appropriate the surface trappings of the genre, incorporating music and the sartorial accoutrements of *punk* through a mass cultural assimilation. Thus, the identification of a wide range of *punk* tags through which those involved in the music can easily understand and assimilate nomenclature, has created a conduit through which those involved in *punk* perceive that they can either evade mass culture and the creation of umbrella categories or embrace these as part of their interpretation of youth culture. However, there are artists who are explicitly interested in the development of a

mass cultural identity and pursue this from the start of their career, seeking mass cultural approval rather than countercultural interest or cult status. Such a division is not a recent development, but appeared as early as 1977, as *punk* had an impact on, and appealed to, the wider music community.

The genres, which remained untouched by the commercial framework, were those that remained underground, promoting the alternative and appealing to small niche audiences. The initial selling out phase in the late 1970s exacerbated the inevitable corporate delivery of *nu punk* artists to a mass cultural audience. This phase affected the *nu punk* ethos, reflecting the dichotomy of *punk* youth culture. It was at this point in 1979/80 that *hardcore* separated from the more commercialised *new wave*, keeping alive the original *punk* ethos whilst enabling those more commercially minded to take the popular route. As Straw relates in Frith et al, *punk* fragmented into a number of styles and movements (Frith et al 2001:170). However, Straw fails to identify the relevance related to this fragmentation and its impact on *punk* music, but instead highlights how the media and the industry seek to manipulate what is initially alternative for their own commercial ends.

The message delivered by *nu punk* is very different from that of *punk*. The original *punk* message was one of strong ideology through the creation of counterculture and open rebellion. From focus group sessions carried out with teenagers, it is clear that the *nu punk* message is mixed. The *nu punk* message is perceived to encapsulate an alternative lifestyle through the existence of a strong youth cultural identity, which, although existing alongside the parent culture, is at odds with it. This acceptance of a mutual existence is through a temporal acceptance of the genre over time, where what would have shocked in 1976 no longer shocks in 2003. McGuigan (1992), Marcus in Shuker (1994) and (Laing 1985:82-98) perceive that such shock tactics were ostensibly related to the *avant-garde* and support the connection between *punk* and the *avant-garde*, where its initial development as groundbreaking and forward thinking reflects a similar philosophy. However, shock is something that is soon assimilated into the norm and no longer portrays an 'outrage' factor. The inability of the media and the industry to assimilate shock during *punk's* original emergence was one reason why *punk* was as effective initially as a youth culture or counterculture. Without shock, *punk* became mundane and controllable. *Nu punk* did not set out to shock as its predecessor had done but by association with youth cultural icons, attracted an audience through assimilation rather than attrition. Both society and corporate culture *per se* found it difficult to accept *punk* as music or a youth culture with its alternative and rebellious style. The advent of *nu punk* was perceived as cleaner and more acceptable to both society and corporate culture. However, as Swiss relates this was not the case with the *hardcore* fans who derided *nu punk* artists opting for a commercial route to success thus detecting potentially "reductive and counterproductive" elements complicating "conventional oppositions" (Swiss 1998:121).

Although *nu punk* artists including The Offspring and Green Day have become mainstream, their music still shares a number of mutual factors with



original *punk*, although these are more musical and stylistic than paramusical. These alternative facets (which include rebellion even though it is controlled by mass culture) are then diluted and disseminated to a wider audience embodying some identity with the original *punk* ethic.

The sunshine, self humour, introspection and self-deprecation of many of the mainstream *nu [pop] punk* artists shows stark differences from the original *punk* and *hardcore* countercultures, where angst, hate, the alternative and rebellion were the central elements. Rather than being picked up for its original contextual rebelliousness, the music is assimilated by its new audience for differing reasons: for example, its lyrical content, its style, its newness to the audience and its catchy riffs which in many cases are replicated by other artists becoming almost formulaic, supporting earlier comments relating to the homogenous nature of *nu punk*.

From this Chapter it can be ascertained that the exploration of punk per se is complex. However, a number of reference points can be identified. Punk and nu punk are not a collection of artists under a collective banner but are split by a number of divides including a dichotomy of ethos and a division between mass music and the alternative. Although broadly similar in musical message, the two genres display a division in style, sartoriality and perception. The next section explores the genesis, development, homology, and discordant elements, which comprise the genres punk and nu punk.

## **4.2 The Origin, Naming, Development, Similarities and Differences of Punk and Nu Punk**

The identification of the origin and the attributing of a name to the genres of *punk* and *nu punk* are complex and difficult challenges. Commentators over the last three decades Laing (1985), Savage (1991), Lydon (1993), Lahickey (1997), O'Hara (1999) and Arnold (1997) have identified and described the origins of and taxonomies for *punk* and *nu punk*, often developing and redeveloping similar and opposing taxonomic frameworks. The complexities of description and origin have often initiated unclear and unspecified identification of artists within the genres.

### **4.2.1 The Naming of Punk**

The word *punk* has many connotations. It relates to worthlessness in one context and homosexuality in another. However, as Colgrave and Sullivan relate, the *punk* attitude and philosophy rather than the word itself have a much longer history, which can be traced back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century through Gustav Courbet the painter who was responsible for the development of the *Avant-Garde* School of Realism. The movement attracted the label of political subversion in much the same way that *punk* did almost a century later (Colgrave & Sullivan

2001:18). This link between the *avant-garde* and *punk* supports the work of both Marcus (in Shuker 1994) and McGuigan (1992) identified earlier in this Chapter.

The link between *punk* and the *avant-garde* may at first seem tenuous; however, the importance of the *punk* attitude and the *punk* philosophy cannot be underestimated. Attitude (Gelder and Thornton 1997), (Laing 1985), common thought processes (Graffin 1998) and community (Lydon 1993) link the *punk* philosophy with both the youth cultural process and the underlying principles of the genre. The common factor linking *punk* to its audience is music through which the central precepts of the genre, the youth culture, the philosophy and the ethos are conveyed to the audience. This is further supported by Hartz (2001) who states that “*Punk* is supposed to be a subversive, anti-establishment way of life. Its namesake music, *punk rock*, reflects these attitudes” (Hartz 2001:1).

The origin of the word *punk* in the context of *punk rock* as a genre is not easy to identify. Greg Shaw recounts the earliest mention of the term *punk* in the mid 1960s as an expression of a badly produced, transient form of music (Shaw 1977:4). Although identified at this early stage *punk* was not an entity committed to dialogue until later. Marcus (1979) and Shaw (1977), identify 1972/3 as the period when *punk* first became visible as a distinct genre. Gardiner (2001) concurs with Shaw and Marcus; he recounts that Patti Smith's future guitarist Lenny Kaye used the term *punk* to describe the music on his 1972 compilation entitled 'nuggets'. David Bowie was said to have a “*punky aggressiveness*” in the October 1972 edition of *Let it Rock* (Laing 1985:24).

Gardiner further describes *punk* as a term used in Paris in 1973 to explain the music scene surrounding Mark Zermanti's Skydog Records (Gardiner 2001:3). However, Van Dorston (1990) chronicles that *punk* as a word appeared in an essay in 1970 by Nick Tosches in *Fusion* magazine entitled '*The Punk Muse: The True Story of Protopathic Spliff Including the Lowdown on the Trouble-making Five-percent of American Youth*'. In this paper, *punk* was described as a “visionary expiation a cry into the abyss of one's own mordant bullshit” (Van Dorston 1990:10). Van Dorston documents that Dave Mansh used the phrase *punk rock* in his *Looney Tunes* column in the May 1971 issue of *Creem*' (*ibid.*) which predates both Shaw and Marcus by two years although the mention does not necessarily identify *punk rock* as a distinct genre.

Laing, however, intimates that *punk's* definitive visibility was slightly later, appearing around 1974 with the development of the New York alternative music scene. A number of sources support this assumption, claiming that around this time the name *punk* in its application to musical genre appeared. *Punk* was mentioned in Greg Shaw's magazine *Who put the bomp*, Mark Shipper's *Flash* magazine as well as Billy Altman's *Punk* magazine - the forerunner of many UK fanzines. The claim that *Punk* magazine was the first publication to use the term *punk* in terms of *punk rock* music, although refuted by Van Dorston, is reinforced by both John Savage (1991) in *England's Dreaming* and Tony Thorne (1993) in his *Dictionary of Popular Culture*. A number of *punk*

artists and aficionados of the early *punk* years uphold this, as referenced in *Punk* by Colgrave and Sullivan (2001).

*Punk* was an American music magazine, which contained articles and reviews of the American bands performing at the Country Blue Grass Blues Club (CBGBs). Legs McNeil claims the origin of *punk* as he had the idea for the name of the magazine (Colgrave and Sullivan 2001:82). Holstrom the co-editor who relates that McNeill was also the first person to take on the mantle of the *punk* name well before anyone in the UK even knew it existed (*ibid*) verifies this. However, recent writers with the benefit of hindsight still idealise the tenuous nature of the origins of *punk* as if its indefinable nature is somehow part of *punks'* illusive and anarchistic nature. O'Hara relates how the *punk* 'world' has changed and developed over the last thirty years, "depending on when you date the birth of *punk*" identifying it as a moveable feast which relies on the characters and the context (O'Hara 1999:13).

From this short history of the origin of *punk* rock, although it is not clear, it is relatively certain that *punk* was first used as a term pertaining to music in the 1960s. *Punk* first became a distinct genre *circa* 1972/73 but *punk rock* as an entity was not fully integrated into genre terminology until two years later *circa* 1974/75. However, those that were part of the music scene as consumers and artists were completely unaware of a tag for the music. Berlin in Paytress states "somewhere along the line, the word "punk" got thrown in. We had no idea what it was" (Paytress 2003:39). This is also supported by one of the founders of *punk* music, Siouxi Sioux who states "Punk wasn't a calculated movement. It was a complete fluke" (*ibid*). Such information supports the supposition that the industry and the media create the tags and not the musicians and the consumers.

Although the conditions for the creation of an alternative music scene were in place in the early 1970s, a catalyst was needed to enable its initial development. Malcolm McClaren spent a short period in 1975/76 facilitating the transplantation of the alternative scene from New York to London and the term *punk* became synonymous with the 'scene'. The journalist Caroline Coon often cited with the first mention of *punk* in the British Press defined a new "cultural movement" that was "unequivocally defined as Punk" (Savage 1991:200). Although the word *punk* had been used on other occasions to describe other types of music, its probable origin for the type of music in this study is that which emerged in *Punk* magazine.

Within the scope of musical genre, a name for one kind of music is often used to describe another. One example of this is *garage*, which described the hastily constructed bands of the late sixties, which failed to make an impact commercially. It was then appropriated to describe mid 70's young groups like the Ramones. In the mid 1980s, it was utilised again to describe a type of 'post *house*' music originating in the Paradise Garage gay disco club (Thorne 1993:90). Thus, the complexity of genre nomenclature is not only complicated within a single genre itself or through the integration of a number of genres through a

period of time but also through the complex and convoluted naming process which can enable two or more distinct genres to bear the same tag.

#### 4.2.2 The Dichotomy Caused by the Naming Process

Once *punk* had been identified and tagged, a dichotomy of interest was created. Once named, *punk* became a target for commercialisation and exploitation. However, it also defined a collective identity that those who were involved in it could claim as community. The very identification of the community defeated the unique and innovative creators and developers of the movement, pigeonholing them and thus restricting their further creative enterprise. The naming of the music/genre/youth culture was perceived by many to be its downfall. Clive Langer, songwriter and producer identifies *punks'* tagging as the conduit through which it became mainstream which was the obverse of what it represented and thus its longevity was limited (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:377). When any entity becomes pigeonholed, it assimilates specific norms and values which define elements through which it can be sold and exploited. It also becomes compartmentalised and those belonging to the genre/youth [sub] culture/music become stereotyped so that those who join late do so with a preconceived idea of what belonging entails.

#### 4.2.3 Naming the Artists within the Genre

The development of *punk* as a youth [sub] culture and musical genre embodied elements of difference and alternative culture. Such alternative elements were also reflected in the names of the *punk rock* bands. It is clear from *Figure 7*, based on Laing's (1985) study of *punk* artist names, that the majority of early *punk* artists use tags, which are deviant, sinister and undesirable, or names depicting death, violence or conflict. Names such as The Sex Pistols, Penetration and The Vibrators have phallic overtones. SMASH, These Animal Men and The Clash suggest violence, and The Mutants, The Outcasts and The Lurkers have connotations of social undesirability. Some artists use their place of origin as a reference, and these include Chelsea and The Leighton Buzzards.

Laing's work on the naming of *punk* reiterates that one of the major differences between *punk* and other musical genres is the "range and pattern of names" (Laing 1985:41-52).

A minority of artists use stage names whilst some artists' names are more quirky. An example of this is The Velvet Underground who took their name from a cheap paperback that they found in the gutter. This type of spontaneity reflects the art house roots of US *punk* and contrasts at times with many of the working/ middle class differences between the US and UK scene. Band names in the UK were set to shock; those in the US bands used names as identity tags rather than identifying overt connotations (Respondent I). *Nu punk* names tend to be less fixated on shock and gravitate more around disease, madness and quirkiness. Some of the *hardcore* names still depict social undesirability, for example Rancid, The Gas Huffers and Guttermouth, but in the main artists

have nondescript tags including The Offspring, Green Day, Pennywise, The Bouncing Souls and NOFX.

It is clear from both the naming and development of *punk* that a number of dichotomies are apparent.

The first is embodied in the *punk* philosophy, which encompasses difference, anarchistic tendencies, change and *avant-garde* ideals portrayed through music, dress, and youth [sub] culture which differentiates it from mass culture. However, the absorption of many *punk* and *nu punk* artists by the mass music industry has invaded and manipulated the original *punk* ethos to suit the commercial nature of mass music and this has changed the focus of the naming of the artist. *Punk* artists, as has already been stated, utilise alternative names for the bands in keeping with the alternative nature of the music. *Hardcore* artists also utilise such a naming process but to a somewhat lesser extent focussing more on the properties of a 'no name' to support their anarchic stance within the music industry. *Nu punk* and *pop punk* artists tend to opt for names that are handles for the consumer rather than overtly political or deviant. These processes enable the naming of the artist to follow the intention of the philosophy. The perceived undesirability of *punk* is reflected through its meaning, its alternative connotations, the names of many of the artists and the lyrics of the songs, which again differentiates it from mass music.

Nomenclature Grouping	Bands
<b>Phallic</b>	Throbbing Gristle, Buzzcocks, Sex Pistols, Penetration, Vibrators, The Members, Eddie and the Hot Rods, The 4 Skins, The Gonads, The Crutch Plates, Screwdriver, Raped, Snatch, The Slits, The Nipple Erectors.
<b>Social Undesirability</b>	The Damned, The Users, The Stranglers, The Skids, The Primitives, The Undertones, The Mutants, The Lurkers, Suburban Studs, The Killjoys, Subway Sect, Generation X, The Ruts, The Outcasts, Not Sensibles, Riff Raff, The Exploited, Crass, Vice Squad, Cockney Rejects, Guttermouth, Rancid.
<b>Death, Violence and conflict</b>	SMASH, The Clash, Cyanide, The Electric Chairs, Slaughter and the Dogs, The Nosebleeds, Menace, The Wasps, 999, Stiff Little Fingers. The Dead Kennedy's, Rancid.
<b>Musical</b>	The Drones, The Banshees.
<b>Sinister</b>	Joy Division, London SS.
<b>Places</b>	UK Subs, Chelsea, Leighton Buzzards, The New York Dolls.
<b>Odd</b>	Ramones, Eaters, The Adverts, The Saints, The Jam, The Boys, Rudi, , The Mekons, Angelic Upstarts, X Ray Specs, Radiators from Space, The Rich Kids, The Yachts, Modern Lovers, MC5, Klark Kent, Radio Stars, TRB, Nick Lowe, The Voidoids, Iggy and the Stooges, Alice Cooper, Richard Hell, Patti Smith, Blondie, The Stooges, Iggy Pop, The Velvet Underground, Green Day, Offspring, Pennywise, Dropkick Murphy's, Descendents, NOFX, Millencolin, The Bouncing Souls, Pennywise, The Velvet Underground.

FIGURE 7 Categorisation of Punk Artist Names

However, the absorption of the artists by the mass music industry has meant compromise and diversification to enable the full spectrum of *punk* to be accepted by mass culture. An example of this is the forced change or bleeping out of certain lyrics during a performance or radio play so that the artist conforms to broadcasting standards. The pursuit of *nu punk* by the mass music industry has pushed many of its sub genres to the periphery enabling youth [sub]culture to create a rich tapestry of unconventional, unassociated elements comprising an innovative and changing polysemic hybrid that proves both exciting and challenging to those involved and to those at the interface of *punk* and *nu punk*.

## 4.3 The Development of Punk and Nu Punk

### 4.3.1 A Historical Development

#### 4.3.1.1 Punk

The stagnation and introspective development of popular music fostered by the music industry in the late sixties and early seventies combined with the high levels of boredom experienced in youth culture provided the catalyst that initiated *punk's* development in the UK. The roots of *punk* however, emerged in the US minority culture of the early to mid sixties (Laing 1985:11-13) where the experimental nature of the art house movement in New York was transferred to musical form by a small locus of musicians.

A definitive history of the development of US *punk* can be found in Van Dorstons' *A History of Punk* which charts its growth from the 1960s to the 1990s, and *Punk America* by Swearingen (1997). Both Van Dorston and Swearingen cite CBGBs as the hotbed of underground talent that spawned the *punk* movement in the US. By mid 1975, the alternative scene was fully established. US *punk* had its origins in pop art closely linked to Andy Warhol, experimental cinema and the beat poets. This included William Burroughs who has often been cited as the 'grandfather' or even 'godfather' of *punk*. The photographer Nat Finklestein stated that Warhol's Factory was where he "watched pop die and saw punk being born" (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:21). The genre now known as *punk* developed in the New York club scene with the *garage* bands of the early and mid sixties, bands including the iconoclastic Velvet Underground, The New York Dolls, The Stooges and MC5. *Punk* was seen as an "attitude towards musical performance" (Laing 1985:12), it was direct and repetitive at "the expense of technical virtuosity" (*ibid*)

The transportation of *punk* from the US to the UK is related by Savage (1991:93-100) who states that the constant movement of the US artists between New York and London, and the influence of Malcolm McClaren's transatlantic trips to search for new ideas, began to "influence England". During the development of *punk* in the UK, there was no *punk* leader; *punks* were pockets of

people disillusioned with society appearing all over the country at the same time. It was the emergence of the Sex Pistols, which gave these youths a focus for their attentions. Although there was no leader, several people including Malcolm McLaren, Vivienne Westwood and Marco Pirroni, were a focus for alternative developments within the movement. *Punk* portrayed an image that depended on monochrome/vibrant colours, hard edges and symbolic violence, replacing the good will and kaftans of the hippie era. This symbolic violence was further evidenced through the dyed Mohicans, cut up clothes, the pogo style dance, the swearing, spitting, vomiting, and the way in which the fanzines reflected the culture and the drugs. The authorities were scared of *punk* as if it was a disease that would spread through the youth of the age.

UK *punk* grew out of youth's boredom with a stagnant music scene and a society which failed to ignite their curiosity and enable them to be creative. The 'scenes' in the US and UK were very different. UK *punk* was more outspoken, less affected, less sexually deviant but more sexually stereotyped than US *punk*. US *punk* emerged within the drug scene, whereas UK *punk* was in part associated with new deviant styles of drug taking and solvent abuse: the cocktail effect, often combining glue, poppers and heroin, caused serious addiction and often violence, usually to oneself. Arguments concerning authenticity and origin are not important to this study. Brian Longhurst validates such an approach; in his expose of the origins of *punk*, he explores the issues of various factions wishing to claim the ownership of the genre. However, Longhurst makes the important contribution to this argument. He states that debates about ownership and originality are pointless as both UK and US *punk* interact as forms of music and culture and thus such a debate is not in the interests of those researching it (Longhurst 1995:110).

#### 4.3.1.2 Hardcore and New Wave: The Antithesis Conundrum

From textual exploration and interviews with those in the industry, media, artists and consumers it is apparent that there are three phases of *punk* (the temporal identification of these is determined in 3.1.1). The first phase is the emergence of original *punk*, its development and decline concomitant with the rise of *new wave*. The second phase is the retaining of the non-commercial elements of initial *punk* and the beginning of a fragmentation process through *hardcore*. The third phase is the emergence of *nu punk* through *hardcore* to a mass cultural crossroads causing fragmentation and the division of mass cultural and minority interest genres.

Daly & Wice capture the essence of *hardcore* stating that in the 1980s *punk* became an ideal and symbolised purity, which many alternative bands aspired to. They relate that *punk* had changed from a youth [sub] culture and angst ridden oppressive entity, to one which championed the anti commercial (Daly & Wice 1995:181). This stance is supported by Garofalo who identified that as *new wave* (originating 1979/80) created mainstream success for post *punk* artists there were a number of artists that wanted to "retain their edge and the anti

commercialism of early *punk*" (Garofalo 1997:332). These artists used ever increasing *punk* tempos and wrote vocals attacking the "conditions of everyday life". The accompanying dance was slamming and the genre tagged as *hardcore* (*ibid*). Thorne identifies *hardcore*, as a genre of *post-punk rock* music on the border between *punk* and *heavy metal* (Thorne 1993:106), which developed as a backlash against the ordinariness of the US *post punk* bands. Thus, the small independent labels were able to survive by producing relatively small numbers of albums for a large number of *punk* artists. *Hardcores'* parallel contributor to the alternative scene: *strait edge*, which emerged at around the same time (*circa* 1980), embodied the antithesis of the *hardcore* message. *Strait edge* was a 'clean' genre where the artists and consumers formed an allegiance avoiding drugs, alcohol and "promiscuous sex" (Garofalo 1997:332). These artists and consumers rallied against racism, sexism and environmental destruction. Black Flack on the SST label were the champions of *hardcore* and Fugazi the initial embodiment of *strait edge*.

The underground *punk* (*hardcore/strait edge*) scene continued through the late eighties and into the nineties. Maverick artists such as the Meat Puppets, Husker Du, Dinosaur Junior and Sonic Youth developed substantial followings. In one four year period the Meat Puppets shipped over 30,000 copies of their *Up to the Sun* LP showing that there was a niche for such artists (Arnold 1997). The origin of these bands was steeped in the original *punk* ethos, but the height of their resurgence was in a time contextualised not by *punks'* original musical and paramusical development, but by corporate rock, which collectively formed the antithesis of their original genesis. The development of corporate rock in its turn spawned a number of alternative styles, just as a culture will spawn a counter culture. However, owing to these developments, this period of *punk's* re-appearance is probably its most experimental and its least easy to define. A wide range of artists including DRI (Dirty Rotten Imbeciles), Gang Green, Agent Orange and The Jesus and Mary Chain were experimenting with crossover styles of music encompassing *punk*, *hardcore*, *thrash*, *rock*, *grunge* and *speed*. This experimentation further sub divided the genres of music and spawned the first vestiges of the many sub, and sub sub genres of *punk* that are still emerging today. Although not at all unhealthy, the cross referencing of so many different types of music confuses the taxonomic issue which often makes clear identification of an artist's genre difficult or enables multi rather than singular identification.

The development of *hardcore* was mirrored slightly later in the UK but was perceived as unfashionable in the time and context within which it appeared. *Agit pop* (or *prop*) as it was then termed in the UK, appeared in the early nineties at the same time as *nu punk* in the US was beginning to become economically viable for the major record companies. *Agit pop* emerged with a similar political intent as original *punk* had. The long period of Conservative governance had re-kindled feelings of political opposition that were represented in the songs and musical cacophony of these anti Conservative



bands. Its very heart mirrored the disillusionment of the mid 70s youth with the Labour Government of the time (Lydon 1993:329)

Many of the bands were overtly political (S\*M\*A\*S\*H and These Animal Men) and they raged about similar issues to those which spawned the *punk* era in the mid 1970s. However, with the upsurge of interest by the UK consumer in a handful of US artists in the mid to late 1990s the *agit pop* genre was overshadowed and short lived, and the whole philosophy and ethos of *punk* once again became fragmented.

The development of *new wave* in the early 1980s clouded the differentiation between *punk*, *hardcore* and *nu punk* owing to two continuing themes. First, the record industry was continuing to fragment with the further development of independent labels and an increase in the development of sub categories from a main genre, and secondly the subsuming of *punk* by a more mainstream musical style enabled artists to assimilate music with a more user-friendly ethos and thus reach a wider audience. *Punk* music by 1980 had lost its impetus, the popularity and the immediacy of press and TV coverage had waned, and thus youth was looking to other music to provide a message. The industry was moving away from *punk* in search of a more economically viable genre as *punk* had not dominated the music scene as had been predicted (Laing 1985:33). As *punk* declined, a new eclectic music scene sprang up which, although dissimilar from *punk*, would not have had the same effect without *punk's* spearhead attack on the music industry of the 1970s. This *new wave* comprised *two tone*, *electro*, *hip hop* and *new romantic* music, many of which distanced themselves completely from *punk* and all its attributes (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:342). However, some commentators were not at all complimentary of the *new wave* scene. Chris Sullivan perceived *new wave* as a "conspiracy" where the music press and the record companies resurrected the careers of many artists who had been totally disenfranchised by the *punk* movement (Colgrave and Sullivan 2001:357).

*New wave* was the obverse of *punk*; it immediately enabled anyone to access it by its lack of uniform and its economical, easily accessible musical and paramusical style. The music industry had learned a hard lesson. If it wanted to be universally accessible to youth culture, it had to encapsulate universal factors for participation. This was a lesson well learned and adapted in the case of *nu punk*. *New wave* had a different set of values to *punk*. Gardiner reiterates that *new wave* watered down the *punk* message making it more acceptable to the media and record companies facilitating ease of access to the public. Such developments enabled many artists to become assimilated into the mainstream, which the attitude and music of *punk* militated against (Gardiner 2001:1).

#### 4.3.1.3 Nu Punk

By the early nineties in the US a corpus of artists embodying a literal interpretation of *punk rock* were receiving a great deal of media attention and major record company recognition. The development of *new wave* as the

acceptable face of music in the 1980s facilitated multi million dollar/pound deals for a number of artists and this trend continued with the advent of *nu punk*. In the early days of the original *punk* genre, it was unusual for an artist to secure a lucrative deal from a major record company and the *punk* philosophy and ethos was the antithesis of such capitalist practice. However, since 1995 such antithesis has become more prevalent in *nu punk* where the mass cultural development of some *nu punk* artists into *pop punk* icons has enabled a locus of artists to command lucrative deals from the major record companies. An example of this is Green Day who's album *Dookie* sold over 10 million copies, creating a steady income for their record company Reprise a subsidiary label of WEA: countless other successful *nu (pop) punk* artists have had a similar impact including The Offspring, The Good Charlottes, Busted and Avril Lavigne. The prevailing trend of co-opting independent artists onto major label rosters in the mid 1990s in the US enabled what is loosely termed as *pop punk* to make a considered assault on the UK charts, eventually lifting both Green Day and The Offspring to top five status. As usual in such cases, the major record companies scour the clubs for other bands with the formulaic *nu punk* sound so that the exploitation of the music, but not the philosophy or ethos, can be turned into economic gain.

However, even those artists who are thought to have totally sold out are still in many quarters believed to be selling out for the good of the *punk* cause. Jello Biafra is optimistic about *nu punk*. In his article on the Alternative Tentacles *Punk Politics* web page in relation to The Offspring and Green Day's rise to stardom, he suggests that the artists amassing large sums of money from *punk* will utilise the economic power that they have been given. He suggests that such wealth should be used to foster the development of those less fortunate, and thus perpetuate the *punk* ethos (Biafra 2003:3). The power at the fingertips of *nu punk* artists is economic power, and to distribute this would enable to some extent these artists to uphold the true values of anarchy by creating equality and freedom for those artists not identified within mass culture.

Hopkins suggests that *punk* as a total entity has moved from the margins to the mainstream and still exists twenty years on in the same form, although she concentrates on a narrow focus and ignores the large number of *punk* artists and labels outside a mass cultural context. Arnold is more pragmatic identifying the fact that young people from poor backgrounds would rather opt for a secure future with a major label than opting for a future which is less secure, less lucrative and less comfortable (Arnold 1997:82). Arnold is supported in this approach by Billie Joe from Green Day, who states:

I am exploiting myself. One thing that really bugs me is all the rich snobby kids who claim all this punk rockness coming out and saying, 'You can't make money' and stuff. How can they even say that to me? They already have money. They live punky now, but in twenty years their parents will keel over and they'll get everything (Roland 1995:25).

It is clear that there are a number of artists signing up to and allowing their music to be exploited by the major labels. However, what is unclear is to what extent those artists and their consumers still embody the original *punk* ethos. Whatever the true ethos of *nu punk* one thing is clear. The interests and motivations of original and *nu punk* fans are poles apart, although their reactions and surface behaviour are often the same, identifying a behavioural link between the two types of music.

Hopkins (1997) identifies a dichotomy between the original *punk* outlook "which took in riots, racism and big business" and the focus of *nu punk* on "apathy, illness and insanity" (Hopkins 1997:8). Hopkins further relates that *nu punk* is not interested in original *punk's* fight against the music industry and the government, but has a more "introspective focus on personal failure and confession" (*ibid*). Such an adaptation relates to contextual and historical changes in a new generation. However, Hopkins fails to identify that such a radical departure from *punk's* original philosophy, coupled with a change in context, enables *nu punk* to invade mass culture, a privilege never really afforded to original *punk* owing to its short period of existence and its inherent naivety. Hopkins also omits a crucial underlying factor inherent in *nu punk* music, namely that an artist can still be self-deprecating, turn out a quirky, catchy tune or focus on failure whilst still preserving some elements of *punk* philosophy and ethos, no matter how tenuous. *Punk* by its very nature cannot become mainstream; it is and always will be a minority interest by the very nature of the philosophy inherent in it. As Sub Pop's Bruce Pavitt stated in 1993: "The one thing that gives music [*punk*] its potency, is its context" (Arnold 1997:75).

The mid nineties *punk* revival in the guise of *hardcore* was made complete by a feature in the July 1995 issue of *Details* featuring Rancid's Tim Armstrong. Malcolm McClaren carried out the review of *punk* albums. In the review, he praised the likes of Rancid, Pennywise and Offspring, giving a somewhat tenuous seal of approval from one of original *punk* stalwarts (Daly & Wice 1995).

Writers on *nu punk* still try to link *nu punk* to *punk* through spurious authenticity and tenuous often puerile associations. Roland in an interview with the Offspring states:

'Now matured, their own brand of positive rebellion, idealism and lack of planning which remains true to their *punk* ideals, makes the Offspring the *punk* stars who deserve it. That and the cool songs' (Roland 1995:25).

Such quotes must be viewed with a fair amount of scepticism bearing in mind that bands such as the Offspring keep the corporate media in employment. "Lack of planning", "positive rebellion" and "idealism" are in no shape or form *punk* ideals and Roland's quip about "*punk* stars that deserve it" rings hollow when compared to Greg Graffin's *Punk Manifesto*.

The development of *nu punk* created a fragmentation in the *punk* 'world', caused by a small number of *hardcore* artists being lured to major labels and

exploited to great effect. As Swiss (1998) states these bands (Green Day and the Offspring as two examples) became “*neo-lite punks*” [pop] and were derided by their original *hardcore* fans. The conventional opposition of *punk* and *pop* became fragile causing a breakdown in the political and industrial framework as perceived by the consumer. The intent of the mass music industry to capitalise on the evolution of *nu punk* is apparent throughout its development. The similarities between the emergence of *punk* and *nu punk* made the early assimilation of the genre relatively easy for the major labels. *Nu punk* emerged from the US and like many other assimilated US genres emerged “about five years” before it did in the UK (Respondent 14). Thus, unlike original *punk* the globalisation of the major label industry alerted the UK labels to the presence of *nu punk*. Thus, *nu punks*’ assimilation was much quicker and the industry spotted the trend earlier than in original *punk* – perhaps because of the lessons learned in 1976 - and identified the artists that would net them large profits.

### 4.3.2 Spatial Identification

The focus of *punk* was the two shops in London *Sex* and *Boy* and the CBGB club in New York. *Sex*, managed by Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood and *Boy*, managed by Helen Robinson and Steph Raynor, were not only the shops that clothed the bands and the original *punks* but also served as meeting places for those interested in the alternative nature of the genre. From these two focal points, word of mouth spread the news about the genre. *Punk* also had its own meeting places to listen to the music including the Roxy and the 100 club. CBGBs in New York was the club where all of those interested in the alternative scene gravitated towards. In the *punk* ‘glory days’ the club played host to “Television, the Ramones, Talking Heads, Blondie and Patti Smith” and later in the 1980s played host to a growing number of *hardcore* bands (Daly & Wice 1995:42). The focus of the upsurge in *nu punk* emanated from 942 Gilman Street in Berkely in the East Bay area of San Fransisco where a locus of *nu punk* artists (Green Day and The Offspring) and consumers spent their time “worshipping at the Peoples Temple” (Arnold 1997:114). Berkely was a similar area to the Bowery in New York where CBGBs was sited, run down with derelict buildings, a haven for *punk* kids to escape to an alternative music scene. Interestingly enough Green Day are unwelcome in Gilman Street because they sold out and in essence have been “evicted from their spiritual home” because the success has changed their music, their style and their philosophy (Arnold 1997:119).

All of the key signifiers of place within *punk* are alternative and focus on countercultural icons. Spatially there is a stark difference between the sun and fun of California and the dismal 'no future' of Brixton. However, linking the two are the similarity of spatial origin and alternativity. *Punk*’s origin was steeped in middle class angst, inner city deprivation and working class toil. *Nu punk* is quite different, as Mark Roland identified in an interview with Green Day where he asks the question “are palm trees and sunshine compatible

with *punk*?" The answer to the question focuses on the homogeneity and boredom of the conservative and Republican neighbourhoods, which fostered a certain kind of rebelliousness (Rowland 1999:25). The allusion to homogeneity is interesting in this context as it could be perceived that the music, the dress code and the music's imagery have a homogeneity all of their own in line with the boredom of the "vanilla and conservative state" (*ibid*). The initial impetus of *punk* and the alternative ethos of the independent *punk* artists, although often homogenous, were alternative, rebellious, and born out of boredom. However, the creation, encoding, delivery and decoding of the *nu punk* message are very different. Whereas *punk* in the 1970s in the UK sought to destroy the state by an inward show of aggression, *nu punk* subverts from within; it has a self-referential awareness.

It is clear from this historical and spatial contextualisation that *punk rock* in one form or another has existed since the mid 1970s and is still a key alternative genre today, although in many cases the musical style has been appropriated by mass culture. It is also clear that both *punk* and *nu punk* have clearly identifiable spatial origins. The two main periods of development can be cited as 1975/6-1980 and 1995-2003. Between 1980 and 1995, with the demise of both key US and UK artists (The New York Dolls, The Sex Pistols) *new wave* and its antithesis, *hardcore*, music filled the void left by the original *punk* bands. However, *punk* did not just disappear, it re-grouped, changed context and made several forays into the independent and major charts before re-emerging in the guise of *nu punk* (possibly best identified as *hardcore* and *pop punk*) to create both mass and minority interest through exciting and different musical contexts. In the next section musical, paramusical and perceptual interpretations of *punk* and *nu punk* will be explored.

## 4.4 Musical Factors

### 4.4.1 The Music of *Punk*

#### 4.4.1.1 Introduction

In this section, although the music of *punk* is explored, a focussed musicological exposition of the music will not be attempted. Instead an exploration of the surface factors that are utilised to identify *punk* by the industry, media the artist and consumer compatible, with the pragmatic nature of the thesis will be expounded. The reason for such an exploration pertains to the lack of musical texts dealing with musical analysis. As Laing states "In an essay on the New York Dolls, which contains virtually the only attempt at musical analysis of punk style" (Laing 1985:60) highlights the lack of research into this area.

The initial experimental nature of the music is one key to *punk's* rapid and almost unnoticed genesis. Laing (1985) and Hebdige (1991) are both reticent to

admit that *punk*, as Moore states, “ had a unified musical programme” (Moore 2001:129). Laing and Hebdige perceive that the most notable features of *punk* were anti-elitism and anti society, and fail to spend sufficient time analysing the importance of musical factors in the identification of *punk* spending an inordinate amount of time exploring the sociological and paramusical factors inherent in its genesis and development.

One of the difficulties in the identification of genre, and more explicitly in the identification of *punk*, is that each individual has their own idea of which artists should and should not be included in the genre. Initially it was relatively easy to distinguish between the *punk* artists and others by their difference but as *punk* progressed, it became more homogenous and controlled by the music industry, and the media and artists became more formalised and predictable (Respondent 12). As well as being identified as *punk*, the media began to label artists with contrasting labels. The Stranglers took on the mantle of *rock*, XTC became *new wave*, Ian Dury and the Blockheads were *pub rock*, and thus it was difficult for those involved in the consumption of the music to identify universal indicators that classified an artist as *punk*. Furthermore as *punk* developed, if a drummer did not have a certain look, or a band did not have a certain sound, then they were perceived not to fit in with the *punk* movement. Unfortunately this was the obverse of the initial idea of *punk* where everything was supposed to be different and alternative and not to conform or be introspective (Respondent 14).

It is clear from texts previously written about *punk* that *punk* is more than just music. However, it is also clear that the music is an integral part of the genesis and development of the genre. This integral nature of *punk* music to any dialogue on *punk* youth [sub] culture is supported by Arnold (1997), Gurewitz in Arnold (1997), Graffin (1998) and Savage (1991) all of whom identify *punk* music as key to the community and the dissemination of the genre itself. It was the experimentation with instruments - by those without prior musical ability - that gave *punk* much of its original creative focus (Respondent 9). The leap from no instrument to stage was small, and enabled many non-musicians to become not only countercultural icons but also household names. Before *punk*, musical creativity was perceived to be associated with dexterity and years of practice (Respondent 10), but with the advent of *punk* the barrier of musicianship was removed enabling immediacy and simplicity to equate to creativity. Laing identifies creativity and self-expression as being far more important than skilful playing or virtuosity in *punk rock*, he relates that “impact” and “substance” were the key concepts related to the music (Laing 1985:60). The relationship of *punk* to the concept of DIY “challenged the connection between virtuosity and genius” by creating the “learn three chords and form a band” mentality associated with the *punk* genre, (Dettmar & Richey 1999:44). Steve Severin from Siouxsie and the Banshees compounds this stating that “The Sex Pistols inspired us all. For the first time in my life I saw that anyone could do it. You didn’t have to be able to play your instruments” (Paytress 2003:48). Although Laing (1985:60) notes that prior experience of playing was not a benefit in the early

days of *punk*, he does not expound the usefulness of prior ability in sustaining artistic credibility after the decline of *punk* and the development of *new wave*.

The breaking of musical conventions is one element that epitomises much of *punk* music and may in part reflect *punks'* rejection of the norm and more specifically the mass music industry. An example of the breaking of musical conventions is the assimilation of elements of other unrelated genres of music by *punk*. This can be identified at its most prominent in the relationship between *punk* and *reggae*, where many *punk* tracks, especially by bands such as the Clash, utilise *reggae* rhythms and bass lines to accentuate the message, although the two types of music are poles apart both musically and culturally (Respondent 12). Non-recognition of conventions and barriers makes *punk* unique. Other unconventional elements identified within *punk* are explored further in 4.4.1.2, 4.4.1.3 and 4.4.1.4 later in this chapter.

Two universal characteristics underpin the music of *punk*. The first is the composition of the band. The usual line up of a *punk* band comprises voice, rhythm guitar, bass and drums. The second concerns the construction of the song. Moore in relating the structure of The Damned's 'New Rose' gives a description, of simplicity, which can be related to the majority of *punk* songs. He identifies:

A simple alternation of verse and chorus yields to a central bridge with the faint sense of an arpeggiated solo. Each formal unit here consists of a simple boogie formula, all three formulae belonging in the same song solely on account of their proximity, rather than any similarity of contour or pattern. All patterns are grouped in units of four, matching the organisation of the lyrics, which are typically declaimed, although less shouted than Johnny Rotten's (Moore 2001:131).

It is not the typical organisation of the song but the alternation of verse and chorus, the lack of similarity contour and pattern (reflecting again unconventionality) and the declaimed lyrics that signal the *punk* song structure. Savage supports the typical organisation of the *punk* song identified by Moore but he elaborates on the theme, citing short declamatory openings, definitive endings, guitar riffs that carry songs augmented with "simplified solos" often consisting of no more than "repeated chords" and "staccato drum patterns" as typifying the *punk* song. Savage also claimed that the lyrics represented the function of "slogans" within the song (Savage 1991:206).

Whilst many commentators identify the DIY nature of *punk* as both refreshing and creative there are those that identify *punk* as lacking creativity because of the constraints placed upon the development of the music through lack of playing ability and the understanding of basic musical conventions. Hatch and Millward suggest that a lack of creativity associated with the *punk* genre, reflected in the increased conservatism engendered by record companies and the limited subject matter available to the artist, resulted in limited chart success for *punk* artists (Hatch & Millward 1987:160-70). However, if *punk* is perceived to be more than the sum of its musical parts manifest as a combination of both musical and paramusical elements as evidenced by Arnold (1997) and Graffin (1998), then it was extremely innovative and creative, well

developed by the alternative or independent labels, had a wealth of subject matter and massive independent chart success. This is extended through the development of *nu punk*, which has a wealth of subject matter and pronounced commercial success.

To identify elements inherent in the classification of *punk* music the main instruments comprising the *punk* band will be explored.

#### 4.4.1.2 Vocals

In early 1976, commentators were already able to identify a cluster of musical elements that could be used to identify *punk rock*. Moore stated in *Rock: The Primary Text* that there is in many *punk* singers, and especially Johnny Rotten, a “refusal to adopt a conventional vocality” (Moore 2001:130). This is reinforced by the exploration of a wide range of *punk* artists, which supports the claim that the vocals are ejected, shouted or declaimed rather than sung. Examples include the Sex Pistols, The Users, The Wasps, Swell Maps, The Members and the Angelic Upstarts. Laing identifies the *punk* voice as “a mixture of speech, recitative, chanting or wordless cries and mutterings” (Laing 1985:54). Laing goes on to relate that the *punk* voice excludes “the musicality of singing” and avoids conventional melody, harmony and pitch (*ibid*). The “underplayed vocal countermelody of the chorus” (Moore 2001:132) is also a trait common to many *punk* songs and shows how important the vocalisation of the song is to the identification of *punk* rock. Although the approach of declaiming vocals was partly preserved by the development of *hardcore*, during the development of *nu* and *pop punk* a less declamatory style is represented. However, although the vocals are slightly less declamatory this is cosmetic and utilised to identify a differing context. Declamatory vocals were the medium through which protest was initiated with *nu punk*'s lack of protest and differing context, less emphasis is placed on this method. Examples of less declamatory vocals can be found in *American Jesus* by Bad Religion and *Leave it Alone* by NOFX. Although *nu punk* vocals are not as declaimed as original *punk* vocals, those bands, which are linked most closely to mass culture through *pop punk*, have the most modified vocals (those that do not sound like *punk* vocals at all). Examples of this are The Offspring song *Pretty Fly for a White Guy*, the Good Charlottes track *Girls & Boys*, the DumDums rendition of *Everything* and Avril Lavigne's *Sk8ter Boi*. Record company managers perceive this modification as the “de-punking” of the music for commercial consumption (Respondent 13).

#### 4.4.1.3 Guitar and Bass

As has already been identified, many *punk* musical episodes form a dichotomy between conventional style and experimentation, a theme which often pervades *punk* music. In many *punk* songs conventional musical elements are applied unconventionally. An example of this is the guitar solo where often just one note is played repeatedly signifying the musical passages difference from other



parts of the song (Moore 2001). A number of commentators including Carson (1979), Colgrave & Sullivan (2001), Laing (1985) and Moore (2001) highlight *punks'* reliance on guitar. There are three key elements related to the place of the guitar in the *punk* song. Firstly, the high treble chords as characterised in *Hong Kong Garden* by Siouxi and the Banshees and *Shadow* by the Lurkers. Secondly, the more conventional arpeggiated chords and thirdly the wall of sound created by continual strumming where the chords flow into each other as evidenced by the Fall and the Mekons. Allied to this, another element central to the *punk* guitar sound alluded to by Savage (1991), is the standard registral guitar solo. The solo in *punk* music was usually guitar related but with notable exceptions, the best known of which is Laura Logic's sax solo in *Oh Bondage Up Yours!* by X Ray Specs. The *punk* guitar solo usually had a limited role and rather than showing the dexterity of the guitarist reiterated musical statements already made in the track. An already used riff or sequence would be replayed at the front of the mix. The few dexterous guitar solos and a tendency to declaim vocals in *punk* possibly reflect the lack of priority given to melody in the music (Laing 1995:61). Where a dexterous guitar solo does occur, for example, Tom Verlaine's solo on Television's *Marquee Moon*, priority is given to melody indicating a possible link between virtuosity and melody in the *punk* song. The Tom Robinson Bands song *2-4-6-8 Motorway* and The Only Ones *Another Girl, Another Planet*, further support this link. The development of *nu punk* has tended to create a more conventional style of guitar playing which, however, still sticks with regimented solos that follow the chord progression of the song. There are a few notable exceptions including the guitar solo by Dexter Holland on The Offspring's version of *Feelings* but these are few and far between, with the band tending to follow a strict and almost formulaic system as evidenced by the clean almost formulaic sound of *pop punk* (Respondent 10). Although little is written about the role of the bass guitar in *punk*, Christgau in Laing (1985) refers to *punk's* "forced rhythm" where the bass was the key. Christgau references the monadic bass rhythm as an anchor in *punk* music which often contradicts the "syncopation of the drumming" (Laing 1985:62). The simplicity and "insistence" of the bass is also highlighted in Carson (1979).

#### 4.4.1.4 Drums

It is by design rather than a quirk of the composition that the drummer creates the framework of the musical episode in *punk*. The fragility of the song highlights where the variety of rhythm would dilute the message and perhaps destroy the momentum of the band. The syncopated rhythm of *punk* accentuates the offbeat and is another key factor inherent in *punk* musical episodes although not exclusive to all *punk* songs. This off beat element is best identified in the work of the Nosebleeds and the Vibrators. Christgau states in Marcus that *punk* "tends to 'submerge' syncopation in its rhythmic patterns" (Marcus 1979:139). Laing states that:

More frequently, though the monad/dyad contrast is distributed among the rhythm instruments, often with the bass and guitar laying a non-syncopated line over the muted syncopation of the drums (Laing 1985:62).

This highlights the importance of the tension to the listener between monadic and dyadic beats, where confusion often occurs between the two, especially in *nu punk* where there is perceived to be a much faster tempo than in original *punk*. This element will become important in the experimentation section of this study. In tracks of over 200bpm, the monadic and dyadic beat often become confused, and the counting of the beats takes an inordinate amount of time to complete. Often either beat can be heard as the primary beat, so that either the non-syncopated bass or syncopated drum line is taken as the primary rhythmic or beat count indicator (Respondent 13). Moore supports the theory that the drums underpinned and supported *punk rock* songs, by identifying that *punk* drum patterns were “blueprints” upon which other instrumental and vocal layers could be placed. The creation of such a structure owes its origins to the composition of the bands and such a structure was created by design not by serendipity (Moore 2001:138). In *nu punk* the drums still follow a similar pattern although it is noticeable that some of the more commercial artists have moved away from a reliance on the off beat, as evidenced in Avril Lavigne on *Sk8ter Boi* and Simple Plans *The Worst Day Ever*, two examples of commercial *pop punk*. Whereas there is often confusion in original *punk* and *hardcore* with the monadic and dyadic beat there is less confusion at the commercial end of *nu punk*.

#### 4.4.1.5 Tempo

Laing states that the high tempo of *punk rock*, which is identified in both reviews and eulogies as a key differentiating element between *punk* and other music, is almost universal across the genre (Laing 1985:59). Both Moore (2001) and Laing (1985) have different ideas about what the high tempo signifies. Moore perceives that *punk's* high tempo is utilised to enable a simplistic ejection of the message, whilst Laing perceives that the tempo signifies expedience in its dissemination to the consumer. However, it is possible that the quickened tempo is the artists' way of skirting convention and changing musical rules to allow faster vocal ejection and to mask limited musical development. It is almost universally the case in *thrash metal*, *hardcore* and *nu punk*, where artists try to challenge the convention of formulaic music, although this is not true of all artists in these genres (Respondent 16).

In *punk rock*, increased tempo and a lack of rhythmic variety are closely linked. In simple terms, to convey a message quickly, efficiently and effectively, *punk* used increased tempo, which lacked rhythmic variety. Where artists were not particularly musically oriented, the simplistic, fast, three chord, declaimed song was the easiest way to convey the message. There were no complex rhythm patterns, few guitar solos and little vocal development. This was a primitive but effective way of disseminating the message in an alternative way acceptable to the youth [sub] culture. Marco Pironi guitarist with Siouxsie and

the Banshees and later with Adam and the Ants cites the Ramones as being ultimately responsible for the increased tempo of *punk*; however, this increase in tempo led to a simplification of the style owing to the complication of dexterity for the band playing at this speed (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:212).

#### 4.4.1.6 Linking the Musical and the Paramusical

From the exploration of the music of *punk* the functionality of the music is quite apparent and this forms a dichotomy with the very post modern nature of *punk's* paramusical factors. Although *punk*, *hardcore* and many of the sub genres encapsulated by *nu punk* are the antithesis of *pop*, *pop punk* is indistinguishable from mainstream *pop* both musically and paramusically. Thus *pop punk* is more easily assimilated by mass culture, and in its most commercial form utilises sung rather than declaimed vocals, clean catchy guitar riffs, and an easily assimilable message and dress style, which in actuality is the antithesis of original *punk*.

The importance of *punk's* paramusical factors emerged as artists whose musical style not normally associated with *punk* were considered in the study. From exploration, it became apparent that other attributes – non-musical – associated an artist with the *punk* genre. Artists such as the Fall were considered to be *punk* because they embodied the *punk* DIY ethos rather than conforming to the *punk* norms and values ascribed by the mass media. Bill Dunn in Colgrave & Sullivan captures the essence of *punk* in his description of the Fall, where he identifies that their very un-*punkness* made them more like *punk* than many *punk* bands. It was the sense of mystery, the absence of sartorial style and the incorporation of new and original sounds into the songs, which gave them their unique identity (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:323). Joel in O'Hara identifies the importance of DIY as the “driving ethic behind” *punk*. It was the artists' ability to create, develop and distribute the product - on similar lines to a major record label - that differentiated *punk* from other music (O'Hara 1999:153). Here the means of production is cited as a possible *punk* quality.

The identification of *punk* as both a music and an attitude or way of life not only pervades the academic texts and periodicals written about the genre but also the fanzines and academic papers. The archetypal and seminal *Sniffin Glue* relates many attributes of *punk* music. It describes the Subway Sect as “real punks” producing simple two or three chord music and also identifies the personalities of the artists as being more important than their expertise in musical dexterity (Sniffin' Glue December 1976:8). In this case a description of the simple 2 or 3 chords utilised by the Subway Sect to achieve the tag of “real punks” underlines the ease of access afforded by the genre to both the artist and the consumer. However, the fanzine also identifies the paramusical element of personality as key to the dissemination of the music supporting Graffin's (1998) exposé on *punk* identifying substance over style. Thus, the two genres explored within this study are identified on many levels as being more than just music.

## 4.5 Paramusical Factors

### 4.5.1 The Style of Punk

*Punk* culture embodied a broad range of diverse ideas, products and alternative styles taken from across society embedded in a youth [sub] culture related to anarchy, difference and the unusual (Hebdige 1991:103) (Polhemus 1995:93). As already stated earlier in this Chapter such a post-modern approach is the opposite of the functional structure of the music utilised as a foundation for the *punk* message.

Punk utilised alternative, alien and depressive factors (gobbing, piercing by safety pins, destruction of clothing and S&M styles) (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001), that although in existence were not at the time assimilated by mainstream youth culture. The choice of such alternative factors marginalised punks and thus the 'true' punk identity was only assimilated by a hard central core of those associated with, and immersed in, the totality of the subculture. Initially the difference of the dress and music was unique and revolutionary, but as others joined the genre, the punk ideal of difference started to become homogeneity rather than alternative, as those joining mimicked rather than created.

The latecomers to *punk* who chose and promoted the typical *punk* look of ripped T-shirts, leathers and a Mohican, forsaking the original individuality eventually shunned those promoting experimentation (Savage 1991). As O'Hara states *punk* "cannot be pigeonholed to some spiked haired white male wearing a leather jacket with metal spikes listening to music real loud" (O'Hara 1999:11). Such a perception overlooks the duality of the genre, where both individuality and homogeneity existed side by side. Robert Elms the broadcaster and journalist, perceives *punk* as becoming uniformed and conservative at an early stage which was the antithesis of what it was meant to be. *Punk* began to refute change as it became scared of its initial roots. (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:377). This is supported by Redhead who relates the short life of *punk's* originality and its subsumation and incorporation into the norm (Redhead 1997:46) and Frith who perceived that *punk* fashion followed in the footsteps of all youth [sub]cultures and became "uniformed" and "dull" (Frith 1988:176).

Although it only lasted a short while in its most vibrant form, original *punk* sartoriality was an important element of the youth [sub] culture. The fusing of aspects of fashion from a number of sources is termed as bricolage. Polhemus relates that such inspiration is usually related to some kind of historic logic but in the case of *punk*, this was not so (Polhemus 1995:93). However, Polhemus fails to develop the argument to its logical conclusion, missing the point that later *punk* copied those initiators; thus the bricolage was one of re-copied, re-hashed ideas rather than originality, which interestingly spawned second and third generation *punk* wear, and kept the cutting edge of *punk* style developing rather than stagnating. Hebdige (1991:122) also highlights this.

Savage notes the polysemic nature of *punk* identifying the wide range of elements appropriated from different styles and fashions throughout youth culture. The elements had no “conscious meaning” as they were drawn from disparate concepts including fetish wear and the trappings of urbanisation and “extremist politics” (Savage 1991:230).

The polysemic nature of *punk* described its sartoriality. The focus on a jumble of elements portraying all that was forbidden and frowned upon combined with the trappings of urban decay laid the foundations for the *urban warriors* to build upon. The use of the bin bag, (a receptacle for rubbish), chains, swastikas, razor blades and the overt use of safety pins, piercing and tattoos often frowned upon by society, challenged mass cultural perceptions of decency, extending the barriers of what was acceptable and set the *punks* apart from mainstream culture. The term ‘bricolage’ identifies an unrelated dress code whereas that of polesemy relates to carefully chosen garments, which reflect urban decay and shock, creating a message, rather than a meaningless jumble of unrelated garments.

*Nu punk* on the other hand combined a number of ideas and icons from across society but specifically related to the accepted alternative youth pastimes of contemporary society including the snowboard, the skateboard, the surfboard and characters on mainstream TV (Arnold 1997). Although *skater punks* (a sub genre of *nu punk*) are often “at odds with the authorities over the use of their boards in inner city areas”- a kind of token rebellion paying lip service to the original *punk* and hardcore ethos-(Polhemus 1995:86-88) their style is not unique. The cropped bleached hair, lumberjack shirts and skate wear are fashions assimilated by mass culture as part of contemporary youth fashion. This very factor enables *nu punk* to be more easily assimilated by youth culture: it has readily-available imagery that every member of youth culture can easily identify with, and thus the homology of *nu punk* can be more easily exploited by corporate culture. The effect was to create an instantaneous style available from any skate, surf or snow fashion retailer (and department store) where clothes could be purchased as it were ‘of the peg’. Although such clothing purchases are now the norm in *nu punk* circles, the inner core of the *hardcore* and *nu punks* still create and disseminate the old *punk* DIY values, portraying created dress styles authentic to the genre and upholding the ‘true’ *punk* ethos (Muggleton 1998).

The fashion appropriated by *hardcore* fell between the two genres (*punk* and *nu punk*) extinguishing the style of homogenised *punk* and misappropriating the commercialised skate/snow/surf attributes almost developing minimalist alternative fashion giving no message and no style, and in essence creating a combinational parody of *punk* and *nu punk* style. The demystification of *punk* by the media had created a somewhat homogenous image of the sub-culture, defeating the original idea of difference. The assimilation of *pop punk* by mass culture pushed the extremes of *punk* further from the centre. The way that *punk* was processed by the media coverage of the phenomenon made the quest of *agit pop* and *hardcore* much more difficult.

However, its underground approach separated it from commercial *punk*, and thus the artists appropriated as already stated either non fashion (Bad Religion) or an extreme parody of original *punk* style (Rancid), identifying that the message was not in the clothes, the icons or the behaviour, but in the lyrics and the philosophy of the genre. In the case of Bad Religion the very nature of the dress codes of the artists and the audience is sombre conveying a dark attitude, focussing on the music and the message rather than the trappings of style.

Both Hebdige (1991) and Polhemus (1995) allude to sartoriality as one of the main elements that distinguished *punk* youth [sub] culture from other youth [sub] cultures; *punks* used a look, which was designed to shock. It was 'statement dressing'.

The nu wave of *punk* which was emerging during the writing of Polhemus' book is totally ignored apart from the *skate punks* who appropriated surf fashion, identifying with extreme sports and sportswear also appropriated by other genres such as *indie*, *grunge* and *metal* enabling cross over elements. Bricolage and polysemy were even more important as *nu punk* fashion borrowed from *indie*, *metal*, *reggae* and *dance* genres as well as from *skate*, snow and surf cultures to create a non-uniform culture, where anyone was accepted rather than just those who dressed in a certain way. This can be observed at any *nu punk* or *hardcore* club where all styles are apparent. This development of bricolage rather than any meaningful identification with clothes was the antithesis of *punk* dress, where those at the core of the sub culture dressed to shock and to be alternative to mass culture. The combination of youth [sub] cultural styles of the *nu punk* consumer reflected not only the combination of garments borrowed from others but also the way in which elements of other music were used in the genre for example; *ska*, *metal*, *thrash*, *indie*, *dance* and *grunge*. Roland observes the plurality of the audience identifying fashion-conscious teenagers, truck drivers and parents as well as the *punk* rockers. His perception that the band Offspring is a "band of the people, for the people and that's *punk*" does not hold true to many of the *punk* sensibilities spanning the last two decades (Roland 1999:25). It is not *punk* in its original context. *Punk* did not attract fashion-conscious kids, nor did it attract mums and dads but those who were alienated, different and also the dropouts and the society misfits (Respondent 9). Offspring being a band "of the people and for the people" is mainstream or corporate rock and encapsulates none of *punk's* original philosophy and ethos but rather shows the medium's concern for the trappings of capitalist society.

#### 4.5.2 Punk, Governance and Anarchy

O'Hara identifies *punk's* political ideology as anarchy, as few artists promote capitalism, communism or any other political belief. The ideology, however, is perceived to be relatively primitive extending only to a belief in the values of "individual freedom and responsibility" (O'Hara 1999:28). Tillman develops the link between *punk* and anarchy stating that "*Punk* rock is inherently apolitical"

and argues that there is no link between art and politics as the relationship between them is too complex (Tillman 1980 165-175). Fornas (1995) validates *punks'* anarchic stance citing a period of rapid change and a system under strain, as two catalysts for the deep rooted anti social behaviour practiced during the height of its development. The *angelfire punk* website quotes Joel from the Profane Existence Collective as stating "*Punks* relationship with the world has been concentrated on shocking and rejecting that world" (Angelfire 2003). Any acceptance would be seen as selling out and the commodification of *nu punk* is totally rejected by those *punks* who have *hardcore* roots.

Anarchy is central to any exposition of *punk*, as it is perceived that the philosophy, the fashion, the music and the general youth [sub-]culture all imitate, embody or generate anarchistic tendencies. *Punk* originated in a stagnant period of music and a time where 'no future' was the call of youth. Paul Cook from the Sex Pistols encapsulated the mood of bored youth when he stated:

We wanted to shake things up. We grew up with three-day weeks and power cuts, sitting with candles. Corrugated iron everywhere, like the war was happening. Nobody considered the future really. It was just a crack....but we did influence a lot of people, not just music - fashion and even comedy (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:90).

The choice of a tool to change or shake up society was anarchy assimilated rather than chosen for its anti-establishment focus and lack of political view. Some commentators perceived that *punk* was a backlash against the Conservative party - "without Maggie Thatcher there would have been no *punk*" (Respondent 14) - in reality *punk* was a backlash against the political system the policies of which created the society alluded to by Paul Cook above.

The choice of anarchy by those involved with *punk* as a tool to 'infiltrate' British society was misunderstood and misinterpreted by both the authorities and the British public, and to some extent by the artists and the audience themselves. *Punk* was new and vibrant. Those in authority had not experienced anything as vibrant as *punk* before and were resistant to the new norms and values emerging within youth culture. It is difficult to identify whether the theme of anarchy pervaded all *punk* or whether it was only identifiable in small pockets of those who were totally immersed in the subculture. However, what is clear is that those involved in *punk* as artists and consumers did not understand fully, nor apply the concept of, anarchy and many paid little attention to its existence.

In its purest form anarchism as a political theory opposed to all forms of government is reflected in the total disregard for authority by the *punk* movement. Anarchists believe that the highest attainment of humanity is the freedom of self-expression, unhindered by any form of repression or control from without (Worrall 1999). The creation of a music and subculture initially without a tag enabled those involved to follow this practice. At the core of anarchy is freedom and this is tempered by anarchy's ban on injuring others in this quest for such freedom. The initial *punk* movement shunned violence but as

the movement grew, many who joined used violence as a tool and thus the police generally described *punks* as violent, unsavoury and threatening (Respondent 14).

According to the potted history above, the *punk* bricolage and icons associated with it are very much portrayed within this anarchistic vein; however, the style of anarchy is muddled by a duality. That duality consists on the one hand of an angry youth [sub]culture displaying aggression within the confines of the clubs, outwardly displaying dissent and going against the style and hereditary icons of the last three to four decades. Alongside the angry youth are those that are into the music and fashion but exhibit little of the philosophy or ethos of the subculture: they rebel but are not anarchists.

In the case of *nu punk*, the youth culture surrounding the music existed in an integrated framework alongside that of the parent culture. Surfing, skateboards, the Walkman and the baseball cap all became the icons of such a youth culture. As these icons already existed as part of youth culture *per se*, it was easy for *nu punk* fans to assimilate the trappings associated with the music and not become entangled with the underpinning philosophy. Hopkins relates in her paper *Identity, 20 years of punk* that *punk* is accepted as mainstream youth culture and categorises disparate artists from *rock*, *indie*, *grunge* and *hardcore* into the same identifiable groups, classifying them under the banner of popular *punk* (Hopkins 1997:12). However, one point that Hopkins misunderstands in her paper is that although *nu punk* has taken on a fully commercialised stance in the form of *pop punk* (which sheds all political intent created through the formulaic *pop* music pose of the charts and develops mainstream sensibilities) the essence and driving philosophy behind it is the antithesis of *punk*. To identify three disparate artists as sharing “introspective punk by grunge sensibilities” (ibid) does not take into account the underpinning subcultural nuances, genre formation strategies and mass cultural sensibilities of the artists. Rancid, Offspring and Bad Religion are also worlds apart, popularity is relative and anarchy has not and cannot become mainstream. *Pop punk* is young people enjoying themselves, portraying all the trappings and accoutrements of *punk* without the baggage of the philosophy or ethos: it is not anarchy. Thus, we have a binary divide. Whereas in original *punk* the genre is split between those bands that embody the original *punk* philosophy and ethos, usually to be found at the *hardcore* end of the genre, and those that embody commercialisation (*pop punk* or *new wave*), treating *punk* as music and a fashion paying lip service to its original ethos and philosophy. The original principles of *punk* philosophy are still inherent in many areas of *nu punk* today and are still central to the focus of *hardcore* artists. Many commentators and *punks* have an over simplistic view of what *punk* was or is. However, Greg Graffin, a member of the *punk* band Bad Religion, in his *Punk manifesto* outlines the underlying principles of what it means to be, *punk*. He states:

Thinking and acting in a direction against the current of popular opinion is critical to human advancement, and a potent manifestation of *Punk*...This ability to go against



the grain was a major part of the greatest advances in human thinking throughout history (Graffin 1998:4).

*Punk* moved against popular opinion in many ways embodied in both the musical and paramusical aspects of the genre. The references to *punk* being a working class phenomenon has caused a great deal of misrepresentation of its initial development and also confused the issue of anarchy which was not driven by working class youth but developed as a supra class phenomenon. This convergence of classes brought together differing norms and values, styles, ideas, art and music and was one reason why *punk* was so vibrant.

This convergence of class and unified struggle against governance *per se*, had a much deeper-seated problem which *punk* identified and exploited and from which British politics has never recovered. This problem is an inability to attract the general youth population and more importantly failing to deal with issues relating to youth. The inability of the major political parties to attract young people stems from the fact that they tend to think about attracting present rather than future voters. This political stance pervades through politics where short-term gain is far more important than long-term strategy. Lydon identifies the stagnant factors of the age where a term from one government would be indistinguishable from the next: there was a lack of change and most young people ignored or rather became disenfranchised from politics, as it did not appeal to them (Lydon 1993:326).

The Government sensed that *punk* was trouble and tried to eradicate it by a heavy-handed approach. However, by the time that the Government acted, *punk* had already built strong foundations in the pubs and clubs. When the police, local authorities and the Government tried to curb *punk* concerts and behaviour it was far too late. The very antagonism shown by those in power perpetuated *punk*: had they left it alone, it would never have lasted as long as it did. By creating a moral panic, the Government and the police through the media exacerbated the perceived problem and incurred further antagonism themselves.

Although it is perceived that *punk* had an effect on society in the US and UK it was nothing compared to the effect it had in some Eastern European countries. *Punk* was in many cases a truly revolutionary tool. Youth in the Czech Republic used *punk* to revolt effectively against the communist regime in the mid to late eighties. *Punk* was perceived by the communist authorities as a real threat to the stability of society and was thus used far more effectively as a tool for anarchy than it was in the UK (Koral 1996:2). Although dissimilar in development, it mirrored the style, music and anarchistic tendencies of the early years of *punk*. Those dressing as *punks* or caught in the notorious Bunkr club could be arrested or beaten by the secret police (Kemp 1996<sup>b</sup>:6). Secret gigs took place, a forbidden library of cassettes and videos charting the history of *punk* in former Czechoslovakia were kept in a secret room by Ales Opekar, a Czech musicologist, and an underground press formed, spreading the *punk* philosophy (Kemp 1996<sup>b</sup>:4). *Punk* was one of a number of developments which signalled the end of the communist regime and the forming of the two

republics, and it could be said that *punk* showed 'true' anarchy (for a short period) as it helped to achieve freedom without violence. After the Velvet Revolution in November 1989 the ethos of *punk* changed: Petr Koral, a music journalist, in Prague identified that *punk* in the Czech Republic had changed its political leanings as in the driving out of Communism the country had exchanged a "regime of guns" for a "regime of money". (Kemp 1996<sup>b</sup>:12).

A despondent attitude set in: with nothing else to fight for, more and more *punks* rejected the *punk* subculture in favour of something more extreme. With the formation of the republic came a renewed effort by many involved in youth culture to rid the republic of gypsies, Slovaks and other ethnic minorities. This ethnic cleansing attracted those *punks* who were disillusioned with the new political state. They were attracted by the lure of violence and racism and became *skinheads*. For every *punk* left in Prague in 1989 there were three *skinheads* (Kemp 1996<sup>b</sup>:6). Antonin Jankovic a computer programmer and a *skinhead* leader states:

*Punk* became boring To be an anarchist was no fun anymore. We were having problems with the gypsies. These are the people who are causing problems for our country, so we became *skinheads* (Jankovic 1996).

However, the *skinheads* were totally pro Czech: anyone - including *punks*, ethnic minorities, gypsies and foreign nationals - were legitimate targets for them. In 1986 there were only 20 *skinheads* in Prague, in 1998 there were over 500 (Kemp 1996<sup>b</sup>:10). It can be seen from the *punk* culture within the Czech Republic that the way in which *punk* has evolved within youth culture in Eastern Europe was vastly different from the way that it evolved in the UK. However, there are many parallels. Those *punks* coming late to the scene as in the Czech Republic were perceived by other original *punks* not to embody the original *punk* philosophy: as Chris Sullivan reiterates, many of the later *punks* became *skinheads* and joined extremist organisations. For these types of people, *punk* was just another fashion and had no meaning. Traits such as spitting were engendered not by the purists but those who identified the elements of *punk* disinherited by those that started the movement (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:312).

Laing (1985) argues that The Sex Pistols demonstrated that the specific music gestures of *punk* operated within a code to communicate the experiences of anarchy and dissolution to the audience. The band was able to convey to the audience the perception of, angst and disappointment felt not only within the music industry and music audience but also within youth culture as a whole. The intensity of the experience was such that it motivated a small minority, and enabled them to buck the trend, move away from a neutered musical framework and formulate a significant counter culture. Twenty-five years later *punk* is still heralded as groundbreaking and original. O' Hara identifies that the corporate fashion and music industries that were disgusted by the *punk* music revolution twenty five years ago now identify many of the original artists as "ground breakers" and that the conglomerates "are now signing new bands left

and right" to try to cream off the talent before the nu punk bubble bursts (O'Hara 1999:p28).

Roy Shuker in *Understanding Popular Music* states that:

The significance of subcultures for their participants is that they offer a solution, albeit at a magical level, to the structural dislocations through the establishment of achieved identity-the selection of certain elements of style outside of those associated with the ascribed identity offered by work, home or school' (Shuker 1994:238).

The development of *nu punk* created a dichotomy of interest as it was seen to embody commercial fashion and homogenous musical episodes, which is the obverse of original *punk* and what *punk* actually stood for.

It is apparent from this Chapter that the anarchistic tendencies associated with original *punk* rely on an anti establishment view reflected in the stance of the authorities when dealing with the phenomenon. However, *hardcore* has a closer affinity with the true aspects of anarchy, as such music and artists identify philosophical writings, lack of violence and a full understanding of the processes and framework of anarchy in relation to the *punk* cause. *Nu punk* includes many of the aspects associated with anarchy but owing to its focus on mass cultural icons and the development of commercialism is far removed from an understanding of anarchy as a process.

## 4.6 Perceptual Factors

### 4.6.1 Punk and the Music Industry

Although Chapter 2 details a general exploration of the music and media industries, to support the genre specific focus of this study a short exploration of *punk's* relationship to the music and media industries will be undertaken.

Jock Scott, a stand up poet, when asked what the legacy of *punk* was stated:

The legacy is the fuckin' music industry. There was a huge response from kids, who went out and formed bands - 15,000 of them - and made records: that's the legacy. It's all those records (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:379).

*Punk* had a big influence on the music industry, an influence that shaped the structure of and framework for contemporary popular music. Although *punk* was not "the next big thing", (Laing 1985) it undeniably enabled access to those who were not musically proficient. It afforded opportunities for artists and managers without substantial economic means to record and release product where this option had not been available previously. *Punk* created competition for the major labels by enabling the setting up of a wide range of new independent record companies in opposition to them, breaking the historical monopoly of the majors on the record industry. *Punk* was about fun and fun

came from the total "rejection of the *pop* industry" and the use of alternative means of production and dissemination (Cutler 1991:125). However, after the initial burst of alternative *punk* enthusiasm much of *punk* was absorbed into the mainstream very quickly. However, only a small number of artists had any sort of success: the majority were either one hit wonders or scraped a living from endless touring schedules and small releases to a loyal band of consumers.

The further development of new independent labels was afforded by those involved in the genre of *new wave*, created in the advent of *punk*. Hesmonadhalgh identifies this development as a network of production, distribution and management systems enabling musicians across the UK to create, develop and disseminate both product and services (Hesmonadhalgh 1997:2). The identification and development of this framework is one of the lasting legacies of *punk*. Such a strategy emanating from *punk* and developing in the post *punk* era was an attempt to democratise the music industry. Beadle identifies this era as a "small economic revolution" where a wide range of small independent companies emerged from the demise of *punk* and the birth of the *indie* scene (Beadle 1993:56). This *punk* legacy still survives today, and many of the larger independent label's vast economic resources originated from a few small and disparate artists within the *punk* era churning out one hundred copies of each single (Respondent 15).

Many protagonists in the industry uphold the perception that the media and the music industry exert control over the mass consumer (Respondent (12) and Respondent (14)). The media, which for so long had served the industry as a closed shop, which perpetuated more of the same artists and music, made a crucial miscalculation: it created a moral panic that totally backfired, pushing *punk* into the headlines and into the public eye. What those in the industry and the media failed to recognise was the massive effect that something as different as *punk* would have on the British consumer and especially youth. It did not matter if an artist only had 100 copies of its latest record pressed; it did not matter if the press scoffed at size and squalor of the *punk* venues, because any reference in the national media to artists or venues increased both the public awareness and interest in the *punk* phenomenon. Thus, those attending alternative concerts and buying alternative product increased, decreasing the market share of the majors. *Punk* had created a sea change. Adorno and Horkheimer in Addison had identified the concentration and centralisation of the production and distribution of culture by the political and economic intent of a small number of "large industries" (Addison 1997:199-202). However, the development of *punk* and the delivery of *new wave* de-centralised and devolved the power of production and consumption to a wider base shifting the balance of power within the industry.

A pivotal point in the democratisation of the music industry was the release of the Sex Pistols' album *Never Mind The Bollocks Here's The Sex Pistols*. The album generated a quarter of a million advanced sales, which caused a sensation in an industry dominated by "soft rock and ballad singers". The

album marked a change in the music industry and in consumer behaviour *per se* (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:279).

Unfortunately the release of *Never Mind The Bollocks Here's The Sex Pistols* was also the death knell for *punk* as an alternative genre. As is the case with many new and innovative elements, they are over very quickly. *Punk* was no exception. The initial wave was over in about two and a half years. As Steven Colgrave identifies, as new *punks* moved onto the 'scene' many of the original audience were moving away from it as it had moved from the underground into the mass cultural domain, defeating the object of its inception (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:291). Had *punk* really moved into the mass cultural domain or was it that many of the elements, which were ripe for exploitation, were utilised for their best effect? These were in fact not the trappings of *punk* but the commercial attributes of music and style far removed from attitude and philosophy. The implosion of the Sex Pistols and the dropping of many of the *punk* artists from major labels because of lack of sell through, completed the *punk* ideal as the majors had wasted their money trying to commercialise a music which had little commercial viability unless the artists were willing to sell out. The Clash, Blondie, The Tourists and XTC all had several chart hits but the major label economic forces modified their music for the *new wave* market.

As *punk* grew and the industry placed its ever-expanding volume of artists into marketable categories, the originators of *punk* either changed genre or developed their music underground. *Punk* became accepted and the trappings of music and style took on a mass cultural identity and appeal (The Mushroom Effect see 1.3.1.8). The record industry packaged *punk* in genres that would sell. They aggressively marketed the image rather than the ethos, and those *punks* who came after the first wave were more susceptible to the conglomerate's wishes. As Graffin states:

Because it is so easy for record companies to sell images of violence, sex and self importance, many bands have taken the bait and portrayed themselves as Punks, without realizing that they were actually perpetuating a stereotype of conformity that is wholly un-punk (Graffin 1998:7).

Graffin's view of the way that record companies act is relatively universal across the artists involved in *punk*. Interviews with Shelter, Panic, Stiff Little Fingers and 999, show support for this view of industry manipulation. It is a 'come and join us attitude' attracting people in droves to a new kind of music where the ideal and precept of *punk* are diluted by the very nature of the conglomerate structure and business function. Tony James, a *punk* musician with among others Generation X, stated:

I think punk changed the music industry, it really did. We thought that we could storm the barricades and change society. I don't think it changed society, but it certainly changed the idea that you could be in a group without having a manager, without having a record company to make it OK. You could do it yourself. Yes, of course everybody sold out. They became rich and bloated or drug addicts, just like all the old groups, but it set the scene for a greater revolution in rock 'n' roll which we're still feeling the reverberance of today (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:380).

Tony James makes two key points: the first identifies an attitude towards music where the artist has some control of or choice in their own destiny. Secondly, that once the industry has recognised an issue of tension it pursues the cause, creates a solution and manipulates the music for economic gain. The whole system within the industry revolves around the dynamic of power, and although this shifts from time to time advantaging the independent company, the major industry conglomerates are very much in the driving seat. They have the economic power to shift back the balance of power to their advantage. *Punk* and *new wave* is one example of a swing away from and back to the major companies. Another example is *dance* music, which existed outside the control of the mass music industry for a period. However, once the industry and the license operators had brought the music into the commercial fold, control was again established.

#### 4.6.2 Punk and the Media

In any analysis of generic tagging, an identification of who invents the tags is necessary. The inventors of a taxonomic system emerge from those who study the development of music, those who create the music, the protagonists within the industry itself, or the journalists who work close to the very heart of the music. In the case of *punk* music it is clear [see 3.2.1] that it was journalists who created the tags for the *punk* genre. David Toop suggests that if we:

Press the majority of musicians and you'll find that underneath whatever social bonhomie they maintain in the interview situation, they reckon the majority of critics are clods who don't listen, can't hear or wouldn't know how to describe what they heard even if their ear to brain function did operate properly. Critics are good for inventing various meanings for music, particularly meanings for people they've never met, or positioning music in imaginative (often imaginary) pecking orders. Whether any of that has significance in a musicians world is another matter...a musician of more than one talent will suffer an excess of stereotyping (Toop 1996:56).

Toop identifies a central theme of genre tension in his identification of the gap between the musician or producer of the music and those who write about it. It is impossible to attempt any meaningful interpretation of genre unless the artist has confidence in the journalist and the media in general. Thus, much that is written about *punk* and *nu punk* by the media is conjecture, hype and sensationalism.

Once classified, a genre becomes manageable. Before a genre has assumed a recognisable tag, the music press and the media in general process the available information inherent in the musical episode or artist awaiting classification. If the classification system fails to pick up a genre early in its development, as it did in the case of *punk*, the initial development takes place at street level in the community in which the music originated. The establishment of a tag is crucial to the media marketing machine, which cannot function efficiently without the classificatory mechanism and is unable to create the jargon and comment to reflect the genre and its attributes. Without the tag, such comments are meaningless. The media are integral participants in music

culture; they do not just act as viewers and those who represent the voice of the knowledgeable, but as a 'central voice' in the defining and communication of music. Mass media misunderstanding was a key element in the rise of *punk*. It was alternative and different. The media did not understand *punk* in its first incarnation and thus the genre was ripe for misrepresentation, sensationalism and moral panic. Therefore, in the initial development of *punk*, its polysemic nature was interpreted in a purely negative context, and few if any of its virtues were extolled (Lull 1995). Such a development highlights the duality of the media. The protection of the mass music industry by the media increased the negative portrayal of the genre. However, once *punk* artists were part of the mass music industry the media supported them as it enabled a higher sell through of media products and the perpetuation of their symbiotic relationship with the industry.

In September 1975 *punk* appeared visibly all over the music press. The term *punk* was one that was detested by those involved with the development of the music (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:111). However, the naming of the movement was the first step in being able to pigeonhole and thus market and sell the entity to the audience, which is the aim of both the industry and the media (Respondent 9), (Respondent 14).

Owing to the paucity of positive coverage for the genre during its early development, fanzines had been important to its dissemination to alternative culture. The development of the fanzine was a spontaneous and natural reaction to the lack of media outlets to promote the music. Those who could not play but who wanted to get involved could do so through the fanzines. Nigel Wingrove, the founder of *Stains* fanzine relates that *punk* had something about it that encouraged involvement. If you could play, nearly play or could sing you formed a band and if you could not you put together a fanzine. He could not sing so he founded *Stains* (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:153). Fanzines were the voice of the people on the street, the alternative to *Sounds*, *NME* and *Melody Maker* the three major music papers of the *punk* era. The fanzines were art as well as information, a movement akin to *Dada*. Fans could interface with current information in an easily assimilable form. It was the individual thought about *punk*, rather than the watered down version of *punk* news in the music press, which captivated the fans. The fanzine was an easily assimilable current message, Xeroxed, instantly created, cheap to produce and could be sold on the street, at gigs or in record shops (Polhemus 1995).

The development of an alternative press was completely in keeping with the *punk* ethos (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001). The misrepresentation and misinterpretation of *punk* by the media emerged early in its development and thus the 'real' *punk* message was diluted and often buried by the mass media delivery. Originally, there was a paucity of media to disseminate the genre, as SMS texting and the internet were not available to the consumer and producer at this time. Thus, there was no easy way to promote an underground genre.

As the scene developed, there was an increase in the number of music journalists visiting the gigs. Frank Kelly, a Sex Pistols aficionado, found that the

journalists were more interested in the 'cleaner' (less declaimed vocals and more appealing to mass culture) bands like the Jam rather than the 'real' (those artists eliciting alternative and non commercial elements) *punk* bands. The increase in journalists attending gigs was concomitant with a decrease in the alternative and unusual *punk* happenings and signalled an increase in the commercial nature of *punk*. Thus, the media marketed *punk* through artists that were not in the true sense of the word *punks*, but were latecomers to the genre and identified as *new wave*. Such a media strategy watered down the message and led to the implosion of *punk* as a force in the music industry (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:193). Chris Sullivan founder of the *Wag Club* supports the notion that such bandwaggoning was partly to blame for the demise of original *punk*, identifying the "youth and exuberance" of the artists coupled with the media manipulation of the genre as destroying *punk*. Bandwaggoning, haste and the push from the majors "ostracized the innovators" and the delivery of *punk*, and by asking for too much at such an early stage disenfranchised those who believed in the *punk* cause (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:215).

Conversely, if it had not been for the media, as Ted Polhemus author of *Street Style* states, "*Punk* would have only been 200 people" (Colgrave and Sullivan 2001:227). The four-letter barrage on the Bill Grundy show catapulted *punk* into the public eye. If the reaction of the media had not been as it was, *punk* would have sunk then without a trace (Polhemus in Colgrave and Sullivan 2001:227). Agreement with such an unsubstantiated comment must be tempered with the fact that the Sex Pistols already had a contract with EMI, which would have enabled *punk* to be assimilated into the mainstream without the Grundy experience. The dropping of the Sex Pistols by EMI after the Grundy show, and their subsequent contract with Virgin Records enabled them to capitalise on their earlier success. Polhemus underestimates the groundswell caused by *punk's* development. The Ted Grundy show may have both pushed *punk* into the public eye and foreshortened its career but this pivotal point in *punk* history created a dichotomy. From a purist angle the Bill Grundy experience and the development of *punk* culture through the media was the antithesis of all that *punk* stood for. However, without a handle for the media *punk* would not have had the same impact. The headlines in the major papers on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1976, the day after the Grundy show, exacerbated the moral panic associated with *punk*. The *Evening Standard* stated "Foul Mouthed Yobs", *The Daily Mirror* "The Filth and the Fury!" placing the Sex Pistols squarely in the public consciousness. These examples of negative media exposure show how the obverse of what is expected to result from such bad press often occurs. Although the seeds of a 'moral panic' were sown early on in its development by the tabloids, the Grundy show was *punk's* first real exposure to a mass cultural audience. The Sex Pistols fed the media with a great deal of material which was used to question the morals of the *punk* movement, thus instituting bans and further fuelling the 'moral panic' already gripping the country. Thornton states: "'moral panic' has become a routine way of marketing popular music to youth" (Thornton 1995:120). She further notes that the BBC



employ bans but the tabloids are responsible for the moral panics (McRobbie 1995). The media employ tactics to develop market share. Few positive stories create an upsurge in media sell through and viewing. However, those with negative connotations more often than not increase the numbers of people consuming associated products and services. *Punk* embodied all the key negative aspects that enabled bans and moral panic to ensue. The media needed to control *punk* and if getting it banned or turning the mass cultural audience against it was what it took, then the media would participate. As stated earlier the banning of an artist or song can create the opposite effect envisaged by those that ban it. For example, the single *God save the Queen* was released to coincide with the Queens Silver Jubilee celebrations: banning the record afforded it more recognition and sell through. A Capital Radio announcement in June 1977 stated:

The Sex Pistols' current record, 'God Save the Queen', is at number one in the capital Hit Line. But the IBA [Independent Broadcasting Authority], which administers the Broadcasting Act, has advised us that, particularly at this time, this record is likely to cause offence to a number of our listeners and have asked us not to play it in our normal programming (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:255).

Consumers purchased the record in droves, catapulting it to number two the week before Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee celebrations. The absence of a chart in the week of the Silver Jubilee celebrations created a peak for the single at number two. McRobbie (1995) is quick to point out that both the TV and the newspapers have a gatekeeping role to play in the exposure of the audience to the genre and subculture. However, in the case of *God Save the Queen* banning the record only compounded its success, as by alternative standards the ban imposed was justification enough for further development of *punk rock*.

The media perpetrated a number of misconceptions: one of these, related to the violence between the *punks* and the *Teddy Boys (Teds)* on the Kings Road, which further fuelled such general misunderstandings. The *punk/Ted* conflict developed in the usual sub-cultural way, where for every 'scene' there is an alternative where those involved wage war. In the case of the *punk/Ted* conflict, this tension was created and advanced by the media. It was to do with style not music, what they wore and nothing else. The tabloids fuelled a hatred for *punk* focusing heavily on the battles.

The media industry had to embrace change; it had become stagnant and afraid of change. The development of a counter culture with a new means of production forced the media through a series of changes, modifying the media's orientation to enable it to be receptive to new and exciting movements in the music environment. Competition from new and evolving independent labels provided the catalyst for this. As the media created strategies to deal with *punk*, those that were the main protagonists of the original scene moved on early in its evolution, and were then integral in the development of new and alternative music that proliferated over the next two decades (see The Mushroom Effect 1.3.1.8).

The development and resurgence of *nu punk* had a similar but much more muted effect on the media. Both the industry and the media identified that the mass consumption possibilities afforded by *nu punk* were far more marketable than original *punk* was and therefore fostered its development, carefully nurturing the music until it became ripe for exploitation (Respondent 13). However, as usual the tabloid zealots treated the *nu punk* character and philosophy with a disdain that caused some temporary trend bucking. O'Hara identifies that *nu punk* did not attract an audience, which had "violent tendencies". However, nor did they have "*punk* tendencies", which differed from the perceived violent and negative characterisation of *punk* in the 70s (O'Hara 1999:46). Youth was adopting the music and the style without understanding the message. Unfortunately, the media have misrepresented *punks* by creating an ignorance of their philosophy and thus a lack of understanding of the core values by those who join spurred on by the mass media. As O'Hara states, *punk* offers the audience: "a place to create their own culture and concentrate on what they feel is important" (O'Hara 1999:46).

Those in the industry and the media responsible for the genesis and development of *nu punk* tried to enable those on the periphery to find the music more open and amenable to their needs. The fracturing of *nu punk* into sub genres follows the *punk* philosophy of developing new and interesting ideas and not stagnating. This was facilitated by journalists eager to be able to identify each fragmented area of the music and thus to milk its marketability. The development of *strait edge* (those clean living *punks* choosing to live alcohol, drugs and sex free) and *emo* (typified by changes in tempo and showing musical complexity) for example, enabled *punks* with various outlooks to be accommodated by a sub genre which still contained some of the aspects of the philosophy of the parent genre. An example of a *strait edge* act is Shelter. Shelter class themselves as alternative *punk* (Respondent 16) but they feel that their audience and the press class them as either *hardcore* or *new pop punk*. Their message differs from the normal *punk* and *hardcore* messages. It embodies spirituality, animal rights, anti-drugs and clean living. However, the dichotomy between the functional nature of the music and the postmodern aspect of style can be observed. The band is *skate wear* influenced, and the music is high energy with a key message in the lyrics. Thus, the philosophy, the message, the music and the dress style are a cross between the commercial and the alternative.

The focus of the major industry on the identification of commercial viability is so much more acute today that it was in 1975. Whilst in 1975 the media struggled to find a niche for the artists, today the aim of their strategy is to increase the marketability of the artist not only through the music but also through the development of image, style and as many attributes as possible to accommodate the widening focus of commercial development. Such strategies focus more on the visual image and often the sound is secondary. To mass media, the style and attitude are as important as the music as these elements are also part of 21<sup>st</sup> century marketing strategies.

### 4.6.3 The Punk Consumer

*Punk* changed the face of popular music. Its aggressive toughness rebelled against the love and peace of the 1960s. *Punk* provided a rough and ready alternative to the slick music of the early 1970s. The *punks* were not all working class slum dwellers as often cited by their detractors. Many were middle class, moneyed individuals who were bored with the way that mass culture was consumed by the masses through the mass media. It was time for a change. Beadle stated that *punk* was overtly nihilistic and the opposite of disco style where the “elegant footwork” of the dance floor was replaced by the pogo (Beadle 1993:56). However, Beadle misses a crucial point here. *Punk*, because of its reliance on a primary off beat rhythm was not conducive to dancing. However, jumping on the off beat encouraged early on by a small group of *punks*, purportedly started by Sid Vicious before he joined the Sex Pistols (Laing 1985), was created and became known as the pogo. The pogo was not concerned with a lack of “elegant footwork”, nor was it created in opposition to disco; it was through the necessity of the offbeat and a jumping prank started by this small group of individuals.

*Punk* had its own set of delusions about ‘you are what you wear’ leading to the spectacle of middle-class children dressing up in an aggressive fantasy world where being working class was perceived as ‘cool’ and thus lying about their ages, backgrounds and affluence was part of the charade. Hebdige identifies the *punk* icons with “material poverty” which was either experienced or appropriated and stood for the “spiritual paucity of everyday life” (Hebdige 1991:115). However, as related earlier Hebdige focuses on the working class and the seriousness of *punk* and leaves out the middle class *punks* and those who were just having a bit of fun. Perhaps too much is being read into the symbolism of the *punk* generation. For many, *punk* was fun, for others it was a way of escaping from the taunts of school bullies and from the pressure of achieving the aims of their parents. Should we be taking all of this meaningful exploration of the underside of *punk* culture as the only truth, when a great deal of the *punk* generation was just having a bloody good time?

From this Chapter it is apparent that there are a wide range of genre signifiers within *punk* and *nu punk* music, which must all be considered in any holistic taxonomy of the genre. The identification of historical, cultural, musical, sartorial and para-musical elements cover many of the factors to be considered within a total definition of the *punk* genre. Chapter 5 investigates the description of the experimental setting, setting the scene for the exploration of *punk* and *nu punk* musical episodes. The description of the qualitative research procedure pertaining to this chapter, which includes sampling strategy and the rationales utilised in the identification of the test pieces can be found in Appendix 5.

## **5 QUALITATIVE RESULTS, IDENTIFICATION AND DISCUSSION**

### **5.0 Introduction**

In this Chapter the results of the qualitative analysis are presented and discussed. To facilitate a clearer focus within the Chapter, once the data has been presented and discussed each salient point is supported where appropriate by secondary research creating triangulation and thus clarifying the validity of the findings.

From the foregoing secondary research it is clear that the development of robust structures in the qualitative approaches underpins the triangulation process. The integration of the questionnaires distributed to music protagonists and consumer focus groups reflect elements of the variables identified for quantitative analysis Thus the triangulation of the data is carefully monitored through the methodology process.

### **5.1 Results, Discussion Articulation and Triangulation from the Qualitative Data**

The results in this Chapter are divided into a number of sections focussing on the most relevant elements within the thesis. The sections comprise:

- **The origin and identification of music genre nomenclature**  
This section explores the origins and identification of music genre and determines where the responsibility for the identification of genre lies. This section also identifies the role that the media, the industry, the artist and the consumer play in the identification process

- **Belonging, protocols, tools and frameworks**  
This section examines the processes involved in belonging to a genre group, the tools and protocols utilised and observed in the identification and development of genre. Frameworks associated with genre are also explored
- **Genre movement**  
In this section the ability of artists to move from genre to genre is explored
- **The evolution of genre**  
In this section the process through which genre evolves is identified
- **The benefits and disadvantages of genre nomenclature**  
This section identifies the benefits and disadvantages of genre identification
- **The development of new artists and longevity strategies**  
This section explores the dichotomy between the creation of new genre and sub genre and the proliferation of artists in the same genre groupings
- **Genre placement strategies**  
This section explores the way in which the industry, the media, the artist and the audience perceive strategies for placing artists in categories

### 5.1.1 The Influence of the Protagonists in the Origin and Identification of Musical Genre

In this section the origin and identification of musical genre is explored from the perspective of the industry, the media and the artist. From the examples identified within the text it is clear that the study is focused on two contrasting areas. The first is generic pertaining to the wider issues of universal genre identification. and the second is specific, focussing on the genres of *punk* and *nu punk* which are the two genres explored in detail within this thesis.

#### 5.1.1.1 The Media and its Pivotal role in the Origin of Musical Genre

From interviews with representatives of the industry a consensus regarding the ultimate responsibility for the creation or origination of genre identities was reached. This consensus elicits a positive response on the media's role in the creation of such genre tags. Respondents (A, B, C, F, G, H, I, K, L, P and Q) all perceived that the media plays a pivotal role in the origin and creation of genre and its development. Audience focus groups support this notion, arguing that the consumer was made aware of new genre identities (including sub and sub-sub genre) through "media articles, fanzines and websites". Ted Polhemus concurs with the pivotal role that the media plays in both the initiation and development of specific genre, identifying that without the media, *punk* would not have had the effect that it did (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:227).

To support this central media role, respondent (A) reported that, "it is generally the press that put a label to a new style of music". Similarly respondent (G), a journalist stated that "all bands hate being pigeonholed, but that is our job. We put them into pigeonholes: we squeeze them in". Respondent (P), a record company manager agrees with this stating:

It is purely an arbitrary judgement on our part; we've probably been watching the underground press... The media tend to name and pigeonhole bands, which is the obverse of the bands wishes.

Respondent (Q) has a more cynical view of this media intervention. He states "I think journalists make it up". Here the respondent opines that it is an arbitrary judgement by the media rather than one that is informed by the merits of the genre itself. Laing identifies the fluctuating role of the media between informed identification and arbitrary judgement by stating that:

The first published review of the Sex Pistols (New Musical Express, February 21 1976) managed both to include them in, and exclude them from, rock music. The band were described as playing '60s styled white punk rock', and thus defined as part of a genealogy of musical genres; then came the comment, 'That's how it is with The Pistols - a musical experience with the accent on Experience (Laing 1985:100).

From this statement it can be ascertained that the media is not only a vehicle through which a genre is named but it is also a vehicle through which the industry sells their products and services. Thus, the central role of media has a dual purpose. It is a leader of musical identification and a provider of a window to music markets through which to sell genre.

The importance of the media cannot be underestimated. It has the power to create and destroy musical genre by the way it portrays, visualises and writes about artists. There are several studies that show that the media is often the gatekeeper of what is seen and heard in music, Hirsch (1970) and Morley (1995), and can prevent or enable audience exposure, overexposure or underexposure to music genres, thus filtering, constricting or exaggerating aspects of the genre to the audience through the interface of media tools (see 3.1.3.3 p59).

Respondent (P) reiterates the way in which the growth and development of media has influenced genre-placing strategy.

Labelling happens much more now and I think it is because there are so many types of media around. Media has become much more niche driven, which is an inevitable thing. I think the media opportunities are dictated so that managers will be quick not to invent genre but rather to attach their act to a genre quite quickly. With some bands, opportunities are really limited, so people are saying do you think we ought to represent the band as punky rather than metal or thrash because it is limiting our opportunities. It is as cynical as that sometimes. You have to look at the marketing opportunities rather than just to classify the band.

The cynical and limiting genre opportunities are shown through this and other responses (Respondents Q, P, K, I, G, H, F, B). This finding lends support to Sorlin who relates a Marxist interpretation:

For many people the mass media fulfil a precise function: they are designed to convince those who use them (to believe, to buy, to conform, etc) and, in this respect, they are ideological tools paid and manipulated by the ruling class in order to reproduce and perpetuate the system which produced them (Sorlin 1994:90).

This response reinforces the notion that the mass media has a great deal of power in the decision-making process related to genre nomenclature. However, what is left unsaid is as important as the quote, and pinpoints some of the differences in the structure, framework and attitudes apparent between the macro media and micro media outlets. Such differences include ethos and philosophy. The macro or mass media create, recreate and use genre to increase their market share, thus increasing the market value of the artist. The independent music media tend to utilise micro media to expose the value of the music to the customer, which in turn forms a loyalty with the product. Cynically, although the two are very different and one is a means to an end whilst the other is an end to a means, the outcome has the same effect: increased profitability and longevity, not for the artist but for the medium.

The development of niche-driven media has changed the face of the music industry and has enabled a wide range of genre to gain coverage from a wide range of genre specific magazines. The development of 'comics' such as *NME* and *Kerrang* into hybrid musical informers across a broad range of music has opened the mass media to crossover strategies (Respondent G). Respondent (G) further states that "the media hampers the development of longevity in artists as music magazines have opted to reduce features and increase gig guides and news items, as these seem to be the reasons why audiences buy these magazines". By reducing features and increasing sound bite media, the magazines hold or increase their market share. Respondent (1) states that this is a short-sighted approach by the media and questions whether the press will be able to move quickly enough to satisfy this need when the market becomes saturated and the audience look for more stability and information. With every 'new' genre, modified genre or emergence of a sub-genre, new publications appear. As respondent (1) states, these publications are often transient and set up to take advantage of the huge injection of spending on the formed or created genre. Respondent (E) underlines the positive combinational aspect of magazine culture, stating that "different publications cover certain areas, some cross over into more than one category". Such publications can increase the longevity of an act through exposure to more than one genre grouping.

Respondent (G) stresses that the product is placed by retailers into pre-ordained categories and it is the media that informs the consumer of the meaning of the categories. Owing to the way that the media create categorisations, once artists create music and are labelled it is difficult for them to re categorise themselves unless the media is behind them. The media is powerful, and once they have decreed that an artist fits a certain genre it is usually difficult to alter the perception of the consumers who pay detailed attention to information disseminated by the media. The media is the consumers' main source of information and without the media consumers find

it difficult to identify music as it is perceived that the media are the mouthpiece for the industry. The mass media spends an inordinate amount of time working on videos, radio interviews and magazine articles exploring the intricacies of individual marketing initiatives. These might take the form of fashion tips, eating habits or musical preferences which they hope will lead to a further shift in anticipated product. Respondent (G) states that the underground press and labels offer practical solutions to youth at street level, advocating belonging to genre groups, which shun mass media's attempts to try to buy their allegiance. They carefully make themselves available to those who wish for an alternative to the mass media ethos and who want some kind of alternative musical or paramusical experience.

The development of nomenclature for music creates strategic spaces and develops an 'aestheticisation' of economic globalisation by creating a global discourse. This global discourse also has emerging global consequences. The independent labels have in the past, citing the example of *punk*, caused a destabilisation in the hierarchies of power. When new actors enter the domains at an informal level the power base can shift if the knowledge provided is not immediately recognised and formalised by the major conglomerates. As informal identities emerge they are formalised and new levels of sophistication are created to enable the marketability of product in an industry in flux.

Respondent (B) cites a dual system where it is perceived that it is the journalists who come up with the labels, but it is the artists who are playing the type of music anyway and therefore, in most cases, fit reasonably well into the categories created by the journalists.

It is clear from the results that respondents perceive that even before music is categorised and in the shops, the media build genres and try to push them heavily in the public domain. Respondent (H) states:

Tell people what you think they are listening to and some of them will believe that's what they're listening to.

Respondent (C) identifies that by promoting certain artists the media pushes pre-ordained genres into pre-identified markets. *Nu metal* and *nu punk* are carefully placed in the market to increase the opportunity for the buying of back catalogue. Just as older aficionados of a genre are exposed to new artists in a genre that mirrors many of their original signifiers, so too are new audiences exposed to the original genre through re-releases and compilations (Respondent 1).

Respondent (Q) notes the fickleness of genre determination by stating that as quickly as the media builds a genre up it can knock it down. If an artist is in such a genre it may mean the end of a promising career if there is no opportunity to take stock and re-market to a different audience with an adapted genre label. Often artists cross individual boundaries into two or more genres to promote their saleability thus ensuring that if one genre fails to ignite their career they can be counted or classed in others. Artists such as Nirvana,



Soundgarden, Paw and Limp Bizkit for example can be classed as *grunge*, *nu metal*, *rock*, *indie* or even a hybrid of these names to ensure longevity.

### 5.1.1.2 Micro Media and its Applications

In the mid 1970s when there were fewer genres of music and departures from the musical norm were rare, the way in which the media integrated the main elements of the genre into one image had both a positive and negative effect for those attaching themselves to the genre. The word *punk*, for example, was first utilised to represent a musical form through the title of a magazine. *Punk* magazine housed disparate artists looking for a collective identity in the New York area. The magazine was fashioned by Legs McNeil. "McNeil was calling himself a *punk* before anyone else in the UK was" (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:82). However, the naming of the genre by someone that founded and edited a fanzine was an important and positive element of *punk's* formation. As the term emanated from an underground media source, the initial naming was true to *punk's* underground roots. In the UK a similar pattern emerged with *Sniffin Glue* which:

Announced itself to be 'FOR PUNKS'. It was the first time the audience rather than the music had been defined in that way. The definition offered to punk and punks by the fanzine's editor, Mark Perry, went beyond the usual parameters of fandom. As well as expounding the variety and solidarity of attitudes and music within punk rock, he constantly returned to the issue of drawing punk's boundaries with the world outside, and in particular exhorting punk to retain its independence from the music industry (Laing 1985:15).

The development of fanzines by punk consumers was a significant development in the rise of micro media, subverting the attempts of both mass media and major record companies to control this emerging genre. As Laing states:

Punk rock was the first musical genre to spawn fanzines in any significant numbers. The occasional surveys in the music press suggested that during 1977-8 there may have been over 50 appearing in all parts of Britain. As well as imitating the trend, *Sniffin' Glue* played a pivotal role in establishing punk's self image. If any communication implies a definition of the receiver of the message (in terms of the attitudes or codes of understanding needed to make the communication work), that implied by the fanzine is very specific (Laing 1985).

The development of such fanzines is still important in today's 'immediate' society. Word of mouth, e-mails, websites SMS texts and fanzines seem to be the major tools for the passage of created genre from the media. In today's "information society", (Webster 1997) e-mouth (e-mailing thoughts) and web site development all seem to impact on the immediacy of genre division and definition. Respondent (H) states that "I find out about new musical directions either by word of mouth, sometimes word of e-mouth or through magazines such as Q and Mojo". Respondent (K) states "I am also an avid fanzine reader so I hear about newer bands that way as well". This type of response

determines that this type of information especially in the independent market, makes industry (and sometimes the artist) second-hand recipients of genre nomenclature. The web is mentioned in a number of interviews in conjunction with the way the younger audience find out about music. Respondent (Q) states that:

They [Kids] go and buy a Sum 41 record and three days later the record company send you an e-mail saying you like Sum 41 you might like Blink 182 or Bowling for Soup.

The immediacy of the web and e-mail enable consumers to access instantaneous written and pictorial information, thus giving access to musical and paramusical elements. Such information facilitates the formation of an overview of a genre. The fanzine and the web form an underground equivalent of the mass music press, which enables those artists and labels often unable to target the mass market to reach a smaller fan base. This is realised through the delivery of fanzines at live performances and the display of web site addresses on merchandising and newsletters.

The growth and development of micro media is extremely important; Respondent (P) believes that: "genre is something that can originate from an individual action such as an article written in a fanzine or specialist music publication". The major labels and promotion companies could not exist without micro media, as it is this type of media which initially identifies new and raw talent which could become the next major company acquisition. The development of manufactured pop has tried to short-circuit this micro system by omitting the intermediary between the street and the major label. However, this promotes short termism rather than longevity and does not involve a wide spectrum of musical preferences.

### **5.1.1.3 The Role of the Retailers in the Identification of Music Genre**

If the media are the definers and major creators of generic nomenclature then the retailers also play an important part in the dissemination of these definitions through the distribution of the product to the consumer. It must be stressed here, and will be reiterated later, that the leap of thought from the media to the retailer does not exclude the role of other industry departments in this process.

By reading the music press, watching videos, listening to the radio and attending concerts, the consumer is forming opinions of music and thus forming buying choices. Therefore, the media and the industry are inextricably linked in the identification and distribution of genre to the consumer. The interface of the consumer and the product is at street level through the retailer. Respondent (H) perceives that the biggest definers of genre in terms of record sales have to be the retail outlets themselves. As already stated, it is through the retailers that the consumers interface with the product. Genre and musical signifiers, marketing categories and umbrella labels are all housed in the retail

system that sells the product to individuals through the formation of primary, secondary and tertiary communication channels (Kotler & Armstrong 1994). Respondent (E) states that “most peoples’ experience of musical genre, I expect comes down to where the record is actually filed in the record shop, where it is racked”. The retailer decides through their product placing strategies how a record will sell. Musical genre and categorisation are pre-ordained in record stores and catalogues (for mail order) by the way in which the name of the artist is filed. Such filing systems are created specifically by the retailers to maximise sell through by exposing consumers not only to the artist of their choice but also to other artists within that genre and similar associated genres. The consumer is buying a particular brand through the title of the artist. The way in which the retail strategies are enforced enables the consumer to access the product immediately rather than change or modify their choice because the purchasing strategy is stronger than the retail strategy. (Respondent E). In such a case the genre is secondary. However, Spellman argues that:

When a popular artist's contract is up they can switch record companies and fans will follow immediately, without a single thought of the former company. This is because the fans' loyalty is to the artists not the company. But we are looking at this from the corporate level. If we move to the 'indie' level companies often play a larger role in consumer choice. Indies become more closely identified with their artists because they usually specialise in a particular music genre that has a large following behind it. The indie label itself becomes a 'brand' and consumers feel confident that whatever the label puts out will share a certain quality which that label has grown to represent....Very often, in these cases, it is the label's brand that supersedes the artist's as the primary stimulator of a musical purchase (Spellman 2002).

Therefore, it could be supposed that those artists loosely categorised as popular i.e. those at the more popular end of the pop umbrella category, can command artist loyalty from their audience as the product transcends the record company influence on the consumer. However, a niche artist on a well-developed indie label may not command the loyalty of the fans in comparison with the influence that the label has. Therefore, to the major label, the individual name of the artist is much more important than a genre placing. Conversely, to the minor or independent label the identification of the consumer with the genre/label is as important as the consumer's identification with the artist. Thus, it can be deduced that the deconstruction of the genre category into individual artists is the key attraction to the popular umbrella label consumer rather than the genre tag, which in many cases is superfluous to the knowledge of purchase. In the case of the independent music consumer, the identification of the genre is as important if not more than the identification of the artist’s name.

From the focus groups, it was identified that artists housed in the three categories (genre, marketing and umbrella) often chose certain types of names, which in many cases define their genre allegiance. A number of chart *pop* artists choose or had chosen for them by astute label managers, quick, short and easy names for their fans to identify with. These names are often part of en vogue culture at the time especially in the present changing, immediate and throw away society, where a name (although an identifier) is often transient and lasts

for a very short period of time. Ease of access is a key factor and thus short defining names are important. The use of names such as A1, Ezy, Blue and Boyz incorporate text language and alternative spelling which are all part and parcel of pre-adolescent culture. This tactic, firmly rooted in manufactured pop music, has also been used from time to time in other musics. Artists such as XTC and U2 have had success using similar inspirational titles.

Respondent (B) identifies that those in marketing categories tend to use a more packaged identity where the name is part of the overall persona and the total image is as important as the name. In the case of an identified genre, *punk* artists often chose deviant names to differentiate themselves from other artists in the music industry. Names such as the Sex Pistols, The Nips, The Members and The Stinky Toys epitomised the anarchic tendencies of early *punk* artists (Laing 1995). *Nu punk* and hardcore artists also appropriate similar names including the Gas Huffers, Rancid and Deviates, again drawing attention to hardcore or underground pastimes (Gas Huffers are those who sniff lighter fuel). Rather than ease of access underpinning the choice of name, difference enables *punk* artists to be found within record shops. However, the development of hardcore and *nu punk* artists does not have the same focus on the deviancy of the name but has a wider spread of name indicator. As respondent (G) states, "during the rise of the first wave of *punk* between 1976 and 1980, artists were listed A-Z in record shops which assisted *punk* consumers in finding their purchases". In advanced societies retailers split identification elements into large umbrella categories such as *rock* and *pop*, *soul* and *dance*, *rock* and *metal*, so that consumers can at least identify the general area of interest and then find the name of what they are hoping to purchase alphabetically. The media often mirrors the selection of the retailers or even creates the specialist publications to support the categorisation of the retailers. Respondent (E) indicates that most music publications are specialist publications, and that their editors are very discerning. They decide whether their media is suitable for the type of band on offer and whether the type of music fits into pre-ordained categories. In many cases (*heavy metal* in particular), magazine editors have broadened the magazines appeal by including artists and genres on the periphery of *rock* and *metal*. This includes genres as disparate as *gothic*, *punk* and *indie*, which increases readership by association and often the credibility of both the magazine and the artists across a wide range of genres. It must be indicated here that the large chains usually practice the umbrella category technique. Many of the independent record retailers house product alphabetically using tighter genre categories to identify the product. These placement strategies mirror those of the major/independent labels portraying a division between major and independent on more than one level.

Clearly once an artist is placed in a genre category it is difficult for them to move to another. Respondent (E) states that in the case of Faithless, "the media has been a drawback to success". In this case the band decided to encourage the media to place them in a certain genre at a certain time so that they could create quick, easily-available music very cheaply. However, they found the genre

placement suffocating. When Faithless tried to reposition themselves they found that the genre preconceptions of the media and the audience were so strong that it was impossible to achieve such a change easily. Once an artist has been identified through a series of signifiers, and then placed in a pigeonhole, it is very difficult to modify or change the perception of the media and the audience in the music environment.

Respondent (X) explains that “genre is subjective. The media imposed nomenclature, signifies different things or nothing to the individual,” depending on the genre that the individual has been exposed to and the extent of their interest in the genre. Genre identification and knowledge is important for consumers so that they can converse with other consumers who share an interest in one or more particular genres. As Hodge & Kress state “Genres only exist in so far as a social group declares and enforces the rules that constitute them” (Hodge & Kress 1995:7). Hence, when a genre subdivides, those sub genres have slightly modified rules that are enforced which make the sub genre different from the main genre from which it has been formed. Thus, dialogue associated with the new genre will differ slightly from that associated with the original genre.

The enforcing social group has to contend with the forces exerted on them by the media. Respondent (K) identifies that such mass media forces dictate popular taste. He states that:

In the mainstream of music the media controls what is the popular genre and who fits it and gets the exposure. This has become more evident recently as media conglomerates have begun to control record labels, TV stations, radio and distribution. It is very easy for them to dictate who gets on the radio and who gets their video played.

It is perceived that mainstream media controls mainstream music, as the media conglomerates are the gatekeepers controlling the interface of the industry with the audience. Thus the choice of the consumer is often manipulated. This manipulation isolates the independent music industry from mass culture, making it harder for the audience to access much of independent music. This is not by the design of the independents but the ignorance of their existence by the consumer who is fed a constricted diet of music by the mass market through the media and the retailer.

#### **5.1.1.4 Retail Strategy**

One benefit of genre identification is the facilitation of effective and efficient retail strategy creating ease of access to the product. Respondent (E) who relates, “If you like dance music you don’t have to wade through a load of rock”, cites this ease of access afforded by contemporary retail strategies. Respondent (K) identifies the many benefits to the consumer of retail strategies and states that “The record stores can set up their goods in cluster formats”. This enables easier access by consumers to the product. Such immediacy also has its drawbacks, including information overkill, which may distract from its

initial message. However, it is clear that for retailers the benefits of genre are in the development of easily accessible labels that enable the interface of the consumer with the product. For respondent (G), “genre is useful to give you a quick fix on things, we need them so that we can judge a book by its cover.” By “judging a book by its cover” we can inadvertently stereotype not only music but the market as well. However, this is incredibly important in the *indie* market, identified by respondent (J) who states “If you say crust punk then you immediately know whether you will like it or not. If it sounds like New York City hardcore punk like 'Sick Of It All'. Cool, I will check it out. I love 'Sick Of It All”.

The identification of the scene is paramount to many consumers. In focus group two, one respondent states that:

Groups change genres to sub genre so that people like us can identify with them. Members of the original scene will also be able to identify with the new sub genre if they want to. Sometimes an icon like a skateboard enables kids to get into the band, something as tenuous as a board with four wheels on can entice a kid to like a sub genre.

Where sub-genres are present, identification of those sub-genres is important. Often sub genres are so fragmented and sub-divided that the only way to define the sub genre is by identifying it with one of the other small number of artists within it. Respondent (K) reiterates this by stating “People unfamiliar with a newer band can see what they are classified as and get an idea if they would like the band”.

This is further supported by respondent (L), an artist who states that genre “identifies an already existing following. We took the Pogues style of music to the next generation and thus made it easier for the next generation of bands to integrate. It opens up the field to other artists”.

Such identification shows that old markets can be resurrected through new genre placement. Also identification by association is vitally important for new artists. As respondent (Q) states “For me to have my new bands associated with artists like Sum 41 and Blink 182 means that kids will check us out”. In addition, genre enables “an artist or fan to say that they belong, when members are few it's a movement, when big a revolutionary party and when huge mainstream pop, death and mediocrity” (Respondent A).

#### **5.1.1.5 The Role of the Record Company in Genre Identification**

The major record company executives are too far removed from the customer interface to create genre, but pick up on ‘scenes’, as they mutate from *indie* and underground entities into potential mass cultural innovations. Respondent (L) relates how the minor independent labels act in a very different way.

At an underground level it is not the media who control the genre-it is the fans. On the major labels it is the media and the managers that control genre.

This again underlines Spellman's (2002) earlier comments pertaining to the differences in the development of major and independent labels and artists.

It is difficult to separate the media from the music industry and indeed the music industry from the entertainment industry as each is subsumed by the greater economic mass. Music is created, named and then marketed, and it is this process that the media control through the way in which it exhibits a positive or negative exposition of the genre to the public.

Respondent (X) states that it is record labels that coin genre. For example the label managers at Sub-Pop did not start calling their artists *grunge*. It was not until the artists hit the mainstream that the term was coined. However, there is some kind of evolution process. Respondent (C) a record company executive states:

There has always been a clutch of bands that have appeared which people have latched onto and decided don't really fit in with what's happening at the moment. Then they come up with these tags.....In fact I don't know who comes up with these tags, whether it's the fans, the media, whatever, but somehow these tags appear.... Its just that somewhere further down the line you find yourself talking about a genre of music without actually knowing where the name particularly came from, yet you know exactly what the music is supposed to represent.

Although music may already be informally identified at an early stage through concerts, fanzines and websites, A&R people in major labels often have a hand in the early stages of formal nomenclature, although it is by no means certain that these labels stick (Respondents G and H). Other respondents refute the fact that record companies have any say in genre nomenclature. Respondent (A) states that:

The industry play a part but ultimately the press have the bigger hand in genre definition; labels rarely if at all collude to create a genre.

It is apparent from these responses that it is perceived that the record company has little or no control over the way in which genres evolve or are named. It is also important to note the lack of power that the media wields in general music industry decision making compared with the wide-ranging powers that the media have in the definition and development of genre (Morley 1995). Record companies follow categories already pre-ordained by the media, and then add or readjust their portfolio of artists to the categories once they have been created. Respondent (A) works for a major label and it is clear from his interview that the company's genre decisions are media led. He states "I come up with my own description until I am told what it is by the mass media, as these are the labels that generally stick".

Both primary and secondary research in this thesis indicates that the major record company exploits the profitability of the artist and imposes its will to try to manipulate the product for maximum marketability. An example of this is cited by respondent (D), who states, "we ended up with this twenty seven minute piece and the record company asked if we would just take the kind of better bits out from it and I said absolutely not". The remit of the record

company here was not to enable a free flowing, creative, interesting and innovative record but to create a product that could be compartmentalised, honed and homogenised, to target as wide a market as possible. A conflict of interest between the marketing of the product and the product's creative process appears to exist. Respondent (N<sup>9</sup>) reinforces this stating that, "I don't pretend to be an expert on marketing. I have evolved through my craft as a songwriter, but others have labelled it and marketed it and made it neat for consumption". It is almost as if this respondent has realised the futile effort of going against the marketing grain, and has accepted the homogenisation of the record company process. Such processes lead to the homogenisation, standardisation and ultimately the sanitisation of music, as the initial creative influence and input becomes secondary. The media and record company managers have replaced parts of the initial creative process with their own influence through which a marketable product is produced so that maximum sell through can be achieved.

In the past, genres of popular music such as *rock* and *rock and roll* have contained large numbers of artists. These catchall genres were initially created to enable artists to have some form of general categorisation before marketing became an essential part of the genre process. However, individuals within the media today can see that new music does not readily appear to order, and thus sub-genre fracturing takes place across the spectrum. It is difficult to establish whether the categories that artists are assigned to enable identification or whether they are clever marketing categories used to sell a type or style of music or para-music.

#### 5.1.1.6 The Artist Influence in Genre Categorisation

Artists, by the very nature of their existence in the 'musical world', must exert some influence over their genre placement. Such a statement is derived from the assumption that an artist wishes to be identified with or placed in a specific genre group. The duality of this is clear when respondent (B) relates:

I think that most artists think they know what they want to do and I think that they also believe that they do what they want to do. The artist will be influenced and to some extent put under pressure by artistic intentions because some people will stick to what they want to do even if they think it is not going to sell. Some bands will bend, break or change their colours and change their spots if you like because that's all they are interested in. I think it has a lot to do with how much power the artist can wield as well. The artist establishes him or herself and is seen as a successful group or artist in terms of record sales. That in itself gives them the power to say OK we want to do what we want to do regardless of whether it sells or not. The more success you have I think the more power you have to do what you want rather than be told what to do. The other aspect of this is it may also have a lot to do with the contract they have signed.

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<sup>9</sup> Respondent (N) differs from all of the other respondents as each response is taken from an article sent by Greg Graffin in response to a request for an interview. A full presentation of the text can be found on <http://www.badreligion.com/history/PunkManifesto.html> e-mail accessed 28/03/02.



From the foregoing response it is clear that three major points for discussion pertinent to genre choice by artists are emerging. Firstly, there are artists that are concerned with the category in which they are placed and there are artists that are not. From the interview process, it is clear that the genre choice of an artist is usually in tandem with their placement by the industry and media, although there are exceptions. Secondly, the success of an artist determines the amount of influence that they can exert on a change of genre. Thirdly, the management contract extended to an artist may exclude them from genre placement choice.

There are pressures external to the artist which can modify genre placement. Respondent (X) perceives that the environment within which the independent artist exists encompasses certain elements which constrain genre representation. He states:

Sure an artist exerts an influence through the sounds of the music, by the shows that they play and with whom the artist plays and what kids like the artists music. Additionally bands label themselves in interviews, but it is really up to third parties. A band that sound like hardcore can call themselves alternative in their bio, or press kit until they are blue in the face but if it smells like hardcore, tastes like hardcore and sounds like hardcore then you're a hardcore band.

The third party referred to here is the media. As respondent (G) reiterates on the same issue, "musicians tend to be media led". Although artists tend to feel that they have the power to change their genre as they feel fit, the way that the media perceive their music usually decides their genre representation.

Respondent (H) identifies one of the primary reasons why artists are attributed to certain genre groupings.

Artists often feel constrained by typing, they want to feel free, free to experiment and to change direction. This is of course the last thing the industry wants. The industry wants a product that it can recognise and sell. Once an image has been constructed of an artist in the public's mind it is difficult to alter that image.

This is supported by Negus who argues that:

The desire for free combination and a fluid crossing of boundaries confronts the very way in which such genre practices are constrained and how 'musicians, producers, and consumers are already ensnared in a web of genre expectation' (Frith, 1996, p.94) (Negus 1999:27).

Thus, the genre placing of the popular artist is constrained as the label dictates the identification through industrial and economic codification rather than musical or paramusical codes.

Negus further elaborates on the strategic processes inherent in major record companies and the way in which resources are targeted at those types of music in vogue and are not directed at loss leaders (Negus, 1999:28). The development of a marketable entity is key to major music industry companies, and it is the development of robust marketing strategies for pre-ordained

genres prior to the release of product that make these companies so successful. Respondent (X) states that "The bands that have the biggest problem with being pigeon holed are usually those who want to seek broader 'commercial' appeal". Such bands seek to be placed in a wide or more general marketing category or umbrella category such a *pop* or *grunge*. This enables maximum commercial viability and the sell through of their product to a wide range of consumers. Often there is a tension between what the bands actually want and what the record label or media think is best for them. Such a dilemma may be related to the consumers' perception of the artist. This may focus on issues of selling out, belonging, or changes to the music being disseminated. Respondent (K) perceives that:

Artists base decisions on what their agendas are, (are they looking for mainstream acceptance, are they willing to compromise their sound, are they willing to give up publishing control and royalty percentages to bigger labels, are they willing to mass market themselves), this can have a big influence on what their genre will be.

A decision to change can involve both ethical and economic elements. However, in the major label the latter is a *prima facie* case for genre change or modification. Artists attached to independent labels are less likely to change for economic reasons (unless they graduate from genres to marketing or umbrella categories). The changing of an artist's sound can fundamentally alter the way in which the existing audience perceives them, and this applies especially to those on alternative labels. In focus groups the consensus was that if an artist on an independent label sold out by changing their music to a more commercially saleable form, the original consumer would look elsewhere for their music (focus group 1). In focus group 2 one participant stated in response to a question regarding artists joining the mainstream and the effect it had on them as individuals, that:

If a band changed their style it had a profound effect on me. If they keep doing what they have been doing then I think it's just because more people like them. But if they change their style then they suck.

A cosmetic change to enhance an independent artist's market position is seen as selling out and this cosmetic influence is supported by Colgrave & Sullivan (2001). Those members of the focus group who were *pop* music oriented were more concerned with the artist's image and production than the ethics of attracting a wider audience, and these respondents showed less hostility to change. This is an important point as many artists themselves perceive that they have a major influence on which genre they are placed in. This is especially true of bands on small independent labels. Respondent (L) relates his own experiences where his band chose a specific label after releasing their own product because the label would reach the small audience that they had created from constant touring. The label was promoting artists that had some form of youth roots element, and the band felt that the philosophy of the label best served the constitution of their consumer. Respondent (M) perceives that an

artist has a superficial influence over genre placing and this influence relates to specific sub genre rather than an influence on the industry itself. Respondent (M) states that “Social Distortion and Turbo Negro introduced cosmetic changes including the wearing of blue jeans, a slightly gay touch and greased back hair and sunglasses”, which moved them away from the central experience of the genre and formed new sub-divisions within the parent genre. Although such cosmetic changes do not influence the central core of the genre it may make it more accessible to other groups and widens the appeal of the genre.

Respondents (J), (F) and (E) also have views on whether an artist has any control over their attributed genre. Respondent (J) focuses on the message and the content of the lyrics as an indicator of genre identification.

Political bands are an example; the lyrics are pro-active or about anarchy and social change. The music industry can't change or influence that unless the record label convinces the band to sell out and change the lyrics to make more money at the mall.

The concept of selling out is reiterated in this response and is perceived to be a major factor differentiating between independent and major label philosophy. It is perceived that an artist sells out when they sacrifice their beliefs and the ethos of the genre for a capitalist strategy where profit is the pivotal force. Politically, *punk* formed a dichotomy between an anarchic stance and an overtly political agenda, but it had no underpinning movement to back up the lyrics of the songs (See 4.5.2).

Respondent (F) perceives that artists in general do not consider categorisation. “They make the music that they want to make and it is usually other people that categorise them”. However, this may change if the artist sets out to copy a particular style. It is clear from the exploration of the artist’s role in categorisation, that most artists are aware of the genre within which they are placed (Respondent C). Independent artists are not usually attributed to marketing or umbrella categories but to genres and small-sub-genres that by their very definition target small pockets of fans interested in that particular type of music. However, the very name *indie* is often used as a marketing umbrella to describe a wide range of artists who are housed by independent labels or have a certain style of guitar focus (see 5.1.3.1). The term can be used in the context of an alternative to a major company or can describe an artist housed in any of the *new wave* categories. The success of these labels can be attributed to their uniqueness and their size, which does not attract mass cultural coverage unless one particular artist or genre/sub-genre becomes mass cultural. Such cases have an impact on both the independent and major label. To ensure that the commercial viability of a genre is fully exploited, the major labels buy up independent artists and labels where artists with economic potential reside. An example of this is the scramble for *punk* artists by major labels when EMI signed up the Sex Pistols (see also 4.2.1). This gave any *punk* band the opportunity to become overnight sensations. However, many artists saw the interest in *punk* by the majors as an intrusion (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:377).

Major artists on major labels have more influence in their genre placement strategy and millions of pounds are spent on the changing of an artist's genre to suit a more pressing development in profit motive. Madonna reinventing herself as an artist and the musical development of Cher are two clear examples of where the industry has modified an artist's genre to appeal to a wider consumer base, encapsulating elements of another genre. In these cases *dance* music was used to enable wider appeal and to create mass media hype and a larger profit potential. Lull in his exposition of Madonna argues that her "multidimensional, multimediated public imagery" (Lull 1995:140) is responsible for her huge appeal to a wide cross section of society. He goes on to state that "Madonna's success comes from the widespread acceptance she receives from her multiple fan base" (*ibid*).

Such fandom is wrapped up in 'semiotics' and especially 'polysemy'. 'Polysemy' is a combination of the interpretation of the symbolic environment and a process of self-discovery and understanding (Lull 1995:144). It can be seen from the responses that the artist, the industry, the media and the audience believe that they play some part in the genre decision making process, but such assumptions are always dependent on the interpretation of a multiplicity of signs inherent in the musical world (Tagg 1993), (O'Sullivan et al 1994), (Lull 1995).

There are artists who have chosen or modified their music to fit a chosen genre and have become big enough and powerful enough to create their own record labels, enabling them to market themselves as an entity rather than a genre. Examples of this are Pink Floyd and the Beatles, owning Harvest and Apple respectively; focus groups found it impossible to place a genre tag on either of these two artists and perceived that their names were bigger than a genre tag. Such discovery is reflected in *dance* music where artists like the Chemical Brothers have their own categories, but in this case not because of the size of the artist but because of the uniqueness of the sound.

The control exerted by the major label and the use of marketing and umbrella categories reduces the possibilities to artists of identifying the genre in which they would prefer to be housed, as these categories are set up as nebulous entities to gain maximum economic benefit for the companies (see the Mushroom Effect 1.3.1.8 p 54). If an artist reaches a situation where the name becomes synonymous with the music they can manipulate such a position totally to their advantage. The development and placement of artists in genre categories is about power relations and 'control'.

Genres are divided into numerous sub divisions to try to accurately pinpoint their exact essence for the marketers. *Dance* is a good example of this where sub-genres can be identified by a prefix. This interchangeability allows readily available genre at the discretion of the artist, so that they can identify themselves with different types of music within a larger generic group identified as *dance*. This is uncommon as it only happens in genre that are not totally controlled by the media and major conglomerates but largely by artists and DJs. Here the title of the genre gives a thumbnail sketch of the music, so

that in an ever-changing genre niches and preferences can be identified quickly and efficiently. Where such immediacy is present, and the music is controlled by the artists, the naming of such music take place at the artist interface with the media. Here more freedom is attributed to the artist. In this case neither the media nor the industry plays a significant part in the genre nomenclature (Reynolds 1998). Where major conglomerates are concerned the movement to identify and develop new genres is slow but in the case of the independent ease of access and quick movement of their streamlined business environment are vital to their continued existence. Thus the independent companies are quick to take advantage of new genre and exploit them before the business and marketing machine of the major companies are fully aware of the new genre's existence.

Throughout Chapter 5 it is argued that the role of the artist has been marginalised. It must be stated that the artist usually has a strong idea of the genre within which they fit. In the majority of cases where genre rather than marketing or umbrella categorisation is practiced, the artist will be placed in the category or a similar category to that expected by the artist. However, there are occasions where this does not happen and this will be viewed later in this Chapter.

From this section it is clear that artists do have some control over the genre grouping in which they are placed, albeit superficial, and that the majority of artists create music which will fit into their preferred category. The philosophy of the independent label has an attraction to certain artists, who perceive a developmental motive in the smaller labels rather than a profit motive associated with commercial success. In such cases the lyrics, differences in music, and sartoriality can all influence the sub category placing but not the overall parent genre of the music. The independent companies depend primarily on small niche markets and survive by individuality. They are often individual genre or sub-genre labels, which are the only promoters of certain types of music. The A&R scouts from majors are always a threat to the continued existence of the independents. However, this may only be a perceived threat as Franzman states: "There is always an underground just as there is always a mainstream. They are parallel lines" (Franzman 1999:5).

It is possible from the responses to the origins of genre nomenclature to construct diagrammatic evidence of the way in which genre originates. *Figure 8* identifies both the formal and informal identity process involved in the development of musical genre. *Figure 9* identifies both internal and external consumption channels inherent in the genre process where the consumer can be involved at both the informal identification of the genre and as the receiver of the mass consumption process thorough the retail interface.

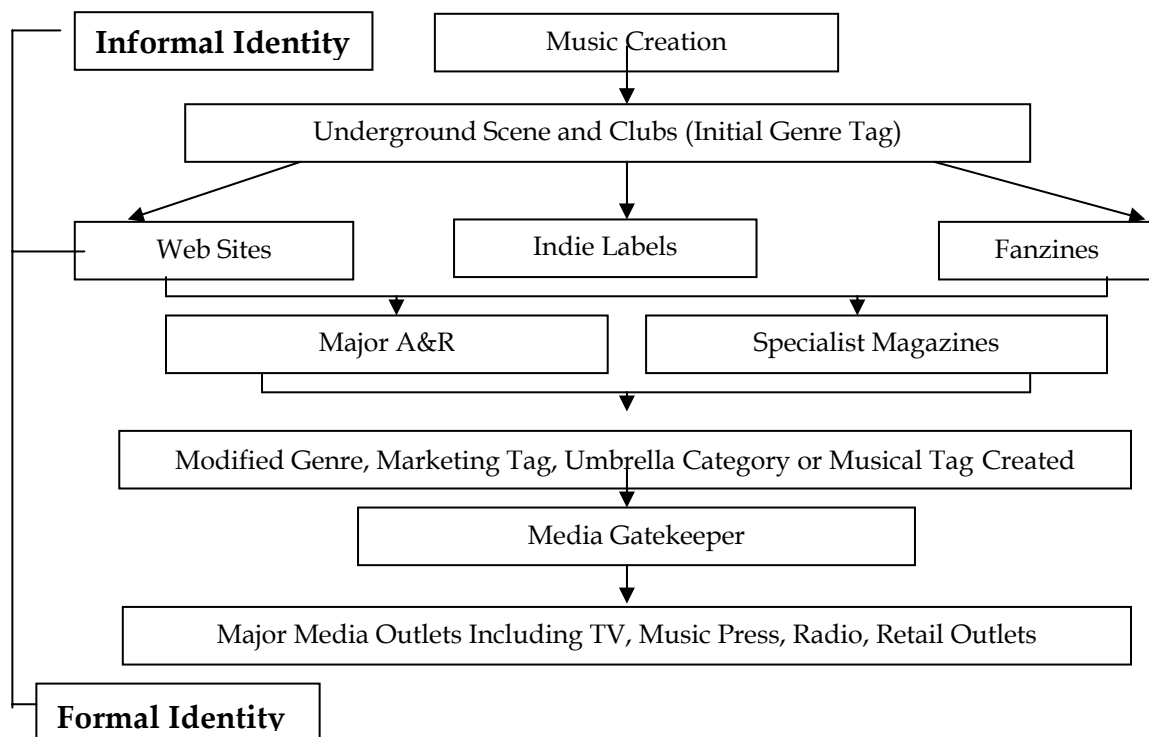


FIGURE 8 Music genre creation to consumption- formal and informal roles

From the findings relating to commentators, consumers and those interviewed from the industry, *Figure 8* depicts the way in which genre is both formally and informally identified. The artist informally identifies genre at the creative stage, when the music is firstly exposed to the underground scene through gigging or playing product. The music is noticed by those working with web sites, fanzines and indie labels and it is at this point that the media makes its informal identification. Once the mass media and major labels become involved in the process the genre label becomes formalised. As the artist is exposed to mass media elements the amount of exposure given and the media and industry gatekeepers decide whether the genre or musical tag originally created is sufficient to promote the artist to a mass audience. The media and industry may then decide that the artist's genre needs to change to either a marketing or umbrella category that will accelerate their move towards mass popularity.

The foregoing discussion determines that the identification process does not always follow this system. In the case of manufactured music, or where an artist has high sell through potential from the outset of their career, formal identification is made very quickly to maximise economic potential.

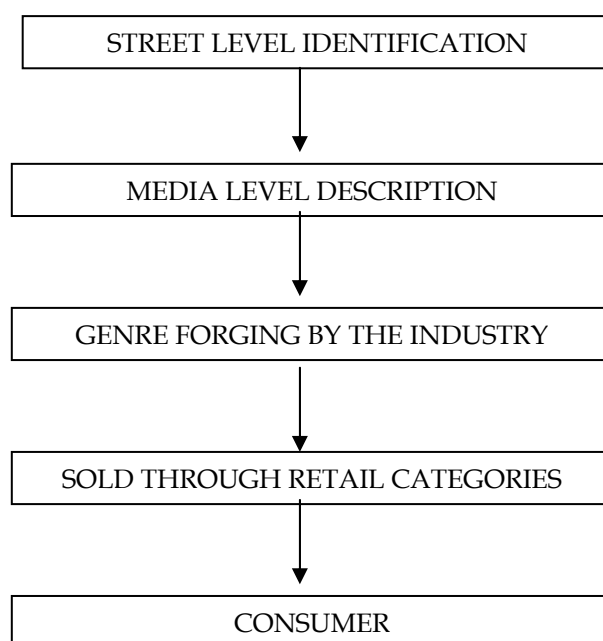


FIGURE 9 Consumption channels for new genre identification

Therefore, the top section of the diagram is best placed to identify new genres or sub genres that are created outside the mass media and main record industry and the bottom half of the diagram is applicable to mass media and major label artist development.

The dichotomy between the structured approach to genre identification and the arbitrary approach is obviated by the consensus of respondents, focus group participants and commentators that a framework approach, rather than definition by arbitrary means, is the key to genre identification.

### 5.1.2 Belonging, Protocols, Tools and Frameworks

The contemporary division of genres into sub and sub-sub categories shows that in a developing market, rather than inventing new genres of music, labels are subdividing to enable recognition. Respondent (Q) states, "I don't know if there is ever such a thing as a new style of music. I think that things go round in circles". Respondent (P) reinforces this notion by stating "I think a lot of people in the industry are forty somethings and everything is referenced by a previous model, everything is a spin off". The cyclical motion model referenced in 1.2.4 supports these comments. Prejudice and misrepresentation underpin the way in which this system of reinvented and rejuvenated labelling applies to the music industry. The creation of a re-packaged and re-labelled product misrepresents the original labelling process as a regurgitated genre rarely has the same norms and references as the original. Thus it could be construed that a reinvented genre (or sub genre) is in fact a new genre (or sub genre), as the underlying referents are dissimilar from the original referents cited in its first, second or even third generation format. Respondent (G) states "you constantly keep

updating it and subverting it. My job as a music promoter is to invent new categories, to cross breed categories and to hype what feels good". This type of approach points to a framework of pre-ordained identification codes.

It can be identified from the responses of respondents (C) and (P) that it is not clear to all protagonists in the music industry how genre are created, developed and identified. This is often because such respondents freely admit to not being at the centre of new genre development, but are really at the economic interface of the record company. However, this view of genre nomenclature being an arbitrary judgement must be taken seriously, because if this is the case it could lead to the preconception that genre is created at the whim of the industry facilitating marketing strategies to dictate consumer taste and thus maximise economic potential for the major companies. There are different responses to the nature of genre identification by those exposed to the 'front end' of the industry and those who make the financial decisions. It becomes clear (from meetings with various record company managers) during the experimental process that those removed from the 'front end' mechanisms of the industry have no real conceptions of a formal or informal genre framework, and thus their perception that genre is an arbitrary concept.

The following section identifies the protocols, tools and frameworks involved in the determination of genre.

#### 5.1.2.1 The 'Similarity Reflex'

By exploring the premise that the genre of an artist can be identified by the similarity of their music to other similar musical episodes contained within a specified genre or sub genre, a number of elements can be clarified. The first is that both independent and major media and music companies rely on the same genre identification mechanism as the consumer. Respondent (A) states, "I try to align them [new artists] with similar artists who are successful". Respondent (G), a freelance journalist, reiterates this point by indicating that genre decisions in the media are made through the alignment of artists with other artists already classed by the media as part of a specific genre. He states that, "If I hear something that reminds me of Kleenex or Gang of Four or Joy Division or the Damned I will probably instantly say that was punk". This indicates that the identification of implicit musical codes, which elicit a 'similarity reflex' are taken into consideration during genre identification and placement. Respondent (X) highlights the simplicity of this process through the vehicle of consumerism, where a comparison is made between a market leader and other artists within the genre. This is also highlighted in focus groups where consumers recognise the sound of the artist as an identifying factor.

From the analysis it is apparent that not only the major and independent record companies utilise similar identification codes but the producers, media players and retailers also apply similar codes to determine musical episodes. These codes are implicit in consumer purchasing strategies and in some cases consumers do not agree with the identified genre grouping. As well as this



tension, a temporal tension facilitates genre constraints, and in some cases only enables the operation of the 'similarity reflex' at a given point in time. As artists move, develop and change within a genre group, the emphasis and boundaries of that group also change. As an example the 'Beatles or Sixties sound' re-created by Oasis does not fit well into a catchall area such as *pop*. Temporally Oasis fits into a more contemporary categorisation, which may attribute them to *indie* guitar music.

However, owing to the strong sales base of Oasis, a marketing category, *Brit pop*, was created through which they and a small clutch of other artists could be heavily marketed to the mass consumer. This caused consumer confusion as the original Oasis consumers perceived Oasis and the other artists with a similar sound to be *indie* bands in alignment with their alternative musical stance.

Those consumers coming later perceived that the band was *Brit pop* and the mass cultural audience perceived them as *pop* (focus group 2). Thus, the temporal movement of the artist changed both the identification of and buying choices associated with the artist.

This is reflected in the confusion of the product placement during the retail process. *Figure 10* depicts a limited version of the initial genre categorisation process showing the identification codes used as universal elements utilised by all the protagonists in the industry.

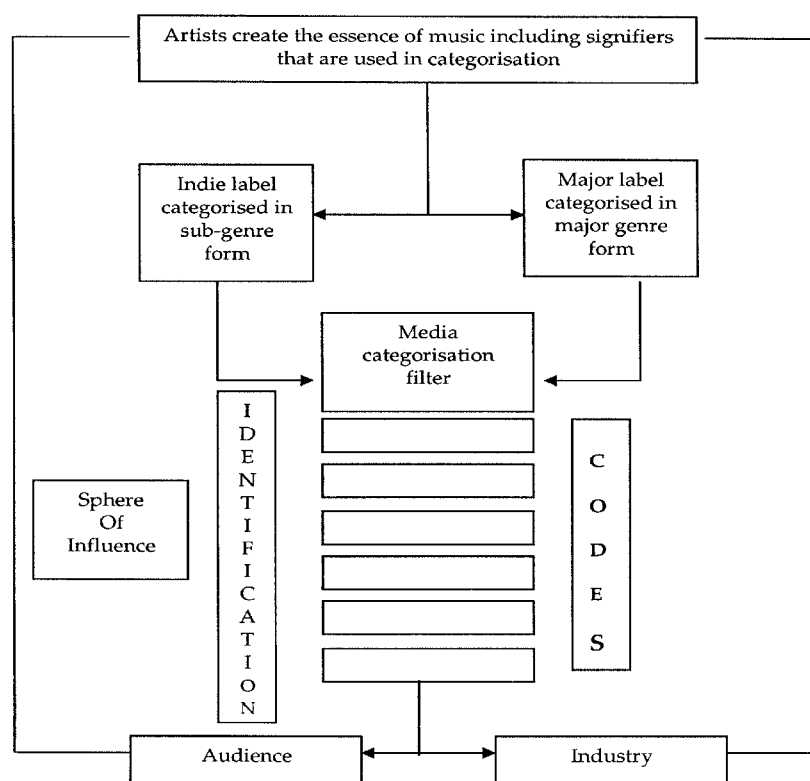


FIGURE 10 Simple Diagram Explaining Genre Categorisation

From an artist's perspective, it is clear that the audience have strong views on which other bands a particular artist is similar to, and this response is utilised by the audience as a reference point and often initiates or impacts upon the genre placement process identified later by the media (focus group2). This type of genre referencing is alluded to by Negus who states:

During a break in a performance, or at the end of a gig, members of an audience would come up with various unsolicited opinions, making specific comparisons (I still recall: 'You play like the guy in Cockney Rebel' and 'The band sound like XTC/The Boomtown Rats/The Beat/Split Enz'). There would be generic comparisons too ('New wave, but a bit of soul', 'You're too poppy for this place' or Heavy, Great! (Negus 1999:4).

This response supports the argument that the audience utilises a similar genre referencing system to that of the industry and media. However, the 'similarity reflex' also has negative elements associated with it. A company in search of a quick economic advantage will exploit artists that sound like others and this when picked up by the consumer can have a negative effect. For instance, one respondent from focus group 2 states "The record company pressurise the artist to bring out albums in a certain time scale and by doing so the record companies are shooting themselves in the foot. This is because the artists are releasing really terrible albums in a format mode, rather than making new and exciting albums in a creative area".

Respondent (C) although agreeing with the similarity of codes appropriated by the industry and the media is sceptical about industry motives. He states "I think that they are going to have a clear idea in mind of what they are looking for before they actually sign the band. So the question about whether they fit in is irrelevant because they are going out looking for a kind of act to fill a certain genre". This statement perpetuates the idea of genre stasis, where record companies already have a fixed idea of the genre to which they are trying to recruit artists. The response also supports the gatekeeping context in the industry. Therefore, A&R managers will recruit artists, creating a specified sound to fit specified genres. Respondents in focus group 1 identified a similar scepticism emanating from the creation of mainstream *punk*, which they perceive:

was a collaboration between the mass media and the major labels to make punk popular with a new generation of kids. The creation of skate punk started the media jumping on every new band that came out and giving them loads of publicity. They had to do this because Green Day and The Offspring were not releasing the stuff that we wanted to hear so Sum 41 and Blink 182 became household names and rose to the top very quickly. They all sound the same but we real punks know its just a copy of hundreds of great unsigned bands in the US and UK.

To support this notion and to defend the inherent problems of the record companies Negus (1999) identifies the dichotomy present in major labels between stability and predictability and change and interaction. In record companies there is a dichotomy where stasis and change are in constant

opposition. The constant search for hits is matched by the knowledge that new albums by existing artists may cause instability in consumer buying decisions.

This highlights the importance of the conflict of interest within the major record company between the safe production of more of the same music and becoming the leaders in the market in a new musical genre. The key is in the weighing up of the probability of short-term profit against the possible development of a genre that could increase long-term profits. It is clear from this section that the 'similarity reflex' in the identification of genre has an important role, not only in creating a reference point for those in the industry and the consumer but also to ensure the sell through of product from a wide range of artists classified in a grouping.

### 5.1.2.2 The Genre Toolbox

The concept of multifunctional codes and the widespread appropriation of such codes from disparate discourses allude to the establishment of a structural framework. Such a framework may be described as a genre toolbox. The notion of the toolbox is supported by respondent (G) who states in relation to *punk* that, "You have a toolbox with your punk criteria in it; you apply a criterion according to your prejudices". This view focuses on subjective rather than objective placement. However, Respondent (K) is more pragmatic and perceives that, "If you are a fan of punk rock you understand the musical qualities, production and song writing structure that constitutes this form of music". This response infers that all members of the industry, the media and the audience are capable of identifying *punk* music by utilising a focused group of genre codes. However, such a response differs widely from other responses from both industry professionals and focus groups where a wide range of both specific and generic variables are cited in the genre definition process. It must be noted at this juncture that although all the respondents were requested to divulge in their opinion what a genre toolbox consisted of, they all declined to give any quantifiable responses erring towards subjective generic rather than objective specific responses. This indicates the application of a personal rather than a professional framework to the identification of genre. It is perceived from this aspect of the study that such definitions are difficult to articulate, or that if an overarching toolbox does exist it comprises a wide and varied set of qualifiable variables from a number of discourses.

Commentators on *punk* utilise descriptors such as powerful, relentless and tough, which are employed to communicate the essence of the *punk* genre. However, the use of music as a vehicle through which *punk* is disseminated to the consumer often defies personal interpretation and thus communication is truncated. This is supported by Lahickey (1997:xiii). Laing (1985:12) cites Ian Birch in his quest to identify *punk* genre: Birch classifies *punk* elements by utilising descriptive phrases rather than single elements evoking codified systems in a descriptive process, which in turn evoke pictures and memories of artists and communicates the message to others. Respondent (C) states "The

music, the look I suppose plays a part but it is basically down to the music". This is reinforced by respondents in focus group 4, one of whom states: "All *punk* sounds quite basic, but the way different instruments are put together creates a sound which can be identified as *punk*".

Contrary to the responses of those who cited music as the main influence for creating new genre, many respondents both in focus groups and during interviews cite a wider range of both musical and paramusical codes facilitating categorisation. The key elements determined from focus group exploration are "guitar sound", "the speed of the drums", "the secondary role of the bass player" "the prominence of the lyrics", "the association with a scene", and "the attitude". These responses are supported by interviewees, for example, respondent (P) states that "it wasn't just about the music it was about the attitude and the people". Respondent (P) further states that "Ian Dury and Nick Lowe, captured a spirit as much as a musical essence, and that was really what *punk* was all about". Respondent (K) believes that the musical and paramusical factors associated with genre are inextricably linked and can be used either interdependently or as an integrated element. He states "I think that it is the aesthetic an artist tries to put forth, be it musically, physical appearance or agenda, this is what is most important when dealing with *punk*". From these responses, it is clear that the identification of genre is not purely musical but resides in the identification of a combination of musical, paramusical and perceptual factors: although the sound of the music is important, as this is the vehicle which primarily attracts the audience. Some respondents use demographics in regards to paramusical identification. For example respondent (B) states that "I think it comes down to age almost, what will appeal to people of a certain age". Respondent (X), a radio DJ, also perceives that age is integral to genre placement, as new popular sub genres tend to appear on the more popular radio stations for young people. This is supported by the perception of *punk* and *nu punk*. *Punk* is played on the more moderate Radio 2 appealing to a wide audience and *nu punk* on radio 1, which appeals to a narrower teenage audience. This creates a musical divide associated with segmentation in the media of radio. The choice of artist by differing media is related to perceptions created by the media focused on the type of audience they wish to attract (Kotler 1991).

It is therefore surmised that the utilisation of paramusical factors in the identification of musical genre, links the musical framework to the philosophical relevance of the genre. This is of course dependent on there being a philosophy in the first place. Respondent (N) has an alternative view to many industry professionals and consumers where the paramusical and perceptual factors are attributed far more relevance and importance than those which are musical in nature. Respondent (N) perceives that the way in which the industry markets *punk* makes the genre transient. The stylistic development is more important than the substance. He states that the current *punk* stereotype is "scarred by mass marketing and an unfortunate emphasis on style rather than substance". Such a response is in line with the original ethos of *punk*, however

with the introduction of *nu punk* the core elements of the genre have been replaced by style, fashion and marketability. Those respondents working for minor labels (Respondents I, K, M and P) are more inclined to agree with respondent (N) as they are all well aware of the *punk* philosophy and alternative *punk's* rejection of style and stereotyping and thus the genre is marketed accordingly. Secondary research supports this notion (O'Hara 1999).

Those at major labels or the larger and more successful independent companies (Respondents A, and C), tend to be more interested in confining music to pigeon holes that enable the artist to be more marketable. This exposes one of the main dichotomies between the majors and the independents and supports the style over content argument. Respondent (L) states "You usually link the attitude, style and what they are singing about. It is really hard to concentrate solely on the music. You see what they are wearing and what they look like". This respondent identifies a major weakness in genre identification where the range of signifiers may evoke contrasting emotions and reference points relating to the individual consumer, facilitating conflicting genre messages. In such cases, the strongest influence will prevail. Such multi-referencing explains why many disparate artists such as the Police, Larry Wallis and Nick Lowe are classified in the same genre as the Sex Pistols, the Clash and Sham 69.

The foregoing analysis suggests that a genre toolbox is utilised to discriminate between different genres. The toolbox is extremely fluid and some users will only utilise musical or paramusical factors whilst others will utilise a combination of the two factors. It is also apparent that early *punk* is far more difficult to identify, as a wide range of artists were attributed to the category and the DIY style and disparity of music often confused the consumer. The advent of *nu punk* introduced a more streamlined and formulaic music which relied more on the musical than the paramusical, enabling an easier identification from a reduced number of codes.

### 5.1.2.3 Musical and Paramusical Factors, Codes and Identity

Although the genre toolbox debate introduces many of the arguments associated with musical and paramusical factors, the importance of these two contrasting but complimentary elements to the quantitative analysis cannot be underestimated. Rather than solely concentrating on specific factors pertaining to a genre toolbox this section will argue that both musical and paramusical factors should be inherent in any such toolbox. Many industry practitioners are exposed to the music at an early stage (Respondent A): it is not until it is written about that the industry can decipher the underground and street signifiers and thus build a genre around an initial 'style' of music. The term 'style' of music must be used loosely as it is both the musical and the paramusical elements that forge the genre. In most cases the defining genre identification process originates at street level, is described by the media and then forged by the

industry and eventually sold through genre categories in other media, retail outlets and live venues.

Respondent (F) states that to the *punk* musician and consumer the identification of a new genre/sub genre is a far more complex process. *Punk* musicians perceive that there are a number of musical and para musical signifiers or codes, which help the consumer to identify the type of music that is being produced. However, these codes are often not explicit but are implicit in the way in which the artist has evolved or in the way in which the artist interfaces with the audience. Respondent (N) states that “*punk* is a personal expression of uniqueness that comes from the experiences of growing up in touch with our human ability to reason and ask questions”. Beth Lahickey also relates to personal signifiers stating that:

My primary attraction to the underground music scene was its reverence for individuality. As I began going to shows and listening to hardcore lyrics, I felt an overwhelming sense of relief, here was a place where I did not feel the traditional adolescent feelings of inadequacy, ostracism and general malaise. I felt connected to the music (Lahickey 1997:xiii).

Respondent (N) and Lahickey both identify the integration of the *punk* artist/audience relationship. The artist portrays a personal expression of uniqueness and the audience perceives an individuality not found in other areas of adolescent entertainment. Uniqueness and individuality have always been core to the original ethos of *punk*. However, the development of *nu punk* into a mass media phenomenon in the past decade has eroded many of the merits of this concept.

Respondent (L) states that, “It is the aggression that identifies the band and the music...it has an intensity, passion and urgency which get the message over quickly and brutally”. Such a statement separates the artist’s meaning in the music from the concept of commercialisation. This is also underpinned by the ethos of many of the record labels which emerged at the centre of the *punk* movement in 1976/77. Laing identifies the “lesser importance placed on the values of the market” in *punk* music but also identifies the obligation to create some form of surplus to continue operating. Such differentiation between independent and major companies identifies differing definitions of music and the differing roles and positions of the consumer (Laing 1985:21). Thus, not only does the mode of consumption differ between major and independent labels but also the mode of production is different. In *punk* the consumer/apprentice way of learning is extremely pronounced. As Willis states: “The special relationship between production and consumption in popular music culture means that most pop musicians begin as ‘fans’, and ‘create’ by copying sounds from records and cassettes- they become “producers as consumers” (Willis 1990:19). This process was highly relevant to *punk* music, and was heightened by the fact that many of the *punk* musicians could not play instruments but improvised and practiced by learning new popular songs. *Punk* artists then added their own repertoire of hastily put-together songs, performing them on stage without a care whether they were ready or not. This was DIY music. This

DIY view of music is an important signifier related to the development of the *punk* genre. It is a collaboration of a lack of musical dexterity and an attitude through which they can carry off their lack of proficiency.

From audience focus groups it is clear that paramusical factors are as important as musical factors. The guitar sound and the attitude are important in identifying *punk* (Focus group1). Laing (1985) and Moore (2001) identify the relevance of the guitar sound in *punk* music supporting the views of focus group members. Respondents (B) and (P), who state that the initial judgement of the genre emanates from the sound, the guitars or how it relates to already existing genres back up Laing's observations. Respondents (C) and (D) identify the speed of the music as a factor in identification between the two genres and students in focus groups support this. Thus from the triangulation of separate responses and the views of commentators on the music it is clear that both musical and paramusical factors are main signifiers in the identification of *punk* and *nu punk*.

Another element, which forms part of code identification, is influence. Although influences on artists, the media, the industry and the consumer are both musical and paramusical and tied in with the 'similarity response' the importance of influence cannot be underestimated. Respondent (B) alludes to whether an artist is "black or white" identifying a generic racial or colour influence within the music. Respondent (J) who states "I look at the influence, wow I can really hear Bob Dylan in that", reinforces this by identifying specific rather than generic influence. Respondent (P) also implies that musical influences impact on artists. He states "What an artist uses as a reference point will undoubtedly influence how their music sounds and thus what genre they are classified within. The sound of such artists is dependent on the extent that both generic and specific influences are utilised".

Many respondents allude to the cyclical motion of the industry and the way in which genre is packaged and repackaged over the decades as causing an over reliance on past genre forms. Such developments are important because genres appear and re-appear through a temporal continuum re-using and regurgitating generic and specific influences. It is possible from re-usage and regurgitation to appeal to both a new audience and to rekindle interest in a genre from an old audience that recognises the previous reference to the past musical genre. The use of bandwaggoning (artists copying musical and paramusical elements of other artists to elicit an audience response similar to another successful artist) is important to major record labels, as some genres when reused attract a wide range of artists wishing to capitalise on the back of other successful artists. Such influences are often related to the 'similarity reflex' identified earlier in this Chapter.

As respondent (P) states "there are a lot of forty something's in the industry and through them music genre is referenced by a previous model". Thus, the referencing model is reliant on not only the reference points identified by the artist and the audience but also through the images and references identified by the industry and the media. Over the years each record company,

media, individual and artist has built their own genre referencing system, which they use as a yardstick to measure genre. However, this referencing system is elusive and few industry protagonists can identify exactly how they classify genre even though, when questioned, all of the interviewees identify similar variables utilised in their personal genre identification process. Respondent (C) states, "*Punk* is a classic example. I don't know where the name *punk* came from but ever since the Sex Pistols, The Clash and the Damned came out everything that followed it, you could easily tell which pieces of music were *punk* and which were not".

In any referencing system codes are appropriated to aid in definition. Codes may be both tangible and intangible and there may be only slight modifications to perhaps one or two specific codes in some genres or sub-genres creating further sub-division. It is the differences and not the similarities that define different genres and sub genres. However, it is the similarities that define the distance between the initial and sub genre definitions. An example of this can be found in the band Capdown who are identified in the *ska-punk* genre only because of the *ska* rhythm in their otherwise mainstream *nu punk* song portfolio (Respondent A).

Once a wide range of codes are appropriated and become identified with a particular genre, it is often the more generic codes which expose the tensions within the musical area. Arnold states:

If you consider "*punk*" to be a sheerly musical term, then only a certain type of young, thin and flashy loud-fast guitar band fits into its confines. But if you consider it as a concept, few bands are more *punky* than Pearl Jam.....Pearl Jam however, offend the more powerful members of the music business the way *punk* should have done all along - not by shock tactics, but by threatening and/or ignoring the very machinery that creates record sales (Arnold 1997:172).

Here Arnold agrees with the argument that *punk* is a concept rather than just music. Thus the boundaries of the *punk* genre become malleable and the tension between identifying simple specific factors, which identify a type of music, become entwined with the identification of a wider concept encompassing the philosophy and ethics of the artist. However, Lahickey (1997) states that:

It is apparent that straight edge means different things to different people. While some may simply appreciate the "substance free" philosophy that it embodies, others may take it to the extreme. Regardless of personal interpretations, the straight edge philosophy is expounded through powerful music. Music is its vehicle (Lahickey 1997:xiii).

Thus, perceptions of the genre also identify different concepts for different people. This points towards the usage of a wide range of codes so that an integration of discourses can identify a consensus.

Both of these commentators reiterate the earlier argument that as a 'label' or an 'attitude' *punk* is much more than a music. If *punk* is more than music it has a wider set of signifiers than if it was purely a music. This concurs with the



initial findings for this question, demonstrating the complex nature of any identification of new musical genre.

Many of the respondents stated that they perceived *punk* as an 'attitude' and not a music, which further reinforces the view that genre is more than just a music but has many facets within its development (Respondents F, L and P). The concept of multiple code usage to identify *punk* as a genre is further reinforced by Respondent (B) who states that "Initially you judge music from the sound, is it guitars, is it horns, is it electronic, is it keyboards...then you check the persons voice. Is it a black person, is it a souly sound, is it middle of the road, is it fast or is it slow". Respondent (F) who states "I think that it is the band putting across their lyrics and their performance" reiterates the idea of multiple code usage. Respondent (X) develops this argument further by stating that, "I don't identify them I just like the music, the ethic, the viewpoint, performance and image of the band, I know they're for me". It is clear from the responses above that there are a multitude of signifiers utilised in the identification of each genre and in music *per se*.

It is important to note here that all focus group members could converse about the genre, even though individuals used different identification codes and signifiers. These responses show that different individuals build up recognition patterns of music through many identification codes. Although different people use different codes, the overall identification of a genre is similar and therefore some definitive central elements portray the central characteristics within new genre recognition. These responses build up a musical and paramusical picture of the artist and industry by developing identification codes and a semiotic language that surrounds their classification. It is clear that personal identification of music is slightly different to industry identification as consumers do not have to market or sell the music that they are identifying. Everyone has their personal preferences and these are separated from the initial response and classification system employed by the industry. However, although the responses and classificatory systems of the consumer/musician and the industry/media differ by their very nature, there are still many elements emerging that support the use of a universal classification system.

#### **5.1.2.4 Formulaic and Individuality as Reference Points**

Whilst exploring the development of *nu punk* a formulaic reference point was identified which enabled artists with a similar sound to create success from stereotyping. *Punk* in its initial form was difficult to replicate as it had no stereotype and thus individuality could be used as a reference. However, as time elapsed as within any genre, ground rules, parameters and identification codes are established focussing the variables and creating a more uniform reference point. Early *punk* was relatively free of mimicry but in later *punk*, it is rife. Thus later *punk* has a more uniform and formalised structure to both its

musical and paramusical elements. The formalised structure of *nu punk* is picked up in audience focus groups where one respondent states:

It is not the same as it was when *punk* first appeared. Now when you hear new *punk* on the radio or see it on the TV it could be any of a group of bands looking the same, playing the same riffs and just hoping that the kids pick them as the next big *nu punk* thing. It is just so sad there is no individuality and thus little choice.

The identification of both homogenous and specific elements within punk and nu punk is further explored in the quantitative analysis in Chapter 6.

### 5.1.2.5 In Search of a Framework for Genre Identification

*Heavy metal*, *grunge*, and many other genres were named or created by the media in different ways but ostensibly to forge a pigeon hole so that artists could be talked about, promoted and marketed (Respondent C). As in many genre groups the title used to describe a genre becomes well used and its original sentiments and vibrancy can become lost to new members of the genre, often owing to a change in context. Those at the centre of the movement begin to resent terms utilised to categorise them (the artists and the consumers) as they become associated with a general area of music rather than being identified with the diversity of the musical form and culture. Respondents (P, J and F) support this notion.

Respondent (G) states *hip-hop* and *rap* are “musician's or genre terms, created by musicians for the type of music that they play”. Often such terms derive from music, which has evolved from an existing culture rather than a culture, which has evolved from an existing musical form. In many sub genres of *dance* music, the names created by the artists reflect a description of the type of music through a thumbnail sketch. Examples of this include *acid jazz*, *uplifting house* and *acid house* (Reynolds 2000). In many cases, the artist is the creator of the *dance* music genre and names the music at the interface with the media (Kemp 2000). Thus, *dance* music in its original form was created outside the mass media framework and it was at least two years before the mass media realised the potential benefits of being able to control the development of *dance* genre. Subsequently owing to the constant state of flux within the music, the mass media found it impossible to penetrate fully the genre-naming framework, which had been initially set up to, create the tags. Respondent (E) states that this system has been proliferated and the only outlets for the mass media in contemporary nomenclature frameworks of *dance* are the commercial forms of *house* and *garage* and thus youth culture is perceived to have some form of gate keeping role in the dissemination of the music.

Respondent (G) states that *urban*, *alt country*, *indie* and *Brit pop* are all marketing categories that cover a wide range of music assembled together for marketing purposes. These categories often contain many disparate styles of music brought together in an effort to sell struggling or minority artists on the back of other artists who are either similar in sound or similar in orientation. Moore (2000) states that *Brit pop* was a genre, however, it was more a catchall

phrase to maximise the sell through of a small number of disparate *indie* artists under one banner (Moore 2000:172). The development of *grunge* into a marketing category enabled *indie*, *rock*, *metal* and some *punk* artists to shift from their original genres to a transient marketing category that was in vogue and creating interest in any product associated with it.

Respondent (F) identifies *pop*, *rock*, *indie* and *dance* amongst others as large catchall classifications encapsulating a wide range of genres and marketing categories so that music can be identified collectively as an 'umbrella' category. In the case of *dance*, the title pertains to the commercial form of *dance* music. The difference between marketing and umbrella categories is the transience of the designation. An umbrella is timeless and a marketing category transient.

*Punk*, *blues* and *jazz* all depict genres, which have specific elements that define their boundaries. For example the structure of *jazz* as Ostransky (1960) states in '*The Anatomy of Jazz*', sets the 'boundaries' of that particular genre. *Blues* has its blue notes and *punk* has its guitar sound and attitude. This is a simplistic observation of the defining elements of genre; it is not pertinent at this point to explore such elements further until the study deals with specifics. These examples are used to differentiate between genre or musician signifiers, marketing categories and umbrella labels. The analysis within both the primary and secondary research divides musical categorisation into these three areas, genres, marketing categories and umbrella categories and any framework to identify musical episodes must first decide into which category the musical episode is placed.

#### 5.1.2.6 The Development of Sub-Genre and Fragmentation and Boundary Development

The fragmentation in recent years of musical genres such as *punk* into sub and sub-sub genres has enabled slightly different forms of *punk* to be attributed to more focused categories. Whereas the general area of *punk* is wide and attracts very disparate artists, the sub and sub-sub genres are more carefully defined, enabling access only to those that fulfil tight criteria. It must be noted that early *punk* has no sub genre divisions and each artist has been historically identified as relating to this category with some cross over at the temporal fringes. However, 'late' *punk* has been subdivided into small categories often containing a small number of artists so that labels and audiences can identify areas of interest. When brought up in focus groups, the stock answer to any question regarding the fragmentation of genre sub groups in 'late' *punk* met with a consensus that in today's immediate consumer society, all classification systems were subdivided to enable easier access to the product or service. Such an answer is certainly in line with other information accumulated throughout this study. However, in the search for new marketable sub genres, confusion is caused by the integration of categories from different genres and sub genres. For example, as respondent (G) states, "Dance rips off rock categories and rock does it back to them". The confusion caused by 'ripping off' emanates from the

fact that it is not only sounds that are ripped off but the names of genre, as some genres, once reserved for identifying a certain type of music, are now used to describe another as evidenced in 4.2.1. Genre names are used and reused and in some cases metamorphose beyond all recognition. *R&B*, *soul*, *hardcore* and *garage* are all names that have changed their descriptive meanings for genre over the decades. This shows how musical genre has evolved and changed. These not only reflect social changes, but also changes in the language used to describe music, as youth culture orientation within music becomes more pronounced. It is also a reflection of changing norms and values in society (Webster 1988).

Respondent (D), a classical musician, makes a very astute observation about the way in which genre becomes saturated and then the boundaries of the genre are expanded to fit other types of music to keep it alive. Often musicians refer to music practiced earlier in history and search for new angles and clarity. Respondent (D) states that:

People are playing with the boundaries as opposed to within them. I think its quite hard to do and I think it will become harder to do as time passes. I think it is possible to an extent, but because we've squeezed as much melody out of music as we can, in a way we have gone to the other extreme where it is hard to know what is being said in a particular piece of music. Music is now so discordant, rhythmically detached and fragmented that artists are now reverting to the stillness of music and the intimacy of being able to digest a whole note, a semibreve or something. For instance, in Tavener or to a certain extent James Macmillan or Arvo Pert or different composers like that. We are gravitating more towards the spiritual aspects of music.

Respondent (D) alludes to the constant development of boundaries and the search for a new aspect. Such a search often culminates in a reversion to basics.

The audience for *punk* and *nu punk* has divided and sub divided in line with the development of re and sub categorisation, which is linked to the evolutionary process of the genre. Similar to the growth and development of the original genre in the mid 1970s, many *nu punk* bands signed to major labels. This is the consequence of success, where offers of large sums of money to sign to a label far outweigh the original ethos of the genre itself. The change from an independent to a major company, in the case of most artists, produces a change from a more 'earthy' product to a formulaic one. Although such a change creates revenue for the record company, it can also change the consumers' perception of the artist. However, those artists on minor independents, often only producing music in a niche genre, provide subcultural expression, uniqueness and a social attitude quite different from those on the major labels. As Respondent (L) states " Hellcat, the label that we are signed to, is specific to roots forms of youth culture rather than any specific music. Therefore, its niche is quite appealing. As an underground band we need a label that fits with the music so we can hit the fan base". This reversion to the *punk* basics supports the view of respondent (D).

On a global scale, respondent (N) states "*Punk* is a movement that seems to refute social attitudes that have been perpetuated through wilful ignorance of human behaviour". In this iteration, *punk* is considered as a conduit through

which to perpetuate 'organic' attitudes rather than perpetuate those forced upon society by the gatekeepers. Gina Arnold is all too aware of this when writing about Green Days' new found success:

Soon the money will come rolling in, and a person has to wonder: is there any way that a man can escape the disillusionment and pain success has brought to Sam McBride, Eddie Vedder and Kurt Cobain and Billie Joe? A year from now will Tim Armstrong still live with nine room mates and ride his little bike around (Arnold 1997:93)?

Success within a small or sub genre, often changes the perception of an artist by the consumer by the development of the artist from a minority interest to a mass cultural entity. Such a change has profound effects on both musical and paramusical elements. As respondent (G) states:

To me pop *punk* is just *punk* songs that you can sing. It is not just based on music it is based on image as well. You could never call Offspring as looking aggressive or menacing in the way a classic *punk* band was. It is the whole look and sound. Pop *punk* tends to be quite positive whereas classic 70s *punk* identifies the destruction of society and all that kind of thing. In pop *punk* there is aggression but it comes out in a positive way. It is a whole different kind of vibe. You would never get the Sex Pistols wearing baggy shorts and key chains and carrying a skateboard but it is the staple of pop *punk*. US vs UK pop *punk* is very much West Coast. Your surroundings determine your musical outlook, bedsitland vs beaches.

Respondent (G) identifies how a change in the perception and development of *punk* as well as the context, has resulted in a number of artists becoming 'household names'. The genre name has been modified to include the prefix '*pop* (the antithesis of original *punk*)', which immediately takes the genre out of the underground and into mass culture. As the ethos of *punk* was never initially to take on the attributes of *pop*, such a genre encapsulates a dichotomy of interest creating a paradox. To sell an artist in this umbrella category means that the signifiers associated with the genre are modified. The new music and paramusical factors contribute towards this change. Conversely media imagery brings together people symbolically creating 'interpretative communities'. These are "relatively anonymous groups of people who interpret particular mediated materials with shared enthusiasm and a common viewpoint" (Lull 1995:161). The more exposure to the media a '*pop*' artist receives, the more people will be assimilated into the interpretative community surrounding the artist.

Many of these initial genre groupings have spawned sub genre categories, which are used to determine the placing of musical episodes, which do not totally conform to the rules of the initially identified 'parent' genre grouping. The creation of sub genres enables a more focused identification of musical episodes or artists as sub genres by their very nature are more focused than genres. A focused process enables both macro and micro media to market the genre more dynamically. For example the initial concept of *punk* can be identified from both musical, guitar sound (Laing 1985), flashy and loud (Arnold 2001), paramusical elements, attitude (Birch 1985), and philosophy

(Lahickey 2001). The development of the sub genres of punk can create a plethora of new more focussed categories. For example such sub-genres might include *77 punk*, *strait edge* and *Oi*. *77 punk* contains artists that sound similar to those from 1977. *Strait edge* includes artists who sound the same as other *punk* artists but have an ethos pertaining to no drugs, no alcohol and no sex. *Oi* houses artists who have violent tendencies and are linked to fascist organisations (Audience focus group 2). However, there are overall musical and paramusical elements, which still enable the musician and the media to recognise that these sub-genres are collectively under the wider umbrella of *punk*, even though there are specific codes that distance them from the original overarching genre. Musically, as already stated, the artists might sound ostensibly the same but paramusically, as in *strait edge* it is the philosophy of the consumer which differentiate artists from others of their ilk (Lahickey 2001). Thus, it is clear from this that although there are some differing musical factors the majority of factors that differentiate the sub genres of *punk* from the original parent genre are paramusical.

In advanced societies, the definition of music cannot exist outside the media environment and the macro environmental factors, which affect the business environment without which much music could not exist or be sustained. To create a nomenclature outside the boundaries of the media and business would not give a true picture of all the facets that combine to encapsulate true genre formation.

### 5.1.2.7 The Changing Face of Music

The change from minority to popular creates an increase in income for both the artist and the industries associated with them. Developing status increases not only the personal income earned by the artists but also the type and amount of technology utilised in the recording and marketing process. The chattels of popularity change the original ethos of hand to mouth subsistence, a conflict with society or a carefree skateboarding existence to a formulaic structure focused on the marketplace. From personal experience of the music industry, it is clear that the edge and much of the raw appeal of the original music to the original consumer is lost during the recording process and thus creativity is demeaned by the technology utilised in the *pop* recording process. The focus is more on the emasculated finished product than the original message of the genre. To keep the artists at the forefront of the new marketing umbrella, the music changes from individualised and developmental music to formulaic music. Although some artists may try to keep their genre roots and paramusical style, it is clear from reading newspapers and magazines, promoting artists, and from watching TV, that both paramusical and musical elements contained in the original genre are modified by the interface with increased popularity and success. The difficulty with the elevation of such artists is that the music becomes a vehicle for competition and the genre becomes short lived as it is engulfed by a wide range of artists and individuality is replaced by formula.

Chris Stein from Blondie and Clive Langer in Colgrave & Sullivan (2001:377) cite two examples of this. Chris Stein stated, "Everybody used to be communal and co-operative until the big record companies started coming round and signing people up. It was sad after that because everybody became very competitive" Similarly, Clive Langer reiterates this stating: "Once the name was slapped on and it became mainstream, *punk* became the very thing it weren't supposed to. So it was very short lived". Moore (2001) contrasts the selling out with the original ethos, stating that *punk* "seemed to signify rejection" and that the reason was a friction generated between a particular song and the conventions of a previously constituted style (Moore 2001:135). When a *punk* artist is transformed into a mass cultural icon and the music is transferred to a more formulaic mode then the friction between the *punk* song and previously constituted genre becomes irrelevant. Thus, the music changes to mainstream and loses its *punk* conventions, and the music and perhaps the paramusical style, no longer convey the *punk* ethos but focuses on the stylistic to enable the realisation of maximum commercial potential.

#### 5.1.2.8 The Do It Yourself Ethic

Tension caused by conflicting messages can be partially avoided by the use of a small number of signifiers which become universally accepted as describing a genre. Respondent (G) identifies the DIY nature of *punk* as a main signifier: "The idea of throwing a band together and just doing it, that's *punk*". This response is echoed throughout secondary resources and focus groups. The codification of DIY, however, identifies *punk* as an unfocussed genre which could have any number of artists associated with it through such a descriptor. This is clearly one reason why so many disparate artists are classified under the original one genre *punk* identification (see 4.1.3.2). Having listened to one hundred early *punk* tracks considered in this thesis, it is clear that this response from respondent (G) has much merit. So many of the one hundred tracks are disparate in style and thus it is difficult whilst listening to the raw data to identify signifiers, patterns or codes that link some of the songs together. Respondent (G) further states that "The really interesting *punk* stuff will, of course, cover several categories". Here the disparateness of *punk* is identified where artists such as Nick Lowe are perceived to be in more than one genre grouping. Lowe is classed as *punk*, *new wave* or *pop* and in some cases all three at the same point in time. However, it must be noted that if the latter 100 tracks are explored there seems to be much more of a cohesive musical theme running through them, linking certain types of 'similar' music rather than a number of disparate styles under one umbrella.

Respondent (G) focuses on the DIY ethic as a facet of the *punk* framework stating that, "The Clash, more than any other *punk* band established the idea of DIY and the protest song". The reflection of the DIY artists in the DIY industry comes through very strongly from this respondent. He states, "to support the DIY ethic, the DIY industry was created. If we are against capitalism, we need

to provide an alternative, which has a folksy, hippie side to it. If I go to a gig and the bands playing are *punk* no one's selling fanzines, no one's trying to give me tapes of their band, everyone's just there in costume, it's not a *punk* gig and it's not a *punk* band if it's not like this".

The *punk* ethos comprises of all the signs of counter culture but in reality these elements are only for show and are not in the majority of cases followed through into the lives of those participating. Although it is clear from both primary and secondary research that the *hardcore* element and those pursuing *strait edge* philosophies do follow through the countercultural elements into their everyday lives. However:

The big difference is that *punk* did make news and move the establishment in ways that youth culture today does not. It set its participants apart and gave them membership of a radical movement. Nowadays, trends have replaced movements. Everybody, especially parents, hated its style; today parents and children dress the same. *Punk* is important and will remain so because it was the first and last genuine youth counterculture. Although the hippie movement had a political context, it was not as single-mindedly anti-establishment as *punk*. The older generation found the peace and love philosophy relatively unthreatening, but they could find nothing redeeming or understandable about *punk*. For this reason, it was far more effective at challenging the status quo (Colgrave & Sullivan 2001:382).

Therefore, the DIY style and the music of *punk* are key to its existence as a genre. It is at this juncture where many commentators disagree with the formative work on *punk* and subcultures as referenced in 3.1.0. Respondent (G) states:

And I always laugh when I read Dick Hebdige's 'Youth Culture' it's just so wrong, every page is just wrong, wrong, wrong. The answer is you do it. If you go away and hit a teaspoon against a jar and you record it and you call it 'well fetched gangalising monkey music' then you are part of rock history. It is that easy. Only one person needs to have heard it and it is there. Its like you make the fucking history.

Clark in Bennett supports this respondent's observation creating the following statement. "Thus as Clarke argues, Hebdige's (1979) analysis of *punk*, there is a distinct air of contradiction between its 'metropolitan centredness [sic]' and the emphasis on 'working class creativity (1981, p.86). Clarke then goes on to suggest that 'most of the *punk* creations which are discussed [by Hebdige] were developed among the art school avant-garde, rather than emanating "from the dance halls and housing estates" (Bennett 2000:23).

The underpinning philosophy of DIY emanates not only from the working class *punks* but also those *punks* who created images and developed *punk* in art schools and in a middle class environment. A melding of these two disparate class cultures caused the DIY phenomenon in *punk* where a bricolage of ideas and styles were meshed together to form a unique mixture of post modern styles. It is through this integration that the real legacy of *punk* was created. As Respondents in focus group 2 stated, "Not everyone can go and be the next Will Young but anyone can pick up a guitar and say fuck it, we are a *punk* band, this is us here we go".



It is apparent from the foregoing analysis that the industry establishes an artist's genre in a number of ways. The first is through the similarity of an artist with others already classified, and the second is through a 'toolbox' system which is universally recognised by producers and consumers alike. The toolbox is wide and varied, and seems to draw from three main spheres identification - musical, physical appearance and agenda. The musical elements include guitar sound, vocal differences, speedy drumming and an identifiable sound. The paramusical factors as already stated are split into two, the physical appearance, which includes what is worn, icons and bodily adornments, and agenda, which contains, context, attitude, what the artist sings about and the DIY ethic. It is also clear that the movement of an artist from an independent to a major label changes the codes and signifiers of the genre. This can be attributed to the movement from a genre to a marketing or umbrella category. It is also apparent from the analysis that all of these factors contribute to some kind of genre identification framework.

### 5.1.3 Genre Movement

The flexible nature of the consumer's attitude to music consumption over the past three decades owes its origin to their constant exposure to the expanding range of musical genres, marketing and umbrella categories. The choice of types of music available, the development of the major conglomerates and independent labels and the fluid nature of genre development has been further enhanced by developments in technology, which have made the production and consumption of music more accessible to the consumer. As Willis states:

There has also been a massive growth in home taping. With many young people unable to afford on a regular basis full-priced new records, let alone CDs, cassette tapes have become one of the principal currencies of consumption (Willis 1990:20).

This popular activity has been further encouraged by the development of CD re-writing equipment and MP3 where all formats of music can be downloaded and recorded from product or the web. The invention and reinvention of differing forms and sub-forms of music has fed consumer culture creating an escalation of the dichotomy between piracy and technological innovation. Owing to consumer unreliability, the industry has had to employ a range of strategies to try to normalise the customer response. Such strategies have meant the fragmentation of music in an effort to be all things to all people. However, the development of such strategies, the exposure of the consumer to ever increasing types and genres of music, and the incidence of the formation of closely related sub genres begs the question of whether artists are able to move freely from genre to genre. Is such a movement if possible just a reaction to the seamless join between certain genres or a conscious move between genre elicited by a profit or other motive?

### 5.1.3.1 The Desire to Change Through Personal Preference

When respondents were asked if genre change was possible in the music industry, negative rather than positive responses were received. It is also apparent that both conscious and unconscious changes take place within the music environment. Respondents cited the transient nature of some genres forcing changes in their genre placement, whilst others cite change being forced on artists that are too peripheral. It was perceived that change also took place as a reaction to trends or a desire (either economic or otherwise) to move on. Artists perceive genre change as a reason to escape the confines of an original genre placement. However, far from simplistic, the answers given to the question are often complex and lack a universal code, indicating a range of personal, group and industrial indicators signifying reasons for genre change. Respondent (E) a musician states:

One idea would be purely artistic, the desire to move on. People don't think or appreciate that most musicians do have very eclectic tastes and because you have very eclectic tastes and because you have success in a particular genre making a particular kind of music, that's not your only taste. There is an need to express other forms of music; you don't want to do the same thing forever. A genre is necessarily limiting because of the media coverage situation; you might want to appeal to a totally different audience. Sometimes your market does not grow with you, you need to break away and find a new market. However, part of the marketing of a record is to actually give it a character, so one song relates to another, there is a continuation of style so people would be able to recognise this without having heard the song before.

Such a view poses many questions, introduces many arguments and forms a dichotomy between the need to break away and to create a different kind of music, and the need to enable access to the music for the consumer through a 'continuation of style'. It is obvious from respondent (E)'s response that those making music have a different perspective on personal preference in genre choice to those managing it. The artist whose response is identified above has been stereotyped by the media and can only successfully create music in one genre; any attempt to diversify creates negative editorial in the music press. However, a key point of audience and consumer identification is made which indicates the power of the media.

The way an album is constructed and the way in which an artist's music relates back to already created signifiers enables an audience to identify with new product released by the same artist, without them having to change their identification codes to do this. This is especially important for the major labels that need to ensure brand loyalty (Kotler 1991) from their customers in the unstable environment associated with chart music, as the artist is more important than the label. However, in the independent sector the label is the brand and brand loyalty enhances the sale of more than a single artist on a specific label.

The growth of the market is also important. If an artist is unable to expand the existing market through a new release then the artists' shelf life will be limited, especially if they are signed to a major label. To change genre or modify

it may be the only way to attract a wider audience. However, by initiating a change in genre the artist may be perceived by the audience to be selling out, which may cause them to refuse the opportunity (Arnold 1997:92). It is often a question of ethics vs monetary gain. However, artists becoming big sellers do not move from genre to genre but from genre to marketing category to umbrella category.

Respondent (L) perceives that association with artists from other genres may contribute to a shift or change in existing genre and fan base. He states, "Genre often moves in context with the artists that you appear with and when appearing with such disparate artists at festivals there is the attraction of genre crossover and a repositioning of the artists playing". This response suggests that many outside factors attributed to industrial intervention such as the naming of the support artist or the festival that the band are scheduled to appear at have an influence on the genre of the artist performing. The introduction of the live music environment broadens the perspective of the thesis.

Although the music industry as a producer of product and the interface of this product with the consumer are all developed through media relations, the relationship of the artist and the consumer through the medium of the live concert is less clear-cut. Many external and often unrelated factors have an influence on this interface. At the outset of a concert or festival promotion the genre placing of artists may be reasonably robust. However, as the date of a festival approaches, and artists pull out of the event and new artists are substituted, the whole fabric of the event may change. Through such a conduit, the way in which some artists are exposed to the music of others often has an effect on the way they play in the future. The creation of multiple stages reduces the effect slightly because the consumer then has a choice, and artists residing in similar genres are billed together. This element is especially prevalent where there is a single bill of play and the artists follow one another on to the same stage. The impact of the concert scenario on genre identification and change is not an element that will be explored primarily in this study but it is an area where further research is necessary.

### 5.1.3.2 Motives for Genre Change

There are a number of motives which underpin the decision of an artist to undergo a conscious genre change. Respondent (X), an ex-musician and now an independent label manager states:

Bands move style because they get bored or because they want to make more money. Then again AC/DC and the Ramones made a fine career out of playing the same music over and over again.

The identification of both personal and economic motives underpinning genre change recognises the alternative options open to the artist, where artistic credibility and economic viability create both a tension and homogeneity within the industrial and social world. Respondent (K) links genre change to

popularity where an artist creates music for the specific purpose of being popular, rather than creating music because the music signifies an important and valid message. He states:

Many artists are trying to fit into the mainstream, they try to make their music fit with what is popular. When ska *punk* was big a few years back many bands tried to incorporate ska parts into songs but when the genre fizzled out many of the bands went back to playing the *punk* only sound. Also members of Lit are comprised of members who were in glam metal bands years ago. When the style was crushed by grunge they re-arranged their sound and look and then jumped on the *punk*/alt rock bandwagon. Artists looking for the big pay off jump genres.

It is apparent that a number of artists sacrifice the ethos underpinning a genre for the pursuit of profit.

Respondents (E) (F) and (P) identify economic viability as a signifier in genre identification. However, the drawback with such a signifier is that artists become classified in a wide band of music which may militate against a correct identification in a smaller more focused category. Respondent (X) however, identified a genre of music which suited the development and ethos of his band and signed to a label, which facilitated a more focused development. This shows that from a purist perspective, artists with a true belief in their work are more likely to be classified in a genre close to their perception of their preferred music placing rather than a category where financial returns are more important than other identification variables. Those who choose ulterior motives to create music by designating their genre niche for economic purposes may find it difficult to re-locate themselves after the initial placement strategy has run its course.

Thus, there is a clear distinction between music for music's sake and music for ease of production or profit within the group of respondents interviewed, and this often ties in with whether the artist or industry protagonist in question is signed to a major or independent label. It is also clear that the artist producing the music, whether it is for a major or an indie label, likes freedom of generic identification. To pigeonhole music in an area with narrow boundaries can have an adverse effect on the creative development of an artist. This divergence of views between the independent and major labels creates a differing perception in regards to the product. It is perceived that the major label product orientates around the market and the independent label product orientates around the consumer. It is, however, important to point out that in contemporary popular music created through mass consumption and the chart system this conflict does not occur, as the artists and the record company create a piece of music to a formula and both have an economic bias for its construction. In contrast to this the staff of an independent company tend to be paid little and work for the love of the music, but in the major company the idea of employment is to shift large amounts of product (Respondent 13).

Making music fit with what is popular has been an element of musical classification since the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Tagg 1993). A change in genre illuminates a number of problems, respondent (P) states:

I think that occasionally people move between genres but is it actually difficult to do so because a lot of music fans look at themselves as liking particular niches of music. So it is a shift. You are almost trying to shift your fan base. A lot of people particularly young people do not shift between one genre and another. They tend to like the things they like. I think that it is quite hard to move between genres.

This respondent makes a valid point. Owing to the wide range of styles available today, many consumers, especially those concerned with the independent music industry, are very discerning. A change in musical style or genre definition can make a customer decide to vote with their feet and refuse to buy the product or go to see a band that has changed genre or gravitated towards a marketing or umbrella category. Such a change may often disenfranchise the artists from the audience. On major labels, the obverse may occur where major artists can transcend genre boundaries and command diverse consumer profiles. Thus a change in genre does not overtly affect the consumer perception.

One reason for a shift in genre is to release the artist from a stereotype that has caused them to be perceived as inferior or unappealing to the wider audience. However, such a move is exceptionally difficult. Respondent (H) states:

Some artists have managed the genre move but not many. The Sweet went from pop to rock but never really threw off the teenybop shackles. Most artists don't change but merely refine what they do. Tom Waits did manage to change from countryish balladeer to something more astringent. That was a real rebirth. Genesis went from progressive rockers to a pop rock band. But I don't think anyone in pop or rock has managed the quantum shift equivalent to Miles Davis in jazz.

If an artist can defy the labellers and constantly reinvent himself or herself (for example, David Bowie, Sting and Madonna) they transcend the genre identification boundaries (see also 5.1.4). The identification of what enables them to do this is the subject of another thesis. Respondent (G) identifies one artist that tried to change genre completely but paramusical factors prevented them from identifying with certain genres and eventually pushed them into the corporate rock category. He states:

U2 have been the epitome of corporate rock. They tried to be punk, tried to be electronic. However,

1. Their politics are so mainstream, so right wing particularly in relation to Ireland, which counted them out as a punk band.
2. They sued a record label out of existence for stealing their songs and subverting them. It's the prodigal son, you can't come here.  
You can't downsize, you can't go up. You become a corporate rock band.

The respondent goes on to say that:

Corporate rock enables artist that are at opposite ends of a musical scale to be classified together and there is room for inexhaustible change.

This statement further supports the notion of such categories being utilised as marketing or umbrella categories and enable change within the category. Thus rather than a small artist being conspicuous by changing in a small genre a large artist can modify or metamorphose within a larger category without much notice being taken. Both respondents (G) and (H) support this notion, as they identify the fact that many mainstream artists have changed genre quite successfully. It is, however, debatable that what they have changed is their genre. It is most probable that they have shifted their focus to create a marketable entity within an umbrella/marketing category such as *rock* or *pop*. Such a move enables them to re align their identification codes so that such a change enables them to create competitive advantage, increase their audience and thus increase consumption of the product or service that they are creating. Respondent (A), who works for a major label, further supports this notion of major label development or the creation of hybrid marketing umbrellas arguing that:

If you count supergroup as a genre then I'd say yes, examples being Radiohead or Oasis moving from indie to pop. The Radiohead sound is far removed from that of their earlier days, though Oasis have not changed much, just the genre has moved on. The main reason for genre movement would be success or a change of musical direction. It is usually a movement away from the periphery to mainstream pop.

Such comments support the theoretical argument that the usual way in which an artist or band change genre is through a movement from the periphery to the mainstream often subverting genre but also enabling a profit motive to control the development of the music (Negus 1999).

It is clear from this section that movement between genres is difficult but does occur prompted by two factors. The first is personal preference where artists move genre to facilitate their own musical agendas. Secondly, there is often an economic motive, which can generate genre movement. This economic motive is associated with the need of music industry protagonists to capitalise on the financial developments of the artist. These two elements are associated with the tension between ethics and economics where the big pay off may mean more to the artists than the perceived responsibilities to the audience or to the artists themselves. The majority of artists are comfortable with their genre placing and thrive in the comfort zone that it affords. In the independent sector an audience tend to move with an artist rather than a label.

#### 5.1.4 The Evolution of Genre

The evolutionary role of genre is identified by respondent (B) who states:

I think bands evolve and bands change and I think that if they don't, there is a danger that they become dead in the water. The music industry is transient and ever changing. It is to do with evolution. Do bands sell out or do they just change?

The evolution of genre is an underpinning concept related to the changing spatial and contextual nature of music. All genres evolve and become either more complex or simplistic. They mutate and they become sub-divided, and in some cases revert to their original form. These states of evolution are directly related to changes in style, sartoriality, ethos and all other aspects of musical and paramusical development. Often artists have no choice but to evolve: either they change or they disappear. Respondent (C) identifies the commercial perception of consumption stating, "We are only reacting to the market place. Typically, metal bands try to move on if they mature as people and then consequently the music that they play changes because of that. I still think the market can be very critical of bands that do that". This shows that many artist are market driven and respond to market changes to enable survival.

In respect to maturing artists, the music and the genre modify to accommodate them or expands, attaching them to other similar genres or sub genres by their relationship to certain musical or paramusical factors. In a temporal context, very few artists in youth cultural related genres are still playing the same music twenty years on. Respondent (C) states that "Genre was created to enable the consumer to understand what they were getting as they do from a washing powder". In the case of mature artists and their relationship to the consumer, the consumer will modify their music expectations to accommodate the artist. The more mature consumer is more likely to modify their genre perceptions of the artist than the youth cultural consumer is, as mature consumers are more tolerant. A number of factors temper the evolution of genre. Many of these are demographic, including age and sex. Others include credibility: for example respondent (Q) states, "If you lose, credibility within the fan base, all is lost. Are the kids that gullible? I don't think so".

The evolution of genre is inextricably linked to the macro and micro environmental factors affecting music. In any given context these factors exert a balance of forces which can determine the development of new or existing genre in a wide range of directions. The question of how genre evolves is one that both the industry and commentators are extremely uncomfortable with, owing to the complexity of possible answers. The complexity of genre evolution is further compounded by the role of the media gatekeeper (Hirsch 1970) who acts as the conduit between the producer and the consumer. In this context the producer indicates those involved with the industry, controlling the flow of product to the consumer.

Respondent (B) states that:

Genre evolves because art evolves. If somebody wants to produce a piece of music and they want it to appeal to a certain audience then they will try to produce a certain genre of music. Gatekeepers then make a value judgement on what is played.

The value judgement made by the gatekeeper may be based on an economic, legal or even a sociological pretext, perhaps bound up with cost effectiveness or profit motive. Respondent (C), who perceives that youth culture and its desire to identify with specific sub-cultural groups are reasons for the evolution of genre, reinforces this response. Over the last decade, society has changed quickly as products and services have become more immediate, and in parallel to this music, fashion and culture have all shifted through rapid stages of change. Genre has sub-divided and this enables the identification with fragmented genre to become an important aspect of youth cultural identity. Respondent (C) further states that:

If you can create a new sub-culture of your own and there is a music that goes with it, then suddenly there is something new and of course the media is quick to pick up on these things. Even the coining of a phrase can initiate a genre. Therefore, most genres are created by youth culture or those that manipulate youth culture.

The allusion to those who manipulate youth culture directly related to the industry and the media is tied up in the forces of privilege, class and state. Willis points out:

For young people it is not the commercialisation and commodification of culture per se which is the problem. On the contrary, it is clear that the market has been a liberating factor in the extension of the cultural resource for many young people. In fact young people have a creative role in shaping the contours of commercial culture in ways which are quite forbidden to them within 'official cultures' - education, literature, the arts - where the combined forces of privilege, class and the state too often reduce young people to powerless subjects (Willis 1990:12).

This response from Willis characterises the dichotomy between mass culture and minority interest where youth at the centre of mass culture has no say in its formation. However, where minority culture is concerned, especially at its origin, youth culture is a key player in genre formation.

Respondent (A), a major record company employee is more pragmatic. He states that "At the point music gets to a record company they have to be able to sell these fruits of creation, giving them names as you would any product, this gives it its own life of sorts". Respondent (X) agrees with this notion using an analogy to reinforce the point. He states that people create genre for "the same reason why people put their salt, pepper, garlic, onion, cinnamon etc. into a spice rack in the kitchen. People need to organise, put things in boxes so they know where to place things. They make it easier to communicate meanings through labels".

Although this response is not concerned with the origin and evolution of genre it gives an insight into the uniformity and control exerted during genre



identification. Genre both categorises and communicates. When people talk about music they need ordered categories which makes dialogue easier as they are conversing with each other in terms that the group understand. Respondent (H) agrees with this to some extent. He believes that the development and origin of many genres is “a side effect of rock journalism. Journalists need classifications. They need categories to write about rather than just a confusing mass of bands and artists. It is about branding”. Such responses support the notion that the media create and name genre.

Respondent (J) perceives that genre relates to individuality: the creation of genre allows artists to create sub-genre so that they do not have to be classed in the same category as other artists. He states “you don't want to be considered in the same genre as say Green Day because you sing about different stuff”. This alludes to the creation of sub-genre elements emanating from those who feel that they do not fit the ordered category already created for them. Thus the artists may feel that they have signifiers that are different enough from other artists in a main or sub-genre to initiate a new category that fits their musical and para musical elements more comfortably. Thus evolution takes place.

Historically rock and roll was reasonably uniform and as respondent (K) states:

as bands began to incorporate different elements into their music radio and record labels needed to classify by name what they were marketing to the public. This enabled those not as familiar with particular bands to understand what a band would sound like without listening to a song of theirs.

This statement clarifies the dual development of genre nomenclature as a compartmentalisation of like musical episodes and artists and the appropriation of the genre system as a communication mechanism where the positioning of an artists name within a genre group can communicate the type of music played by that artist. In this case the genre utilises dual semiotic structures of cohesion and order. Hodge and Kress state:

Semiotic structures can be described in terms of relations of *cohesion* (Fusion/separation, identity/difference) and *order* (vertical and horizontal, involving degrees of complexity and subordination) (Hodge & Kress 1995:263).

Both cohesion and order are vitally important in the identification and subdivision of genre. Fusion is enhanced when artists fit to a serviceable genre and separation is caused when a genre mutates or subdivides. Identity with a genre is important in the reiteration of the genre sense of existence and difference is not only a key in new genre formation but also in the formation of sub genre from an established genre grouping. Complexity and subordination and elements inherent in any study of genre semiotic complexity vary depending on the genre itself. *Dance* music genres are not particularly complex in their makeup but the identification of *free jazz* may invoke complex musical structure identification and the score analysis of *classical* music may also invoke complex procedures.

Respondent (P) states that:

There have been musical genres from the origin of popular music. I think the mid-late 50's introduction of teenage driven music is what really drove it into genres because it was all then classified as rock n roll Elvis or Johnny Ray. It was a wide genre and up until then there hadn't been a market for young people to tap into, it was more of a family thing. Media grows, music expands, variety appears and it is logical to name varieties. It is a marketing tag, it enables you to isolate groups of people.

This supports the earlier respondents, as it mirrors their view that genre was created as a communication form to enable people to talk about the music, but through the media it enabled identification and market penetration. This is endorsed by respondent (L) who states that:

Music must be classified so that people can find it in record stores and identify artists. *Punk* had to be split into categories (sub-genres) because it no longer just involved 77 *punk*. To identify your audience you have to find a niche.

This is supported by respondents in focus group one who identify genre as a tool for compartmentalisation, identifying the isolation of sub genre groups through media manipulation and the search for a 'handle' through which to market genre. Respondent (G), a journalist, has a more sobering thought. He states:

Pop music is very like the English language in the sense that it is in the interests of the centre of authority in commercial terms to homogenise. The more the centre tries to homogenise the more things fracture at the edges.

This is borne out by the major/indie argument. The majors more often than not use a large umbrella or marketing category within which to place their artists. Fracturing occurs at the independent end of the scale, where the more genre and sub-genre there are, the more likely the artists on the *indie* labels are to survive. The shifting power relations in the music industry tend to militate against control, and the fracturing of genre is one mechanism which undermines the controlling influence.

The subject of the evolution of genre has at the central core the element of recognition. This can be identified as the branding of a product or through the dialogue between consumers or producers and consumers. As some artists gravitate towards a mass cultural identity, others move away from the mass cultural focus to retain individuality. Major artists evolve from genre groups into either market groupings or umbrella categories, creating homogeneity within the industry. Others evolve to more extreme sub genres, fracturing genre and developing alternative genre identification. The role of evolution is most pronounced where an artist changes from a genre to a marketing category and then to an umbrella category. However, the evolution of an artist from one genre to another can also be caused by passive choices, such as a change in context or a subtle change within the existing genre, which pushes the artist outside the genre definition. The analysis suggests that evolution may be

caused by active choices such as boredom, musical direction changes or to escape stereotyping.

### 5.1.5 The Benefits and Disadvantages of Genre Nomenclature

When examining the main benefits and disadvantages of genre nomenclature, it is inevitable that some responses will encapsulate a dual focus, as many categories perceived to be beneficial to one respondent may be perceived as disadvantageous to another.

The major benefits of genre are perceived to fall into two categories. The first centres upon the benefits of marketing and retail strategies and the second relates to the individual artist and consumer and their attachment to a genre group.

#### 5.1.5.1 Marketing of Genre

Respondent (P) states that genre is:

A marketing tool to isolate groups, it isolates who you are going to target. You don't have to take a scatter shot approach. It is a cost-effective way of getting to people. At an early stage it is not cynical but a way of artists being identified by youth culture. For word of mouth it still has to be classified.

Respondent (C) reiterates this by stating that genre identification “makes it easy to hit the target market and you package them in such a way that it makes it easy for the market to find them.” Respondent(F) agrees that “it is easier to find your target market if you have some idea of what you are selling”. From this it can be ascertained that ease of access afforded by genre nomenclature to both the consumer and producer is thought to be beneficial. The introduction of genre labels facilitates knowledge of the product thus enabling the record company and the media to hit the target market. The isolation of target groups enables companies to create living entities (artists and bands) and direct them specifically at these target groups by developing market intelligence so that the producer/consumer interface is as rewarding as possible. It is also perceived that industry practitioners use marketing tools to secure profits through the minimisation of costs and by attracting consumers to consume a product, which may or may not be of interest to them. One such way of attracting consumers is the use of logo parodies (Daly & Wice 1995), where artists use variations on established trademarks or use well known songs with a different slant to give them a wider appeal. The use of the *Ghostbusters* Theme by Xentrix and *Kids in America* by Lawnmower Death are prime examples of artists exploiting the commercial successes of others to kick-start their own fading careers. Changing a genre by using fun images to replace dark images of death and destruction did not make for longevity in the two previous artists careers but rather ended them because they had exploited niche genres to their own ends, finally trying to capitalise on mass media techniques.

### 5.1.5.2 Belonging

Belonging to a genre is important for both producer and consumer as it creates groups of people with like minds and similar ideas creating in turn an ability to utilise dialogue regarding the music through the elements signified by the genre. This creates modified and breakaway genres that have added small modifications to their musical or paramusical factors, which causes fragmentation and sub-division.

Major artists are not identified by label but by the popularity which they attract. Their movement from label to label, or often from pseudo genre to pseudo genre within an umbrella category, has little significance to the consumer. However, some independent labels are synonymous with a certain genre, and a movement between labels within this tightly knit area can result in a defection by their audience to another artist on the artist's original label. This type of brand loyalty therefore is not to the artists but to the record label which is the constant in this independent system.

The notion of belonging is important to the individual as music like sport and other interests provides an escape from the realities of life. The following of an artist or a label enables consumers to appropriate new dress codes, alternative lifestyles, identify with others with like minds or similar musical tastes and to converse and communicate with others through the medium of genre. Reading certain magazines, listening to certain radio programmes and exposure to music on television supports this dialogue.

The identification of media formats supports such consumer dialogue. Respondent (K) states that genre enables radio to "programme what they play better and have listeners who know what to expect from a format of radio". The main radio stations play popular hits or hits that they decide will become popular on a strict rotational basis, usually in four or five play rotation systems comprising an A, B, C, D, and E playlist. In this rotational system there is little room for independent/underground music. This type of music is played by niche and underground radio stations and programmes followed by small groups of people.

It is apparent from this section that the benefits and disadvantages of genre nomenclature are entirely subjective and a single genre signifier can both be a benefit and a disadvantage. It is also clear that there are three main benefits that genre categorisation affords. The first is that it creates easily identifiable marketing categories recognisable by artists, media representatives the industry and the consumer. Although these categories are often based on profit motives there are equally genre groupings that are based on more acceptable notions in the alternative industry including ethos, artist identification and creative aspects. The second benefit is the effect that genre nomenclature has on retail strategies, where the identification of artists and genres from readily available simplistic development can benefit the artist, the industry, the media and the consumer. The third benefit is the identification of a base and sense of belonging for both the artist and the consumer. This enables access to both by a

mutually relevant tag. In the case of disadvantages of the genre system, two have been identified. The first is stereotyping and pigeonholing where an early identification of an artist in a genre can disable further attempts at categorisation. Stereotyping and pigeonholing are elements forced upon the artist and the consumer by the search for economic viability. The second disadvantage is bandwaggoning, where an artist mimics and competes in the marketplace with other similar artists for a share of the market. However, to the major label such a system is crucial in the facilitation of further commercial gain.

The major disadvantages of genre nomenclature are difficult to conceptualise as some of the disadvantages to artists or the media are advantages to the consumer and the industry and vice versa.

### 5.1.5.3 Stereotyping and Pigeonholing

One main disadvantage of genre is stereotyping or pigeonholing. Labelling tends to be something which causes artists to be tightly categorised and may include an image and musical/paramusical content which is very difficult to change. Respondent (A) states that there is nothing worse than “belonging to a genre that does not sell”. Once placed in a genre, as can be seen from exploration earlier in this Chapter, it can be difficult to change genre. Respondent (C) identifies one of the major problems with changing from one genre to another. He states:

If an artist wishes to change or crossover it may be perceived as a wrong move and the public and the media may not take the artist seriously.

Respondent (G) exposes the cynical nature of such developments.

The industry uses genre in an attempt to homogenise, categorise and control. The kids use genres to fuck with the industry's head.

This shows how the producer and the consumer differ in approach to genre. The industry uses it to control and market, whereas youth culture uses it to marginalise the industry. For some artists stereotyping has a more deep-seated problem. Steeger (2001) states in her paper “The Business of Stereotyping Black music: The Stranglehold of Non Traditional Black Artists in Popular Music that:

The distribution of non-traditional black popular artists is challenging due to historical models built upon segregation, Black Nationalism and racial concepts, poor marketing capacities and the economics of niche marketing to the masses. In spite of the success of artists such as Lenny Kravitz, Living Colour and Macy Gray, many non-traditional black acts will not find an audience due to the above mentioned conditions.

Stereotyping in this case is based on political, racial and economic factors rather than social, economic and musical factors. In many ways this example mirrors *punk*, a music which was shunned for its total alternative status to popular

music of the time. The hatred of *punk* by the middle aged and middle class was tantamount to racism and at time *punks* were classed as sub human.

#### 5.1.5.4 Bandwaggoning and Short Term Gain

Alongside the concepts of stereotyping, homogenisation, categorisation and control is the concept of bandwaggoning which is seen by the those interviewed as a way of controlling the spread of musical genre by mimicking artists and sounds already created. However, such blatant marketing techniques can cause major issues for both the industry and artists. Respondent (K) states that, "Bands think that they can get fans immediately by mimicking a genre or wearing the uniform of a genre". This is compounded by the fact that: "When a genre becomes marketable record labels will jump all over the genre and bleed it dry by over exposing it until everyone becomes sick of it" (Respondent K).

The reasons for bandwaggoning are purely economic and reflect an industry which is governed by the need to control. By creation a leading artist and signing other artists who are similar a record company can create short term gains from such a strategy. However, this process is potentially damaging to young artists as they are exploited by the industry for short periods of time and then discarded when the genre or sun genre is no longer economically viable. Such genre milking is a symptom of the exploitation of youth culture by the media and industry. The industry's need to make money causes such developments to overtake the real meaning of the genre. The search for economic gain through bandwaggoning has many detrimental effects.

#### 5.1.6 The Development of New Artists

The creation of new genres and the mechanisms used by the industry and media to seek out artists to fit into these genres is an important area for exploration. In the search for artists to fit a new genre, artists within already existing genres are ignored, reflecting the way in which the music industry operates. Respondent (A) an employee of a major record company states:

We aim to push artists that have more of a chance of a result because there is less time and resources due to the downsizing in the industry. Jobs have gone and the focus is on short/term/maximum profit. The cost of breaking an artist has increased so a company with a product will shift emphasis onto what will sell now.

Respondent (10) reiterates this and reflects the industry view on bandwaggoning stating "why look for artists in a genre that is not selling, look for similar artists to those that are selling now". It may seem creative suicide to some, but one company's creative suicide is another company's economic sense. Although companies are forsaking new talent in other, less profitable genres, they are capitalising on new talent in a new genre that sells well which may enable more money to be spent on a later date in pursuit of more creative artists in other genres.

It is clear from such exploration that the profit motive outweighs any other developmental aspect in the genre decision making process within the major record labels. This is reiterated by respondent (B) a mass cultural DJ who states:

If someone is successful the media and the industry will search out others of that ilk. It is a cynical process. It is about getting to the largest audience.

Others who work with major label artists agree. Respondent (Q) states "Record companies are a bunch of sheep. They follow each other to try to sign the same or similar artists to a genre". The active search for artists similar to those making money is expounded by respondent (P) who states:

If they see an act enjoying some success they want more of this. You know everyone is out there looking for a Coldplay or a Travis. I meet A&R men on my travels and they say 'we've been sent out to look for a Dido'. They were all looking for a Dido two years ago. However, a Gabrielle or a Dido are not genres they are amorphous elements.

In such cases where artists are relatively unclassifiable the search by A&R departments are fruitless. The way in which both Gabrielle and Dido created fan bases is nothing to do with the genre that they were perceived to be part of. It was by chance and good marketing strategy that the buzz around these two artists was created.

The view of independent companies is very different and it reiterates comments and responses from earlier questions. Respondent (L), a *punk* musician, states:

The major labels identify a new phenomenon then they sign up every band that sounds like them to maximise profits. However, the indie labels are constantly looking for new artists in indistinct genres to sign up and fight for their survival as a ground breaking label.

This again supports the differing approaches of mass cultural and minority interest groupings where the mass cultural element has a strong profit motive for existence. It is however not beyond the realms of possibility that the independent motive may also be for profit. The only way to compete against the larger corporations is to find a niche in the industry and develop it. Respondent (K) another independent record label manager states:

The perfect example was grunge, then punk, then ska. Every third rate Nirvana and Pearl Jam was signed, as grunge became huge. Then with punk after Green Day and Offspring every Californian punk band had a record deal. The feeding frenzy killed the format in the mainstream and also ignored other genres around at the time.

This is supported by Arnold who states:

Thus began a bidding war of seriously mammoth proportions. Rancid were as Armstrong puts it now, 'practically being stalked. Before last fall, I didn't even know

what an A&R person was, I had no idea, and here they all were turning up at our shows, our hotels.....It was really crazy and overwhelming (Arnold 1997:91).

The offshoot of this is that many promising artists around at a time when artists are being sought for individual genres, fall by the wayside. Respondent (G) perceives that, "genres put people in cages. A zoo beast consuming your own dung". Such an allusion gives a vivid picture of the way in which the media exploit the consumer to liking more of the same.

Respondent (H) states:

A lot of very good artists get left out in the cold usually selling to the dedicated few. Music always has to be seen to be reinventing itself, coming up with new ideas and sounds. Most artists have a limited shelf life so it is important to create a fuss at the beginning and to get selling those units.

Respondent (E), who thinks that "a lot of money has been ploughed into some rather poor *garage* artists at the expense of some rather good ones" ,backs this up. However, Respondent (X) has a slightly differing and more cynical view of the industry which relates to the cyclical motion of music theory:

The press want to sell papers. They will happily slap a new name on some tired old shit from a decade previously and suddenly it is the hot thing. Music fashion is the prime example of this, do we really need to bring back neon 80's fashion? No they've just run out of ideas. Indies will work to reinvent their chosen genre or expand the horizons of the genre or simply rely on a core fan base to perpetuate things. A more organic process of evolution! Majors are like locusts, they find a new genre like rap metal and beat the horse to death creating a huge upswing then a huge backlash against that type of music.

From the foregoing analysis it can be ascertained that the dichotomy between artists being classed as 'more of the same' or classed as a development of an entirely new genre or sub genre can be identified as either an organic or a synthetic process. The synthetic process takes three forms: first, the development of similar artists to those in vogue at a particular moment, secondly the creation of new music from old genres, a type of recycling of genre when there is a lull in the creation of key artists, and thirdly the creation of manufactured artists by the industry. The organic approach focuses more on the development and positioning/re-positioning of an artist in a particular area of music, in which they are perceived as being genuine artists in that genre. These artists are grown and nurtured, developing a fan base and not appropriated for short term gain. The next section deals with genre longevity and placement strategy.

### 5.1.7 Longevity and Genre Placement Strategy

*Rock* artists in the late 1960s and 1970s including The Who, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, Yes, ELP and the Rolling Stones were strategically positioned in the market and longevity strategies enabled both artists and the industry to have a great deal of success over a long period of time. The number of artists today



who employ such strategies has diminished as the sale of singles and albums has decreased. Part of the exploration within this thesis is to ascertain whether longevity is taken into consideration and whether genre placement strategies still exist.

The majority of respondents perceive that it is unlikely that longevity is a factor in an artist's development in the present economic climate. Respondent (B) supports this stating that "there are so many one hit wonders that longevity is not a issue considered by the major labels". Respondent (H) reiterates this by stating that, "no one really ever knows how long a musical artist or style will last, so longevity is seldom a factor". Respondent (J) perceives that "it is much cheaper for the industry to invest in one artist for one hit and then drop them, they are low maintenance". Respondent (Q) sees today's music industry as rife with short-termism: "A few majors consider longevity but not like they did in the past". Respondent (K) is more philosophical in his approach to the question:

No, it is a hit while the iron is hot strategy. Major labels work more or less as a bank. They give their artists money as a loan and then try to recoup as quickly as possible. Bands they sign to these deals are bands they expect big sales from over short periods so they choose to sign bands with a sound that is currently popular. Artist development is dead. Everything is now one or two records out and each record has a shelf life of about three months unless they can generate a second hit which seldom occurs. Today's strategies are all based on piggybacking the artist on the genre they are part of and that genre has to be the one most popular at the present time.

Although respondent (K) perceives that there is no room for longevity in strategies today and that artist's development is dead, respondent (P) has a slightly different perception:

I think that most people assume that there is some sort of longevity there. In most genres you have hundreds of bands associated with them but there are always two or three key bands that come out of that genre and survive and have long lasting careers. They are usually the genre leaders rather than those that have jumped on the bandwagon. Most labels hope that their band is going to be one of those at a particular stage. It is towards the tail end of a genre when the real mercenary bandwagon jumping takes place where people try to squeeze the last drops of goodness out of the dying genre. It is the labels that push this rather than the act.

Although the point that respondent (P) makes is valid, from previous sections of the study it is clear that an artist reaching such a stage [a genre leader] within a genre, usually moves from the genre to a larger marketing or umbrella category. The movement to a wider category causes both musical and audience changes, which are inevitable in a move from minority interest to mass culture, where there is wider access to economic resources. Respondent (E) cites a different reason as to why longevity may be important in genre development. When alluding to a longevity strategy he states:

I don't think so, not at the point of placement, not at the moment when the genre is being defined. I would think that occasionally moving out of the genre might be longevity based. It was very tempting at the time to make drum and bass music and we knew we could have hits with it but we did not want to begin to enter into that genre, we knew how limited it was. It was very specific and we knew that it would

have a very limited audience after a time, so we specifically did not entertain making music of that genre because we knew how short lived it would be.

The artist in this example has made a conscious decision not to make music in one genre because of its limiting capacity. However, respondent (P) has a more practical view on longevity:

I think it is something that might happen but it is never planned for majors need to make a quicker return than ever before. There is much more longevity in the classical and jazz market because you are not trying to drive it through the mass market. I think now that longevity is looked at as a niche and specialist genre thing and perhaps jazz is one of those elements.

This study of longevity supports niche market strategies where to create income, the smaller label has to sell regular amounts of records to necessitate their survival. By regularly releasing niche product to their market their turnover is guaranteed. Therefore, if a label has a small number of artists, it is imperative that such artists are part of some sort of longevity structure.

From this section, it can be ascertained that there is a perceived reluctance by major companies to create longevity strategies for artists and that longevity is something that occurs rather than is planned. In the case of the independent label, longevity is key to niche survival and the constant release strategies of these companies secure sustainability.

## **5.1.8 Concluding Points**

### **5.1.8.1 General Genre Description**

From the qualitative findings and subsequent discussion, a number of issues inviting further clarification have arisen. The role of the media in genre genesis and identification is one of facilitation and development. On both a micro and macro level, the media's function is pivotal in both the formal and informal identification of musical genre. The identification process utilises both musical and paramusical signifiers, which integrate to formulate a wide and varied assortment of reference points through which such identification can be made. The perceptions of the industry, the media, the artist and the consumer form an important interface in the definition of genre. The economic viability of the artist has a role in defining whether the artist is placed in a genre, marketing or umbrella category, and this decision is linked to major and independent marketing strategies which consider such concepts as the cyclical motion of music, surrogate spending capacity, and the mushroom effect in their genre decision making process. There is a tension between the formulaic and the individualistic musical reference and this is often associated with the economic viability of the artist or musical episode. Thus, the identification of a genre through a number of appropriated variables is carried out through a filter mechanism where those codes most appropriate are recognised by the protagonists involved.

There are a number of protocols and frameworks, which facilitate such filter mechanisms. These include the 'similarity reflex', which leads to the initial recognition of a broad categorisation, and the genre toolbox from which one or more variables are adopted. Fragmentation and boundary expansion are facilitated by genre development and such developments are affected by the differing strategies of the major and independent labels. Artists do have a small amount of influence over their genre placement but this is often reserved for the independent label artists where elements such as 'DIY' can immediately influence placing. Such influence is also exerted where artists control their own means of production.

Genre movement, although seldom practiced, is initiated through personal preference, boredom, economic reasons or through evolution. In the case of economic development the movement initiated is usually from a genre into either a marketing of umbrella category. The benefits of genre identification are both industrial and individual. The marketing and retail strategies associated with genre increase economic viability, and belonging to a genre facilitates self-esteem as well as a fan base through which the genre can be marketed. The disadvantages of genre identification include stereotyping, pigeonholing and bandwaggoning, which all impinge upon the creativity of the artist. During the progressive rock movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s stability and longevity was crucial for the perpetuation of the music industry. With the emergence of *punk*, and the resultant shift in the musical power base, there was a shift in strategy. The major labels no longer implement longevity strategies, but pursue quick, short term gain from a wide range of artists. The independent companies tend to target niche areas pursuing longevity and stability, enabling the independents to survive.

#### 5.1.8.2 Punk and Nu Punk Drawing the Evidence Together

In line with other musical genres, the media exposed and developed *punk*. In the tradition of an alternative sub or youth culture, the media developed a moral panic and the BBC instituted bans, which catapulted *punk* into the public domain through negative association rather than a positive developmental process. Such a process of attrition rather than gravitation supported the way in which all aspects of original *punk* were received. Micro rather than macro media channels were utilised by the alternative industry surrounding the genre, to promote and develop the youth cultural consumer base. Such developments eventually spawned a number of sub genres of the music, as the central core of the genre eventually surrendered to the lure of economic advancement (see the Mushroom effect 3.1.3.3 p54) fragmenting the genre development.

The deviant naming of the artists facilitated alphabetical retail strategies in the independent record stores, strengthening the alternative philosophy. Originally the artists had more say in the genre naming process as they chose to deliver the product through alternative channels. *Nu punk* already had a strong developmental base in the popularity of a nucleus of *hardcore* artists. The major

music industry quickly latched onto the economic potential of the *nu punk* artist and utilised mass cultural strategies creating an environment where clothes, music and other *nu punk* attributes were available quickly, effectively and efficiently from a wide range of outlets.

Protocols and frameworks for the two types of music differ. The genesis of *punk* spawned a wide range of artist and styles under one genre banner where the 'similarity reflex' was utilised liberally and the paramusical elements associated with *punk* underpinned the genre. As *punk's* main protagonists were copied, a stereotypical reference for *punk* emerged, through which the major labels took a foothold in the alternative domain. Thus, fragmentation took place expanding the boundaries of the initial genre and enabling sub genres to escape the major label influence. With the emergence of *nu punk*, the majors had a genre through which the stereotyping, bandwaggoning and pigeonholing of a small number of mass cultural artists could gain a strong economic hold at the heart of youth culture. In the *nu punk* domain the 'similarity reflex' is more specific and utilised by the consumer to distinguish between mass cultural and alternative elements on both a perceptual and an industrial level.

The appearance and identification of *punk* had both a musical and paramusical dimension. Declamatory vocals, loud, distorted guitar, lack of solo, fast drums played on the offbeat and a simple underpinning bass line were all musical factors pertaining to the genre. Paramusical factors integrated with these musical factors comprised sartoriality, the spiky Mohican and monochrome/bright coloured dress, the attitude, through confrontational and aggressive behaviour, the live experience involving spitting and pogoing. These initial *punk* factors are now more of a stereotype than a cross section of *punk* youth culture, which by its very nature was alternative rather than conforming. The *nu punk* paramusical factors are uniform and exist already in the mass cultural domain. It is said that *punk* suffered through a lack of cultural icons (Polhemus 2000), but the opposite is true of *nu punk* which has an abundance of readily available icons from surf and board fashion to designer skatewear. All of these elements, both musical and paramusical, form part of the genre toolbox utilised to identify musical episodes and artists.

There was not much genre movement by *punk* bands until the advent of *new wave*, where artists chose either to remain *punk* and deliver a more *hardcore* and alternative product, or become mass cultural and move to one of the wide range of genres under the umbrella of *new wave*. These genres included *indie*, *new wave*, *electropop*, *new romantic* and *Gothic*. In contemporary popular music *nu punk* affords a different type of movement, rather than the creation of a division to separate musical and paramusical elements, the division in *nu punk* was purely economic where artists were divided by their potential to either create or not short term gain *creating nu* and *pop punk*. Thus the change was synthetic rather than organic. This is not a movement within a genre or from genre to genre, but a movement elicited by the economic necessity of the major labels. However, some artists still retain their original genre title so that consumers from the original genre placement may be swayed to buy their new product.

The desire to change genre therefore as well as being influenced by economic expedience is also influenced by personal preference and evolution.

Little of *punk* was economically viable owing to its minority appeal, but *pop punk*'s penchant for formula endears the genre to the mass cultural audience, afforded by the move from the independent to the major label. Such a move is the obverse of *punk*'s initial DIY and alternative stance. Thus *pop punk* is often classified as a derivative of corporate rock. *Punk* artists existed in an alternative musical environment, which enabled them to exert more influence over their genre placement. However, *pop punk* is fully manipulated by the media and mass industry, and artists exert little influence over their genre placement. Thus longevity of the artist has become the domain of the independent rather than the major, where the major labels pursue expedience in economic gain and the independents need a solid build up of releases over a long period to sustain economic viability. All of these developments are part of genre evolution.

The benefits of genre identification to *punk* genre are few, owing to their alternative orientation. Marketing and retail benefits afforded to other genres are not important to *punk* music, which revolves around its philosophy of DIY and attitude to authority. The disadvantages of bandwaggoning, stereotyping and pigeon holing are also problematic to *punk*, although the major label philosophy encourages such practices as it enhances the potential profitability of the genre.

It is clear from the evidence that there are a wide range of variables involved in the identification of genre and that *punk (hardcore)* and *pop punk (nu punk)* are very different in orientation.

The next section deals with the tabulation of the quantitative results and the discussion, the articulation and triangulation of the data. The procedure utilised in the examination of both the hand and computer coded data including the variables utilised and the way in which the data was analysed can be found in Chapter 2 in section from section 2.10 (p77-81).

## 6 QUANTITATIVE RESULTS, IDENTIFICATION AND DISCUSSION

### 6.0 Introduction

In the first part of this Chapter the quantitative results are presented. In the second part, the results are discussed and qualitative evidence is combined with secondary research to facilitate the triangulation of the data. In the normal course of a study where significance values are determined, a threshold value is created which identifies an acceptable significance level. However, the degrees of significance identified within the study necessitate the creation of a scale of significance so that differentiation can be made. This scale comprises the following  $p < .0001$  (extremely significant),  $p < .001$  (very significant),  $p < .01$  (significant) and  $p < .05$  (marginally significant).

### 6.1 The Presentation of the Quantitative Results

#### 6.1.1 The Two Tailed t-test

In the left hand column (column one) of *Table 1* the variables chosen for the experimentation are shown. Column two identifies the mean values of the early group of 100 songs (original *punk* musical episodes), whilst column three displays the mean values of the late group of 100 songs (*nu punk* musical episodes). Columns four and five show the t and p values respectively, from the two tailed t-tests carried out in the study. The first 14 rows house the results of the analysis carried out on the hand-coded variables. These variables were initially identified through free listing and pile sort and then a final choice made by focus group analysis. The outcomes of the hand-coded analysis of the 200 musical samples were reached using focus group deliberation, rating *Tables* and observation. The final nine rows of the *Table* comprise the results of the

computer-coded analysis. The outcomes of the computer-coded variables were ascertained by the analysis of the 200 midi files (representing the 100 early and 100 late musical episodes in the test sample), through the Midi Toolbox (Eerola & Toiviainen in press). To assess whether there were significant differences between the two groups (early and late) in each variable, a two-tailed t-test was implemented. The two-tailed t-test gives a higher probability value than a one-tailed t-test and consequently is a more conservative test affording more validity to the result.

The variables with the most significant differences ( $p < .0001$ ) are Beats Per Second, Mix Structure Drums, Mix Structure Bass, and Number of Repeat Lines. An explanation of these very significant variables follows (in 6.2.3). The test pieces in the late group tend to have a higher number of beats per second than the pieces in the early group.

On average the drums and bass tend to be further forward in the mix in the latter test pieces than they do in the earlier test pieces. Lines tend to be repeated more in the early pieces than they do in the later pieces. The variables with the next most significant differences ( $p < .01$ ) comprise, The Deviancy of the Artists Name, the Number of Lines Per Verse, and the Number of Lines Per Chorus.

Table 1 identifies a list of the variables chosen for experimentation and the significance of those variables to the study. An explanation of these significant variables follows (in 6.2.3). The artists' names in general tend to be less deviant in the later examples than in the earlier. There tend to be more lines in both verse and chorus on average in later *punk* songs than in the earlier *punk* songs.

The variables comprising the next most significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) are Rhyming Couplets in the Chorus, Length of Song, Internal Distribution of Pitch and Notes per Second. An explanation of these marginally significant variables follows (in 6.2.3). There tend to be more rhyming couplets in the chorus of the later examples than in the early examples. In general, late *punk* songs tend to be longer than early *punk* songs. The distribution of pitch tends to be higher in the later songs and there tends to be more notes per second in the later songs.

The rest of the variables are not significant in identifying differences between early (original *punk*) and late (*nu punk*) musical episodes. The foregoing analysis suggests that these variables identify homogenising factors between the two types of music explored. Out of the 23 variables tested for significance through the two-tailed t-test 4 are extremely significant, 4 are significant, 4 are marginally significant and 11 are not significant.

TABLE 1 The Significance of the Variables Tested

Variable	Mean (early)	Mean (late)	t	p
Artist Name Deviant	3.37	2.24	0.0006	p<.01
Song Name Deviant	2.88	2.25	0.028	n.s.
Beats Per Second	2.74	3.28	2.68E-09	p<.0001
Lines Per Verse	5.06	5.90	0.001	p<.01
Lines Per Chorus	3.78	4.67	0.0008	P<.01
Mix Structure Guitar	8.66	8.74	0.418	n.s.
Mix Structure Drums	2.43	5.86	9.9E-15	p<.0001
Mix Structure Vocals	8.96	8.85	0.357	n.s.
Mix Structure Bass	2.45	4.57	2.97E-06	p<.0001
Number of Repeat Lines	3.57	2.34	4.78E-05	p<.0001
Rhyming Couplets Verse	2.40	2.44	0.439	n.s.
Rhyming Couplets Chorus	1.35	1.67	0.144	p<.05
Length of Song	2.80	2.52	0.013	p<.05
Vocalisation	6.45	6.56	0.305	n.s.
The entropy of pitch class distribution	0.56	0.56	0.476	n.s.
The entropy of Interval Distribution	0.48	0.51	0.010	p<.05
The entropy of Rhythmic Variability	0.75	0.75	0.437	n.s.
Rhythmic Density	2.40	2.63	0.007	p<.05
Maximum Tonal Clarity	0.68	0.70	0.062	n.s.
Pitch Range	8.28	8.88	0.117	n.s.
Average Pitch	60.7	61.2	0.062	n.s.
Standard Deviation of Pitch	2.11	2.22	0.168	n.s.
Pitch Variety	5.79	6.04	0.174	n.s.



### 6.1.2 Discriminant Analysis

Discriminant analysis determines the group to which each musical episode either belongs to, or is most closely represented by. In this study the determinants used for group belonging are early (original *punk* musical episodes) and late (*nu punk* musical episodes). The discriminant analysis identifies whether the variables utilised in the thesis are important or unacceptable indicators of group belonging. Initially a simple discriminate analysis was carried out and then a stepped discriminant analysis instituted to give more credence and validity to the results. Discriminant analysis attempts to maximise the probability of correct group allocation.

From the discriminant analysis, the following results were obtained.

TABLE 2 Predicted Group Membership using only the Hand Coded Variables

Classification Results <sup>b,c</sup>					
		GROUP	Predicted Group Membership		Total
			Early	Late	
Original	Count	Early	89	11	100
		Late	13	87	100
	%	Early	89.0	11.0	100.0
		Late	13.0	87.0	100.0
Cross-validated <sup>a</sup>	Count	Early	86	14	100
		Late	14	86	100
	%	Early	86.0	14.0	100.0
		Late	14.0	86.0	100.0

a. Cross validation is done only for those cases in the analysis. In cross validation, each case is classified by the functions derived from all cases other than that case.

b. 88.0% of original grouped cases correctly classified.

c. 86.0% of cross-validated grouped cases correctly classified.

Table 2 shows the discriminant analysis carried out using only the hand coded variables. The original analysis identifies that out of 100 cases in the early group 89% of the cases are classified correctly and 11% are incorrectly classified. Out of 100 cases in the late group 87% of the cases are classified correctly with 14% incorrectly classified.

TABLE 3 Predicted Group Membership using only the Computer Coded Variables

**Classification Results** <sup>b,c</sup>

			Predicted Group Membership		Total
			Early	Late	
Original	Count	Early	61	39	100
		Late	37	63	100
	%	Early	61.0	39.0	100.0
		Late	37.0	63.0	100.0
Cross-validated <sup>a</sup>	Count	Early	60	40	100
		Late	42	58	100
	%	Early	60.0	40.0	100.0
		Late	42.0	58.0	100.0

- a. Cross validation is done only for those cases in the analysis. In cross validation, each case is classified by the functions derived from all cases other than that case.
- b. 62.0% of original grouped cases correctly classified.
- c. 59.0% of cross-validated grouped cases correctly classified.

When cross-validated analysis is utilised out of 100 early cases 86% are classified correctly and 14% are incorrectly classified. Out of the 100 cases in the late group the figure is exactly the same with 86% of the cases being correctly classified and 14% being incorrectly classified.

Table 3 shows the discriminant analysis carried out using only the computerised variables. The original analysis identifies that out of 100 cases in the early group 61% of the cases are classified correctly and 39% are incorrectly classified. Out of 100 cases in the late group 63% of the cases are classified correctly with 37% incorrectly classified. When the results are cross-validated, out of the 100 early cases 60% are classified correctly and 40% are incorrectly classified. In the late group out of the 100 cases 58% are classified correctly whilst 42% are incorrectly classified.

TABLE 4 Discriminant Analysis Carried out on All Variables

**Classification Results** <sup>b,c</sup>

			Predicted Group Membership		Total
			Early	Late	
Original	Count	Early	90	10	100
		Late	13	87	100
	%	Early	90.0	10.0	100.0
		Late	13.0	87.0	100.0
Cross-validated <sup>a</sup>	Count	Early	85	15	100
		Late	13	87	100
	%	Early	85.0	15.0	100.0
		Late	13.0	87.0	100.0

- a. Cross validation is done only for those cases in the analysis. In cross validation, each case is classified by the functions derived from all cases other than that case.
- b. 88.5% of original grouped cases correctly classified.
- c. 86.0% of cross-validated grouped cases correctly classified.

Table 4 shows discriminant analysis utilising all the variables. In the original analysis, the predicted group membership shows 90% of the early cases being correctly classified and 87% of the late cases also being correctly classified. When cross validated analysis is utilised the cases correctly classified is reduced to 85% and 87% respectively.

TABLE 5 Stepped Discriminant Analysis Carried out on All Variables

**Classification Results** <sup>b,c</sup>

			Predicted Group Membership		Total
			Early	Late	
Original	Count	Early	84	16	100
		Late	13	87	100
	%	Early	84.0	16.0	100.0
		Late	13.0	87.0	100.0
Cross-validated <sup>a</sup>	Count	Early	83	17	100
		Late	15	85	100
	%	Early	83.0	17.0	100.0
		Late	15.0	85.0	100.0

a. Cross validation is done only for those cases in the analysis. In cross validation, each case is classified by the functions derived from all cases other than that case.

b. 85.5% of original grouped cases correctly classified.

c. 84.0% of cross-validated grouped cases correctly classified.

Table 5 shows the results of the stepped discriminant analysis where variables are introduced at each step of the analysis. From exploration of the original analysis the predicted group membership is 84% in the early group and 87% in the later group which shows a high rate of correct group classification.

When cross validated the cases correctly classified are reduced to 83% in the early cases and 85% in the later cases. From the foregoing analysis it can be ascertained that a high percentage of both early and late musical episodes are correctly classified using the variables identified.

The variables in Table 6 are ordered by absolute size of their correlation within each function. The Table also shows the relative significance of each of the variables. The Table is ordered according to the correlation values which are identical to the ordering according to the t values. It must however be noted that when exploring early and late *punk* songs there are a number of variables, which are significant, suggesting that there are differences between early and late songs which can be attributed to the variables identified for experimentation. It may also be important that where little or no significance is identified between early and late periods within the same variable that this could be attributed to the homogeneity of the musical episodes within the two periods, identifying elements that signify a predominantly *punk* nature rather than a divergence within the early and late episodes. Thus in the analysis these homogenous variables could be perceived as signifiers inherent in the development of an overall framework for *punk* music. However, without repetition of the experimentation and further comparison with other *punk* and *nu punk* musical episodes, it is impossible to ascertain whether these variables are valid signifiers of an overall *punk* framework.

TABLE 6 Pooled within-groups Correlations between Discriminating Variables and Standardised Canonical Discriminant Functions

Variable	
Mix Structure Drums	.513
Beats Per Second	.380
Mix Structure Bass	.289
Number of Repeat Lines	-.247
Artist Name Deviant	-.203
Lines Per Chorus	.198
Lines Per Verse	.187
Rhythmic Density	.153
The entropy of Interval Distribution	.143
Length of Song	-.138
Rhyming Couplets Chorus	.137
Song Name Deviant	-.119
Average Pitch	.095
Maximum Tonal Clarity	.095
Pitch Range	.074
Standard Deviation of Pitch	.060
Pitch Variety	.058
Vocalisation	.032
Mix Structure Vocals	-.023
Mix Structure Guitar	.013
The entropy of Rhythmic Variability	.010
Rhyming Couplets Verse	.009
The entropy of pitch class distribution	.004

(A positive sign in this *Table* means that the respective variable has a higher value in the late group than in the early group and vice versa)

From analysis of the *Tables* in this Chapter, the t-test analyses and further tests on those tracks, which are classified incorrectly, the following observations can be made. The following information is extracted from *Tables* compiled utilising the discriminant analysis output of SPSS.

TABLE 7 The Number/Percentage of Incorrectly Classified Variables in the Early Category

Variable	Number of songs in the early category displaying incorrectly classified (late) variables (N=17)	Percentage of songs in the early category displaying incorrectly classified (late)variables (N=17)
Artist name Deviancy	11	64
Beats per second	12	70
Lines per verse	11	64
Lines per chorus	7	41
Drum Mix	13	76
Bass Mix	8	47
Repeat Lines	13	76

Out of 17 cases of early artists/songs incorrectly classified by the discriminant function the following observations can be made.

The two most prominent signifiers of correct classification that appear in 76% of the songs that are incorrectly classified are drum mix and repeat lines. 70% of those songs incorrectly classified show beats per second as a correctly classified variable. 64% of those songs classified incorrectly have the deviancy of the artist's name and the number of lines per verse appearing as correctly classified.

TABLE 8 The Number of Incorrectly Classified Variables in the Late Category

Variable	Number of songs in the late category displaying incorrectly classified (early) variables (N=15)	Percentage of songs in the late category displaying incorrectly classified (early) variables (N=15)
Artist name Deviancy	6	40
Beats per second	10	67
Lines per verse	7	47
Lines per chorus	9	60
Drum Mix	15	100
Bass Mix	11	73
Repeat Lines	11	73

Out of 15 cases of late artists/songs incorrectly classified the following observations can be made.

100% of those songs incorrectly classified show the mix placing of the drums as a correctly classified variable. 73% of those songs incorrectly classified show the position of the bass in the mix and the number of repeat lines as correctly classified. 67% of those songs incorrectly classified show the number of beats per second as correctly classified. However, only 40% of those incorrectly classified exhibit a deviant artist's name.

When viewing the number of variables fitting the correct classification in the early songs the following *Table* can be constructed.

TABLE 9 Number of Early Variables in each Song Classified Incorrectly Displayed in the Correct Category

Number of variables in the incorrect category	Number of songs classified in the incorrect category (N=17)
7	1
6	3
5	4
4	5
3	3
2	1

TABLE 10 Number of Late Variables in each Song Classified Incorrectly Displayed in the Correct Category

Number of variables in the incorrect category	Number of songs classified in the incorrect category (N=15)
7	0
6	2
5	6
4	7
3	0
2	0

There is a wider span of variable usage across the early songs showing that the number of incorrectly classified variables needed for an incorrect classification is between two and seven. In the late songs between four and six incorrectly classified variables are needed for an incorrect classification. Out of the 17 songs incorrectly classified in the early category the most consistently incorrectly classified number of variables is four and five. Thus the number of songs having either four or five incorrectly classified variables is nine out of 17 or 53%. Out of the 15 songs incorrectly classified in the late category the most consistently incorrectly classified number of variables is also four and five. Thus the number of songs having either four or five incorrectly classified variables is 13 out of 15 or 87%. Thus it can be ascertained from these results that on average a higher number of variables are needed in the incorrect category in the late songs than are needed in the early songs to ensure an incorrect classification. The foregoing analysis supports the premise that early punk episodes are more individual and that later punk episodes are more homogenous.

Having described the quantitative results a more focussed representation of the findings will take place.

## **6.2 Discussion, Articulation and Triangulation of the Quantitative Data and its Relationship to the Qualitative Experimentation**

### **6.2.1 Introduction**

From the findings of this study it is apparent that the discourses employed are diverse in nature and orientation and thus the methodological approaches appropriated encapsulate both quantitative and qualitative elements to ensure that the diversity of discourses are fully explored from a holistic perspective. It is clear from the triangulation of methods and techniques that the multidisciplinary nature of musical genre formation can be identified through the articulation of a combination of musical, paramusical and perceptual

factors. The resultant attestation derived from the quantitative and qualitative research does, however, pose problems of articulation and integration.

In the next section, the exploration is divided into two parts. The first deals with indicators of homogeneity between *punk*, and *nu punk* and the second with characteristics that distinguish between the two genres.

## 6.2.2 Indicators of Homogeneity between Punk and Nu Punk

The genres identified for experimentation are perceived by many consumers to be part of the same genre (Arnold 1997). However, the producer perception is that *nu punk* and *punk* are either totally different in form or content, or that *nu punk* is a sub category of a *punk* 'parent' genre (Hopkins 1997). Owing to such mixed messages, it is necessary to focus on both homogeneity and divergence to test the consumer/producer relationship.

To ascertain whether there were differences between the two genres of music, the significance in the quantitative results was employed as a measure. The more significant the difference in the individual variables used, the more that variable could be identified as distinguishing between *punk* [early *punk*] and *nu punk* [late *punk*]. Thus the less significant the difference between the individual variables, the more likely those variables denoted similarities between the two types of music explored.

The majority of the melodic variables utilised in the experimentation demonstrate little or no significance between *punk* and *nu punk*. The number of pitches used, the standard deviation of the pitch, average pitch, pitch range, maximum correlation of tonality, rhythmic variability and the number of different pitches used, are all computer coded quantitative measures concerned with melody, and are relatively universal across the 200 test pieces. The hand coded quantitative data also exhibits a number of common variables across the two types of music. These comprise the vocalisation rating, the number of rhyming couplets in the verse, the mix structure of the guitar and vocals and the deviancy of the song name.

The validity of the quantitative results obtained from the experimentation can be verified by triangulation, with qualitative information acquired from individual interviews, focus group discussion and from previous experimentation and commentary accomplished by other researchers in associated areas. Vocalisation, the guitar sound, the sounds like response, the speed of the music and the melody are all elements identified in the primary and secondary research which indicate the development of a homogenous *punk* genre. In the following sections, these indicators of homogeneity are explored.

### 6.2.1.1 Vocalisation

The average vocalisation rating determined from the 200 test pieces in the quantitative hand coded data (6.5 early and 6.6 late) identifies a similarity in vocal style between *punk* and *nu punk*. On the vocalisation scale created in focus groups this rating (6.5) is represented as, 'sung discordantly or monotone with

an emphasis on certain words' (see Appendix 2 for a full vocalisation scale). In the qualitative experimentation individual interviewees describe the vocal sound as 'shouted', 'rasping', 'monotonous', 'relentless', 'discordant' and 'raw'. These qualitative adjectives endorse the quantitative data supporting a link between the two types of experimentation through the vocalisation inherent in both *punk* and *nu punk*. This relationship is further triangulated through focus group responses, where the overall *punk* vocal sound is identified as 'abrasive', 'raw', 'intense' and 'monotonous', all of which reiterate the findings from both the quantitative experimentation and the qualitative interview data. Commentators such as Laing (1985) and Moore (2001) further support this evidence through the identification of similar vocal traits in their research, which further reiterates the homogeneity of *punk* and *nu punk* vocalisation. Thus, the foregoing analysis recognises vocalisation as a universal variable in the identification of both *punk* and *nu punk*.

### 6.2.1.2 The Placing of the Vocals and Guitar in the Mix Structure of the Song

The average placing of the vocals and the guitar in the mix structure are universal in both the early and late musical episodes explored. The average placing of the vocals in the mix is 8.96 in the early songs, and 8.85 in the late songs. The average placing of the guitar in the mix is 8.66 in the early songs, and 8.74 in the later songs. In each of these calculations, a mean of 10 would place the vocals or guitar at the very front of the mix and a mean of 1 would place them at the very back of the mix. The p factor identified for each of these variables is less than .05 and as such is not significant in distinguishing between *punk* and *nu punk* songs from the sample tested. Taking the four main instruments of vocals, guitar, bass and drums, which are present throughout each of the test sample of 200 songs, with the addition in a small number of cases of other instruments, including saxophone and keyboards, the following can be ascertained. The bass and drums fluctuate from the back to the middle to the front of the mix in the songs explored. However, the vocals and the guitar are always central to and at the front of the mix and are the most prominent elements in the music. In *nu punk*, the bass and drums have a more prominent position in the mix than they do in original *punk*; however, there are no examples where the bass and drums usurp the role of the guitar and vocals. It is clear from the experimentation that the vocals and guitar are prominent elements in the identification of *punk* and *nu punk*.

In the qualitative analysis, the vocals and the guitar are determined as the most recognisable musical elements of *punk* and *nu punk* differentiating them from other types of music. In both interviews and focus groups, the type of vocals used and the guitar sound are elements almost universally identified as *punk*, although in *nu punk* the music was perceived to be more formulaic in nature in contrast to the DIY nature of *punk*. The guitar sound and the vocals are also implied as the trigger for the 'similarity reflex' indicated in 5.1.2.1.



Although the adjectives describing vocalisation have already been alluded to earlier in this Chapter, it is clear from the emphasis on declaimed, ejected or shouted vocals by interviewees, focus group respondents and commentators (Moore 2001, Savage 1991, Laing 1985), that their identification as a prominent trademark of *punk* and *nu punk* is in part owing to their placement at the front of the mix.

A number of commentators on *punk* make a primary identification of the genre through the distinctive guitar sound comprising either the high treble or conventional arpeggiated chords often accompanied or replaced by the 'wall of sound' effect (Laing 1985, Savage 1991, Moore 2001, Colgrave & Sullivan 2001). The majority of the respondents interviewed reference the guitar sound as a key element in the identification of *punk* and *nu punk*. This primary recognition factor is related to both the positioning and the sound of the guitar in the mix, which is centrally located alongside the vocals to enhance *punk's* emphatic delivery. The information imparted by focus groups supports this, where it is reiterated that *punk* can easily be identified by the guitar sound, which is different from any other genre. The secondary research and qualitative analysis supports the quantitative findings. Thus, the foregoing analysis recognises guitar and vocal placement and sound as a universal variable in the identification of both *punk* and *nu punk*.

### 6.2.1.3 The Computer Coded (Melodic) Variables

The majority of the melodic variables utilised in the exploration are not significant in distinguishing between early and late *punk* songs. Thus, it can be ascertained that the majority of melodic variables tested in this experimentation are relatively homogenous in relation to the two genres explored. For example, maximum tonal clarity (early mean 0.68 and late mean 0.70), pitch range (early mean 8.28 and late mean 8.88), average pitch (early mean 60.6 and late mean 61.2), standard deviation of pitch (early mean 2.11 and late mean 2.22), pitch variety (early mean 5.8 and late mean 6.0) and the entropy of pitch class distribution (early mean 0.56 and late mean 0.56), all show a high degree of homogeneity between early and late songs in the test sample. Thus, out of the nine computer coded melody variables, seven are not significant in the identification of distinctions between early and late songs in the test sample. Although little is written on the homogeneity of *punk* melody in academic texts, both interviewees and members of focus groups identified the absence of a focus on *punk* melody as a factor which distinguishes *punk* music from other genres. Laing supports this stating that, "There is a noticeable lack of the atmospheric solo in punk rock, however, which reflects punk's lack of concern with melody" (Laing 1985:61). It is difficult for those involved with music, especially consumers and the industry, to conceptualise the attributes of melody and thus to speak of its totality with any authority. Therefore, many of the references to melody are either superficial or constructed from a limited knowledge of all of the aspects concerned with its construction. However, the

homogeneity of the melodic elements may in part be due to a universal lack of concern with this area, although further study would have to be carried out to validate this.

#### 6.2.1.4 Other Hand Coded Variables

The deviancy of the song name is relatively homogenous between *punk* and *nu punk*. 38% of *punk* songs and 33% of *nu punk* songs have a deviant title. This means that the mean deviancy value of one hundred *punk* songs is 2.88 and the mean deviancy value of one hundred *nu punk* songs is 2.25. On the deviancy scale created in focus groups this rating is represented as being between, Odd connotations with ambiguous meanings and mention of slight deviancy (see appendix 3 for a full deviancy scale). There is no supporting evidence from either secondary research or qualitative data to underpin any relevance of the title of a *punk* song in the identification of genre. However, it was one variable which was identified through free listing and pile sort, and thus it was included and explored within the study.

The rhyming couplets in the verse are also homogenous with a means of 2.4 for both early and late songs. The majority of *nu punk* songs within the sample tested have either 4+4 or 8+8 verse and chorus structures but the *punk* structure is more variable it is apparent that the average song has at least one pair of rhyming couplets in the verse, the chorus or both. There were only two songs in the sample tested that did not contain any rhyming couplets, one of these was a poem and the other a short declamatory song of 38 seconds.

It is clear from the qualitative data that there are many other elements emerging, which could have been explored, in the quantitative data, for example, the lyrical content of the song and the subject matter. However, the free listing and pile sort in the first instance did not identify these as important factors, and thus they were not considered as variables in the experimentation.

Having identified variables which are not significant in the differentiation between *punk* and *nu punk*, but which support homogeneity between the two types of music, the next section of the discussion identifies variables that are significant in distinguishing between *punk* and *nu punk* musical episodes.

### 6.2.3 Distinguishing Characteristics of Punk and Nu Punk

From the exploration, 11 of the 23 hand and computer-coded variables identify differences between *punk* and *nu punk*. These 11 variables are divided into four categories relating to their significance in such identification. The four categories (groupings) comprise extremely significant, moderately significant, significant and marginally significant. The quantitative findings from the exploration pertaining to the distinguishing characteristics of *punk* and *nu punk* will be explored, through three of these four categories as category two (moderately significant) does not have variables attributed to it.

Group 1      Extremely Significant ( $p < .0001$ )

Four variables fall into this category: they comprise beats per second, the mix structure of the drums, the mix structure of the bass, and the number of repeat lines in a musical episode.

### 6.2.3.1 Speed of the Music

Although both *punk* and *nu punk* are musically expeditious, there is a clear difference between the average beats per second identified in the *punk* [early] and *nu punk* [late] songs. The later songs accommodate just over half a beat more per second, per song than early songs (2.73 and 3.27 respectively), an average increase from 164 to 196 beats per minute. The difference in speed between *punk* and *nu punk* is highlighted in focus group one, where members commented on *nu punk* and *hardcore* being “much faster than original *punk* used to be”. Respondents (C) and (D) support this identifying the faster pace of *nu punk* with an increased pace of life and the immediacy of products and services in consumer society. This message is not only transmitted through the speed of the music but also through economic and paramusical dissemination evidenced by industry and media orientation where aggressive marketing strategies are utilised to maximise profitability as quickly as possible in the contemporary music industry environment.

Previous exploration within this thesis in regards to the speed of the music also identifies this variable as a universal factor in the identification of *punk per se*. Therefore, the speed of the music is a trait that not only alludes to *punk*'s divergence, but also to its homogeneity as *punk* music is perceived as faster than most other types of music. Only speed metal, thrash metal and some forms of *dance* music including *gabba* are as fast as or faster than *punk* and *nu punk* are. However, there is little comment on the speed of new *punk* in secondary texts although Lahickey (1997) and Arnold (1997) both allude to the speed of *punk* but not to the faster tempo of new *punk*, compared to that of *punk*. It may also be possible to draw a parallel with the increased tempo in other music existing at the same time as *nu punk*. Dance music, thrash metal etc. all have an increased tempo when compared to music from the same temporal period as original *punk* and such types of music may also affect the speed of *nu punk*.

### 6.2.3.2 The Positioning of the Drums and Bass in the Mix

The positioning of the drums and bass in the overall mix structure of the song differs greatly between early and late *punk*. In *punk* the average position of both the drums and bass are at the back of the mix in a generally supportive capacity attracting a rating of 2.43 and 2.45 respectively, where 1 is the back of the mix and 10 the front. In *nu punk* the average drum and bass readings are relatively central to the mix with ratings of 5.86 and 4.57 respectively. This evidence supports the possibility that more prominence is given to the drums and the bass in the mix structure of the later songs. Secondary research also supports such a supposition. Laing (1985), and Moore (2001) identify the drums and bass

in *punk* as underpinning elements of the song and drivers of rhythm, utilising simplistic patterns and bass lines to enable the musicians to keep in time. As Moore states in his exposition of the “punk aesthetic” in relation to the Damned’s *New Rose*, that the drums and the bass play a “minimum number of patterns” (Moore 2001:131). Christgau in Laing (1985) refers to *punk*’s “forced rhythm” where the bass was the key. He states that “it is here that the monadic rhythm is anchored in a continuous and regular series of single notes which contradict the syncopation of the drumming” (Laing 1985:62). The role of the drums and bass in *nu punk* is antithetical to *punk* as evidenced by respondents (K) and (P), who state that the drums and bass are integral to the music rather than holding it together. As the artists and the genre have developed, the musicians on bass and drums have been able to contribute more fully to elements other than time keeping or the underpinning of the song. The drummer and bassist are more involved in the melody and rhythm of the musical episode, as the band are not so reliant on the two instruments for enforcing the underpinning elements of the song framework. An example of this is the alternation between the on and off beat and clever syncopation practiced in many of the *nu punk* songs. It is also possible that development of studio technology has an affect on the positioning of the instruments in the mix although this is not an aspect which is researched within this study.

### 6.2.3.3 Repeat Lines

The number of repeat lines is another noticeable feature that differentiates *punk* from *nu punk*. The mean in the early songs is more than one full line more than can be found in the later songs. Respondents in focus group 1 perceive that this is directly related to the protest nature of early *punk* where many songs utilise chanted or repeated lines throughout the song to accentuate a point of protest. This is one possible reason why the repeat lines in *nu punk* are less accentuated, as the subject matter of the songs does not lend itself to reiteration. There is no evidence from the individual interviews concerning *nu punk* having less repeat lines than *punk* does, and commentators have written little on the subject. However, Arnold (1997), Lahickey (1997) and Hopkins (1997) identify the differing subject matter and philosophy between *punk* and *nu punk*. As Hopkins states original *punk* focused on “riots, racism and big business” and the focus of *nu punk* differed centring on “apathy, illness and insanity” (Hopkins 1997:8). The focus of *punk* on areas, which lend themselves to chants, and the reiteration of ideas is supported by Savage who claims that *punk* lyrics represented the function of “slogans” within the song (Savage 1991:206). From the foregoing analysis it can be ascertained that the subject matter contained in the song and the way in which the song is sung are related to the number of repeat lines in *punk* and *nu punk* musical episodes thus the significance of the factor represented in the findings.

The four variables identified above are the most significant from the findings. There are no variables contained in the moderately significant group and thus the next group of findings explored are those found to be significant.

#### Group 2      Significant ( $p < .01$ )

Three variables fall into this category comprising the deviancy of the artists' name, lines per verse and lines per chorus.

#### 6.2.3.4 Deviancy of Artist Name

42% of the *punk* artists explored within this study have names relating to deviant behaviour or sport titles with deviant connotations, whereas 28% of the *nu punk* artists explored within the study have names relating to deviant behaviour or sport titles with deviant connotations. The foregoing analysis suggests from the sample tested that more *punk* artist have deviant tags than *nu punk* artists. The mean deviancy value of the 100 *punk* songs is 3.37 and that of the 100 *nu punk* samples is 2.24, indicating that the frequency of deviancy in the identification of *punk* samples is higher than that of *nu punk* samples. The artists' names in the latter genre are usually non-specific and have few connotations, although as can be seen from *Figure 7*, there is still a clutch of artists using deviant identification in the later *punk* episodes. However, the deviancy of the *punk* song title is not a factor in distinguishing between early and late *punk*, as identified in 5.3.1.6.

The deviancy of the artists name, although not referred to in the interviews, are alluded to in focus groups where respondents cite the deviant nature of the artists' names as an easy reference point through which to identify the artists' genre. Laing supports this notion identifying the utilisation of taboos in punk names citing them as "a celebration of male sexuality as essentially aggressive and phallogentric" (Laing 1985:46). However, such a mechanism has become clouded by the deviancy references pertaining to the wide range of sub genres aligned to *rock*, *metal* and *grunge*, where artists are assigned tags signifying their relationship with anti society and anti religion. Such tagging is a response to differentiation within genre where fragmentation is caused by those with paramusical attributes that facilitate a move from the centre of a wide genre to the periphery, facilitating a fracturing into a sub genre grouping. The deviancy of punk and nu punk names reflects the counterculture and shock aspects of the genre as evidenced in Savage (1991), Colgrave & Sullivan (2001) and Lydon (1993). Laing who states that to shock, "is an established part of avant-garde aesthetics" (Laing 1985:76), further supports this. The significance of the difference between the two genres in this aspect is similar to the increase in repeat lines in the *punk* musical episodes compared with *nu punk* musical episodes where the subject matter and ethos of the counterculture is aimed at facilitating the delivery of a message through alternative means to gain the

attention of mass culture. The *nu punk* message is less shocking as the vehicle through which the message is disseminated is different to that of *punk*.

### 6.2.3.5 The Number of Lines in the Chorus and the Verse

The number of lines in the chorus and the verse are elements which have only been identified through quantitative experimentation. There are on average more lines per verse in late *punk* (early lines 5.06, late lines 5.90) and more lines per chorus in late *punk* (early lines 3.78, late lines 4.67). From the experimentation it is clear that more songs in the *nu punk* area are formulaic, using a four or eight (4+4) (8+8) line chorus and verse structure, whereas *punk* chorus and verse are very variable. Where artists are signed to major labels, are formulaic, or have had some minor or independent successes, the formulaic nature of their music is easily identifiable through the song structure although there are no identifiable elements which point to a rationale behind the differences in this section.

Group 3 Marginally significant ( $p < .05$ )

Four variables can be identified in this category comprising rhyming couplets in the chorus, length of song, the entropy of interval distribution and notes per second.

### 6.2.3.6 Song Length

The average length of song in early *punk* is 2.8 minutes and in later *punk* 2.5 minutes although there are long songs, Televisions' *Marquee Moon* which is just over 10 minutes (early *punk*) and short songs, Deviates' *She Broke My Dick*, 38 seconds (late *punk*). Although taking the average, with the five shortest and longest songs omitted, the calculation still shows a difference in average time of 22 seconds between early and late songs favouring the late songs with a shorter average time. From interviews, focus groups and secondary research it is clear that the development of *punk* marked the return to the 2-3 minute single and this tradition has carried on into the later *punk* songs which are identified as more compact and frenetic (focus group 1). One rationale behind the short *punk* song is identified by respondent (G) who states that "the reason that *punk* songs were shorter was because they wanted to get it over with as soon as possible as they struggled to keep the rhythm and chord progression above and beyond two minutes". However, this is refuted by Laing who states that "Their use of those elements [distortion and feedback] suggests that the 'incompetence' or *punk* musicians was more rhetorical than actual". However, further analysis needs to be carried out before the differentiation in song length between the two genres can be validated.

### 6.2.3.7 Rhyming Couplets

The difference in rhyming couplets in the chorus heralds quite an interesting explorative conclusion. In many of the earlier songs non rhyming couplets seemingly forced into a rhyme are used in the chorus, which includes clever puns, the forcing of language or just a lack of inherent creativity. For example the first two lines of the Sex Pistols' *Anarchy in the UK* where Christ and anarchist are forced into a rhyme by John Lydon's pronunciation. In the later songs most of the couplets used do rhyme, often showing a more formulaic motive in the song structure rather than a creative and non-conformist approach. However, although showing some minor significance, this variable only shows a variance from 1.35 in early songs to 1.67 in later songs. Laing (1985) alludes to the forcing of *punk* rhyme within the song and identifies a creative flair where rhyme was secondary to purpose.

### 6.2.3.8 Notes Per Second and the Entropy of Interval Distribution

The qualitative data supports the quantitative identification of notes per second and interval distribution elements as marginally significant variables in the characterisation of differences between *punk* and *nu punk*. There is a marginal difference between the average notes per second between early and late songs, 2.39 early and 2.62 late, a rise from 144 to 156 notes per minute. The difference in beats per minute between *punk* and *nu punk* is 32.4 (164 early to 196 late) and the rise in notes per minute is 12. Such discovery points to *nu punk* music being faster and having more notes per second, which identifies both a faster and more dexterous definition of *nu punk* music. However, other variables militate against such a statement and thus without further research this statement cannot be validated.

There is also a marginal difference in the entropy of interval distribution of pitch (0.48 early and 0.51 late); this slight difference is still significant. This variable signifies the number of different intervals used in each sample and thus the average interval structure of *nu punk* is more complex than that of *punk*.

## 6.3 Combining the Evidence

In the foregoing experimentation there are 11 variables which exhibit significant differences between *punk* and *nu punk*, and 12 variables identifying a homogenisation between the two types of music. From the mapping of the quantitative data with qualitative references and supporting commentaries from secondary research it can be ascertained that the initial discovery that commentators were undecided whether *punk* and *nu punk* were the same genre, or if *punk* and *nu punk* were individual genres, can be upheld.

The foregoing analysis suggests the notion that homogeneity is inherent in an overarching *punk* category or *parent* genre, and that diversity supports the

notion of sub categorisation. 67% of the variables identified with homogeneity indicate the incorporation of musical factors. This suggests a reliance on musical variables in the identification process of homogenous factors identified within an overarching punk framework. These findings are supported by the qualitative research where both those interviewed and in focus groups identified the 'similarity reflex' and musical factors as important in the initial identification of the overall genre of punk.

When the variables distinguishing between *punk* and *nu punk* are explored, only 27% of the variables incorporate music as an identifying factor. 73% of the significant variables are related to paramusical elements. This is also supported by both secondary research and interviews and focus groups where the ethos, attitude and sartoriality are identified as significant in the differences between *punk* and *nu punk*. Although many of the factors cited in the quantitative and qualitative research are not universal in the paramusical sphere, the very nature of the non-musical response makes this a significant factor in the differentiation between the two types of music.

The significance of the variables used in the identification of correctly classified cases through discriminant analysis is important to identify the validity of the above findings. In the initial calculations utilising all variables before cross validation, 90% of all *punk* and 87% of all *nu punk* musical episodes are classified in the correct category. After cross validation this percentage is reduced slightly to 85% and 87% respectively. After stepped discriminant analysis, the original correctly classified cases stand at 84% and 87% respectively and after cross validation 83% and 85%. This indicates that from the variables utilised in the study there is a high probability that *punk* and *nu punk* tracks can be correctly classified from their utilisation.

However, the predicted membership using only the hand-coded variables was 89% for *punk* and 87% for *nu punk*, and those being correctly classified after cross validation in both types of music is reduced to 86%. The experimentation using only the computer-coded variables identifies 61% of *punk* tracks being correctly classified and 63% of *nu punk*. This is reduced to 60% and 58% after cross validation. The experimentation identifies the hand-coded variables as giving a higher percentage of correctly classified musical episodes than computer coded variables [in the instance of *punk* and *nu punk*] This does not however mean that the hand coded variables are any more valid than the computer coded variables.

Owing to the supporting qualitative data, and the focus in this thesis on paramusical variables, the foregoing experimentation has enabled more triangulation in relation to the hand coded variables. Conversely, the relative homogeneity of the music is well supported by the discriminant analysis using only the musical or computer coded variables. This supports the argument that the two types of music are relatively similar from the musical variables utilised. It is also pertinent to note that where an artist is classified in the wrong temporal classificatory category, 100% of the variables identified as influencing wrong categorisation are paramusical and not musical suggesting that the



musical variables are key to correct classification and thus homogeneity and that the paramusical variables identify difference.

The exploration of the discriminant analysis identifies the significance of the hand coded or paramusical variables when utilised for the exploration of genre identification. The significance of the predictability of the paramusical variables in the identification of distinguishing factors between *punk* and *nu punk* is far more effective than that of the utilisation of musical factors. Far from demeaning the study, the high significance of the combination of paramusical and musical factors in the homogenisation of the two types of music leads the researcher to the conclusion that the musical factors are more relevant in the identification of similarities between *punk* and *nu punk*, and the paramusical factors a measure of difference. This is supported by qualitative evidence. However, this will not always be the case as there are still a small number of paramusical variables that are universal between the two different types of music. Similarly a small number of musical factors exist which enable the identification of differences between *punk* and *nu punk*.

## 7 CONCLUSION

### 7.0 Introduction

The initial objective of this study was to determine from a wide range of sources including Tagg (1982), Fabbri (1981), Laing (1985) and Negus (1999), the present means of genre identification and to determine whether a more informed, structured and holistic approach would have any inherent benefits for the industry, the media, the artist and the consumer. From the outset of the thesis it was apparent that within the study of genre a gap was identified where a holistic interpretation combining a wide range of discourses would make a contribution to the field of study (Zorn 2000) (see 1.1.1). The foregoing analysis suggests that the thesis has made a contribution to this area through the development and implementation of a holistic approach focussing on the role of the industry in the genre development process. The major contribution of the study is to the field of music management with subsidiary contributions to the fields of sociology and psychology and to a lesser extent musicology.

The qualitative aim of the study was to synthesize information from the protagonists involved in regards to genre classification systems, and to ascertain a broader understanding of the present musical genre identification system. The quantitative aim was to compare hand and computer coded variable analyses to discover whether such an approach would facilitate either an alternative genre identification system or a complimentary procedure. The overall aim was to articulate the different discourses through qualitative approaches and quantitative experimentation and to explore the possibilities afforded by the existence of a holistic approach to genre classification. The development of a holistic approach is the main theoretical approach in the study.

In any study where triangulation embraces both quantitative and qualitative data the resultant findings, discussion and conclusions are rich in description, analysis and synthesis. In this thesis the combination of perceptual, musical and paramusical illumination with statistical and computational

evidence affords multiple possibilities to the researcher in regards to the pathways available through the study. From the data analysed and the identification, clarification and utilisation of validated evidence it is clear that an applied and integrated approach to the methodologies utilised has brought to life and focussed what otherwise could have been both a dry and fragmented study.

The conclusions formulated from the evidence presented in this study have been separated into three linked - but at times mutually exclusive - areas, comprising the identification process, the experimentation and the genre framework. Separating out linked data sets, exploring these independently and then integrating the results during the discussion process, have strengthened both the methodological framework and the overall development process of this thesis.

## **7.1 Contribution to Knowledge**

### **7.1.1 The Identification Process**

The foregoing analysis suggests that industrial practices exert as much influence on genre development and naming as other discourses and thus the initial focus of this study on a holistic interpretation is validated. The process of identification is formalised through a framework approach recognised by the industry, the artists and the consumer and configured through the media. This framework approach, however, is on two levels, affording an informal identification at street level and a formal identification by the mass media. This division of identification forms a divergence of major and independent companies identified through the creation of three deliberate organizational elements - genre, marketing and umbrella categories. The genre categories are usually specific to the domain of the independent company. The umbrella categories are in the main exclusive to the major companies and the marketing categories shared by the two.

The foregoing analysis also suggests that a mixture of musical, paramusical and perceptual elements are utilised to identify genre, and that the four protagonists explored in this study (the industry, the media, the consumer and the artist) recognise both musical and paramusical elements associated with artists and musical episodes in the same terms. However, the results of the analysis suggest that in a mass cultural environment, the producers create the framework, the consumers are governed by it, and few alternatives are possible. This is evidenced through both 'hypodermic' (Morley 1995) and 'gatekeeping' (Hirsch 1970) models. However, those participating in alternative cultures play a central role in the developing environment as the community are central to the strategies employed by the alternative industries (Arnold 1997). In the major labels there is little tension between the industry/media perception and that of

the consumer, as the codes utilised to identify the artists are relatively universal. However, in the independent sector there is tension between the mass media representation of an artist and consumer recognition, and thus micro media channels of recognition are important, as these fulfill the philosophical and other paramusical needs of the independent consumer.

The creation of a new genre is rare, and the limited capacity of those responsible for the creative output in contemporary popular music to create new genre, perpetuates the cyclical nature of music. However, in many areas of music, the lack of new genres facilitates fragmentation and the development of sub genre categories, which expands the boundaries of the identified parent genre and creates a multitude of minor specific units in which artists/musical episodes can be classified. Economic viability is a factor, which permeates genre origination and development, and the formulaic structure of major artists is contrasted with the individual nature of the independent. Both major and independent artists and consumers are influenced to a greater or lesser extent by 'gatekeeping' (Hirsch 1970) and 'hypodermic' (Morley 1995) strategies, which facilitate or hinder access to the dissemination of the product through 'filter flow' (Negus 1992) or 'transmission' (Burnett 1990) models identifying market segmentation as a marketing strategy practiced in both the major and alternative industries.

The identification of genre by the industry, the media, and the consumer is firstly through a 'similarity reflex', where a musical episode is compared to others through a past or present musical experience. Secondly, a genre toolbox is utilised, where a wide range of musical, paramusical and perceptual references/variables are available for the purposes of genre identification. Although the majority of artists fall within a category which is acceptable to them, in certain cases the artist has a modicum of influence on their own categorisation. However, such influence is usually reserved for those who either frequent the independent sector - where they have a choice of sub labels that reflect their philosophy - or conversely, those artists who are phenomenally successful and have the ability to influence the industry through their own means of production. The majority of artists attached to major labels or classified in marketing categories are governed by marketing possibilities and a dependency on increasing economic viability through an expanding audience profile.

Although genre movement is not widely practiced, apart from changes from genre or sub genre to marketing and umbrella categories, there are three distinct approaches through which genre movement can be facilitated. These comprise personal preference, evolution and economic motivation. Evolution is driven by external influences; the other two aspects are driven by either artistic tendencies or rapacity. Evolution is a core element of genre development and is often outside the control of the industry, (or in the case of some marketing and umbrella categories totally manipulated by the industry) and as such focuses on branding, dialogue and identity.

The major benefits of genre identification are the facilitation of marketing and retail strategies that create a market interface for the product. There is also the benefit of belonging to a category, which gives individuals an identity, a focus and a role in the artist/industry/consumer relationship. The disadvantages for the artist are stereotyping and pigeonholing which can result in the artist being placed in an unsuitable category, which could be disastrous for their career. Bandwaggoning demeans creativity but promotes currency and thus floods the market with 'clones' which cheapen the consumer and artist experience.

New developments in genre or sub genre are either organic or synthetic. Organic growth of artists and labels has declined in contemporary popular music, and the synthetic creation of artists and sub genres has increased. This has given the conglomerates a larger market share, and has shifted the powerbase in the industry to an almost unassailable position in favour of the major industries. Linked to the dichotomy between organic and synthetic artists is the longevity/immediacy argument. During the genesis of contemporary popular music [from Elvis and the Beatles], the major labels practiced longevity strategies. In the present economic environment immediacy is key and the identification of short termism where large profits can be accumulated regularly from each artist is an important financial consideration in the overall economic strategy of the company. The independent labels however, do practice longevity for their artists through the development of sustainable niche strategies. The release of small amounts of product over a sustained period facilitates the steady accumulation of profit and enables companies to survive in an environment where polarization has created a divergence of industrial practices within the major and independent business strategies.

From this, it is clear that the present genre creation, identification, and development system operated by the industry and the media, and engaged in by the artist and the consumer recognises mutually beneficial signifiers and codes. These facilitate the genre identification process and help to formulate consumer-buying choices. The creation of a different system focussed on the identification of a number of structured signifiers would not facilitate the symbiotic framework in place at present in the music environment. Although the present process may be seen as corrupt and manipulative, the system facilitates growth and development within both the major and independent sectors, which a more structured approach may destabilise owing to the capricious nature of the music industry.

### **7.1.2 The Experimentation**

In this study, 23 musical and paramusical variables have been explored through quantitative analysis to ascertain whether musical and paramusical elements and episodes contribute towards the identification and differentiation between *punk* and *nu punk* and thus define them as separate genre areas. To complement this exploration, protagonists from the industry, the media, artists and

consumers have been extensively interviewed to ascertain whether perceptual factors have a bearing on the placement of artists in specific genre groups. The integration of the musical, paramusical and perceptual findings have determined a wide range of pertinent information relating to the identification of musical genre.

However, it was also a possibility that the variables tested would highlight that there was no differentiation between the two types of music, and thus in reality *punk* and *nu punk* were a homogenous genre and that sub groups perceived to exist could not readily be differentiated in the research carried out.

From the combination of quantitative and qualitative findings, the foregoing analysis suggests that the variables tested in the experimentation are significant in identifying artists and music in *punk* and *nu punk* categories. In the quantitative findings the discriminant and stepped discriminant analysis identify a high correlation between and significance in the variables used in the experimentation. The identifying factors used to differentiate between the two types of music are the temporal period signifiers early and late. Focussing on these two temporal signifiers, the analysis suggests that the variables used in the qualitative analysis are significant in enabling the placement of *punk* and *nu punk* musical episodes in the correct temporal category. From the analysis, those variables, which are responsible for incorrect genre placement in each incorrectly classified musical episode, have been identified and rationales for each incorrect genre placing prepared.

The variables tested in the quantitative analysis demonstrate an approximate balanced distribution between those which signify homogeneity, and those that denote diversity between *punk* and *nu punk* musical episodes. Such an approximate even distribution concurs with the views of both Arnold (1997) and Hopkins (1997) who share conflicting opinions on the homogeneity and diversity of the two types of music utilised for experimentation in the study.

A high percentage of the variables concerning homogeneity are musical in nature (67%), whilst a high percentage of factors relating to divergence pertain to paramusical elements (73%). This evidence is supported by qualitative exploration, as those in focus groups, interviews and from secondary research identify musical factors as a major source of information when identifying *punk per se*. In the case of smaller genre groupings, the identification of paramusical factors often differentiates the alternative from the major artist. However, many of the paramusical factors have associated musical connotations and thus the validity of a small number of variables utilised in the experimentation may be brought into question.

The discriminant analysis effected combining both computer and hand coded variables demonstrated a high predicted group membership (90% early, 87% late, cross validated 85% and 87% respectively). When stepped discriminant analysis was utilised the predicted group membership was still significantly high (84% early, 87% late, cross-validated 83% and 85% respectively). The foregoing analysis suggests that the combination of variables

chosen for experimentation are significant in the identification of both *punk* and *nu punk* music. It is also clear from the comparison of the discriminant analysis for hand and computer coded variables with the overall analysis that there are universal factors, as well as divergent variables present that signify both *punk* and *nu punk*.

The discriminant analysis has a bearing on the discovery of convergent and divergent variables. The predicted membership of *punk* and *nu punk* categories is more significant when paramusical factors are utilised for exploration than when musical factors are utilised. This supports the premise that the similarity between *punk* and *nu punk* musically induces a difficulty in differentiating between the temporal periods in which the musical episode should be placed. As the musical factors are all computer coded, it is clear that the mechanical and mathematical process has either not been afforded sufficient variable data to discriminate effectively between the two types of music, or that the melodic structures explored are relatively similar in nature and thus differentiation is difficult to identify.

However, the high incidence of correct classification utilising the paramusical variables signifies a differentiation between *punk* and *nu punk* outside the musical sphere. Thus, the foregoing analysis identifies the possibility that sub genre classification can be established through paramusical rather than musical variables, and that an overall category for the two types of music can be determined from musical factors. The supporting qualitative research and secondary exploration underpins this evaluation. This can only pertain, however, to the identification of *punk* and *nu punk* until further research on other types of music has taken place.

The identification of genre is complex; and it is clear that although the paramusical and universal musical codes are used in dialogue between the four groups of protagonists studied in this exploration, many of the musical factors utilised in this thesis are not universally recognised by many of those outside academia. Therefore, the titular elements that comprise the melodic codes are unrecognised by the general consumer or industry manager, but the information inherent within the variable is utilised by them in the genre decision making process, supporting the holistic recognition and development of musical identification. The recognition of general codes or variables by the musician, the media, the artist and the consumer identifies a homogenous language and semiotic codification underpinning the dialogue and interface between the protagonists. Thus, surprise at the placement of an artist is minimised because of the open and deliberate dialogue between the parties involved. Allied to this is the diverse nature of the major and independent companies and their media strategies, which are key to the recognition of homogenous or alternative nomenclature.

The foregoing analysis suggests that a holistic process exists in the identification of *punk* and *nu punk*. The process, both formal and informal, is fostered by the media in tandem with the industry, and accepted and clearly interpreted by the artist and the consumer. The process is both musical and

paramusical in nature and, although recognised by many of the protagonists as being heavily manipulated in favour of the major conglomerates, is also accepted by the independent companies. The identification and subsequent experimentation on a series of these variables identified the importance of both the musical and paramusical elements in the homogenisation and differentiation of musical episodes (specifically in *punk* and *nu punk*). The industrial and media structures utilise these variables [and more] to informally and formally identify musical episodes into classificatory groups, whether these are temporal, spatial or contextual. The artist, in the majority of cases, is suitably identified and placed in a category pertinent to either their own or the industries' needs, and their classificatory system runs in tandem with the industry and media system. The consumer utilises much the same classificatory system as utilised by the mass media, and thus recognition rather than tension is created in the mass industrial environment. In the alternative environment where independent companies reside, the smaller individual companies who are responsive to the consumers needs uphold the *status quo*. A point of tension occurs when an alternative artist moves into a marketing or umbrella category and the paramusical factors surrounding the artist become confused to the audience.

The conclusion to this study suggests that the aims and objectives have been fully explored. The present means of genre identification have been analysed and the information synthesised, determining that the present industrial structure is both robust and developmental. The identification in the study of the integrative nature of the musical and paramusical factors and their relationship to industrial practices has confirmed the importance of a holistic approach to the robustness of the genre framework. The benefits of such an approach to the industry are manifold, and include a tracking and mapping system through consumer intelligence, a comprehensive intelligence system utilising musical, paramusical, perceptual and industrial reference points, and a system which enables fluidity. The comparison and contrasting of early and late *punk* songs with computer and hand coded data elicited codified elements enabling a broader understanding of the classificatory system employed in the identification of *punk* and *nu punk*. The reliance on factors which homogenise or differentiate between musical episodes, show clearly the reference points pertaining to a genre and a sub genre and the musical and paramusical balance achieved within each. Thus, the overall experimental aim was accomplished, where different discourses in relation to musical genre were articulated utilising both quantitative and qualitative experimentation, identifying that there is a holistic approach to the identification and classification of musical genre.

From the experimentation carried out, a genre framework diagram has been constructed identifying the major elements inherent in a holistic genre classificatory system based on the information identified from the *punk* and *nu punk* analysis.



### 7.1.3 The Genre Framework

From the exploration carried out within this study, the identification of music genre and the categories within which artists are placed, can be articulated as a framework.

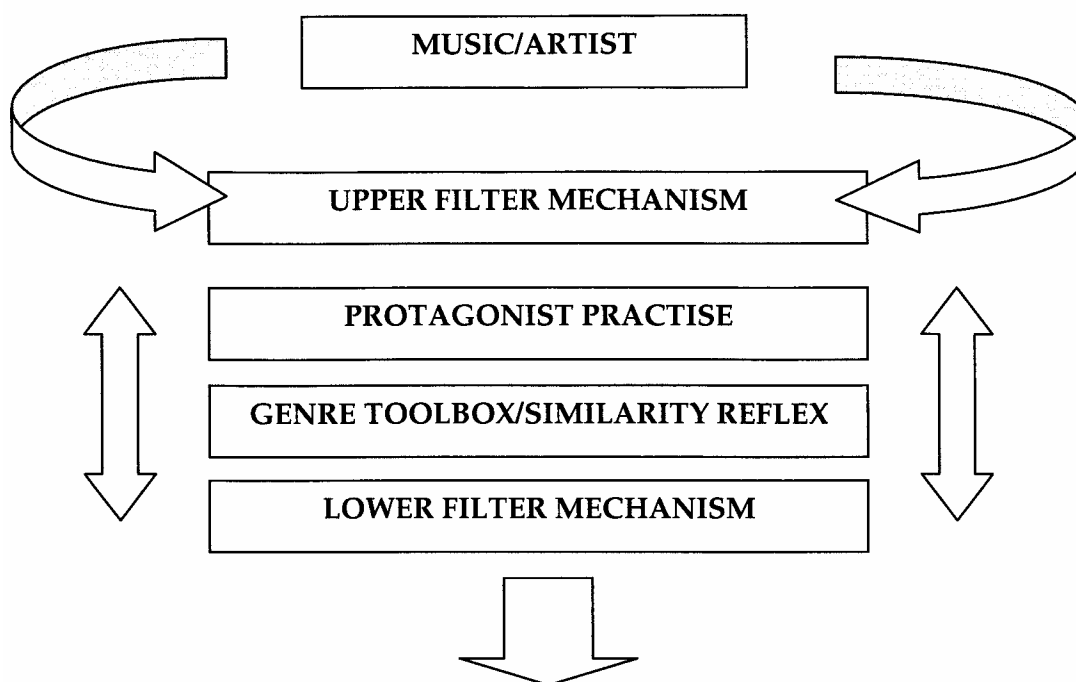


FIGURE 11 Genre Shell (Outer)

This comprises a number of levels gradually peeling away from a simplistic outer shell uncovering a series of more complex layers as they are required in the identification process. The outer shell framework identified in *Figure 11*, determines that protagonist practice and the genre toolbox/similarity reflex are central elements to the genre identification process.

The protagonist practice and toolbox/similarity reflex break down into a further set of variables (see *Figure 12*), which are affected by a series of overarching factors. Often such factors can be a single attributable element in the identification of the genre, i.e. the similarity reflex or the structure of jazz. The model created is continually in flux as the overarching factors as well as those inherent in protagonist practice and the genre toolbox/similarity reflex are constantly changing.

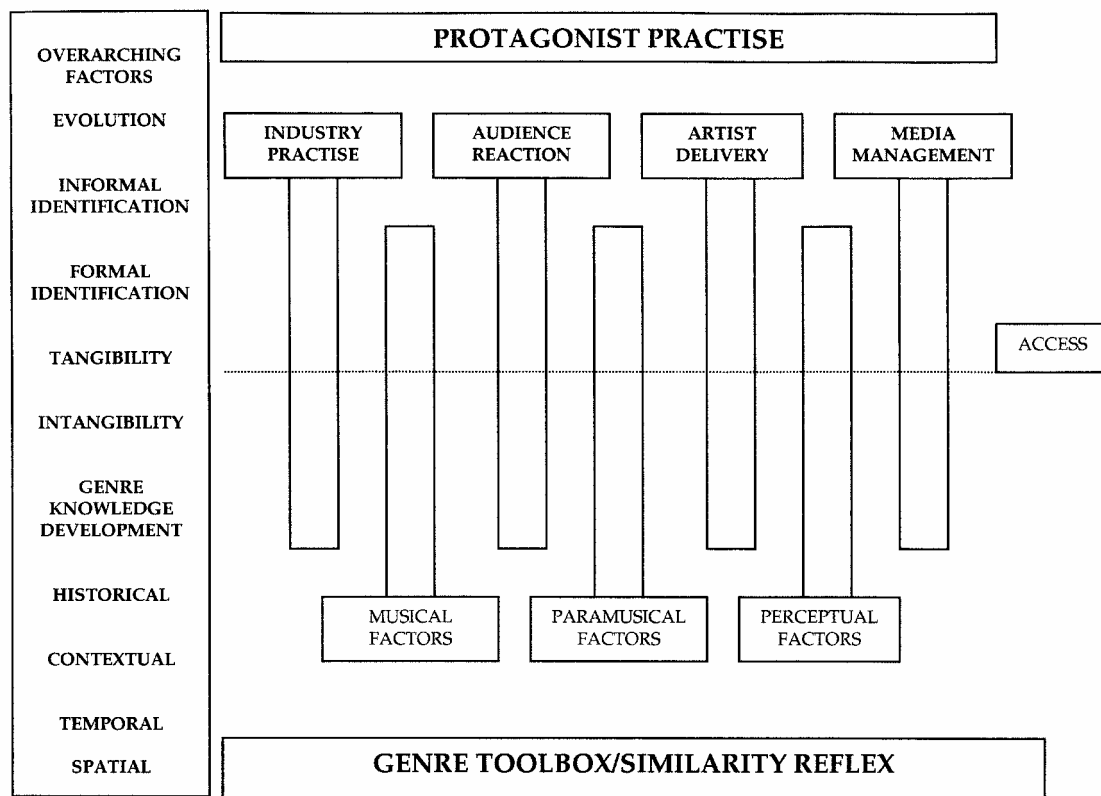


FIGURE 12 Genre Shell (Inner) Level 1

One example of this is the informal and formal identification mechanism, which precipitates a change in the perceived placement of a genre, and thus the initial informal identification - for example skater punk - may take longer to identify by the utilisation of the model, as several layers may have to be discarded before a correct identification can be made. However, the homogeneity of pop punk (the genres possible formal identification) may be identified from the similarity reflex found in the outer layer of the model.

The association of broad variables utilised to identify artists or musical episodes within manufactured music, marketing and umbrella categories is supported by the findings in the foregoing analysis. These findings determine the creation of easily identifiable variables pertaining to the manufactured and mass cultural musical episodes thus facilitating dissemination to a wider audience. Such a process is essential for the economic viability of the artist or genre. An example of a single factor utilised to identify an umbrella category, which is accelerated by the media but controlled by both the industry and media gatekeepers, is the identification of pop music by the number of units sold. Thus an artist appears in a 'pop' category by the use of a single criterion reference. The influence of one or more overarching factors is dependent on the type of music to be identified. For example, classical music can be identified by the temporal period in which the music was written. The model identified in this thesis is not exhaustive as many other factors can be included in the

representation. However, it does identify the need for a holistic development of genre identification as the musical, paramusical and perceptual elements are all integrated and interrelated in the final identification process.

In many cases it is not easy to identify a genre from a general or singular variable, an overarching factor or a context created specifically by the industry. Therefore, a more complex set of variables are needed in the identification process. Thus the genre outer shell is peeled away to reveal a further layer of more focussed and complex variables as shown in Figure 13. A further Figure (see Appendix 4) shows a further layer of the genre shell peeled away revealing even more detailed genre identification variables. It is clear from the framework that such a process could be never-ending, with the genre toolbox peeling off further layers to identify more complex and sub divided genre. But in principle the fourth level of exfoliation is the deepest layer utilised to enable a consensus in the identification of a genre.

From this study, it can be ascertained that it is possible to create a framework for the identification of specific genre or sub genre, i.e. *punk* and *nu punk*. However, there is no indication that an overall framework for the identification of all genres of popular music exists. The significance of the discovery of specific genre identification may lead to further work on the total genre development process, finally leading to the development of a definitive genre framework for popular music, although this is unlikely. It is more likely that a series of specific genre framework models could be constructed for a parent genre, spawning a wide range of sub genres. But the exact purpose of such a model is debatable. However owing to the similarity of punk and nu punk to other musical styles it is possible that the reader may generalise within the model applying it to other forms of rock music.

The more complex the levels of coding used within the identification of the genres, the more exact the identification of the genre becomes. If a superficial identification of the genre is easily ascertainable, then further stripping of the model is not necessary. In other studies of genre the music industry, the involvement of the consumer/artist and the central role of the media have been ignored. Yet the interaction between these protagonists is vital to the understanding of musical genre.

The interface between the protagonists, i.e. the retailer, the music magazine and the concert attendee, can in a number of cases form the basis for recognition and identification of genre. It is clear from this study that the identification of genre is a multi dimensional activity and includes a wide range of variables and activities associated with, or forming part of, a holistic approach to musical identification.

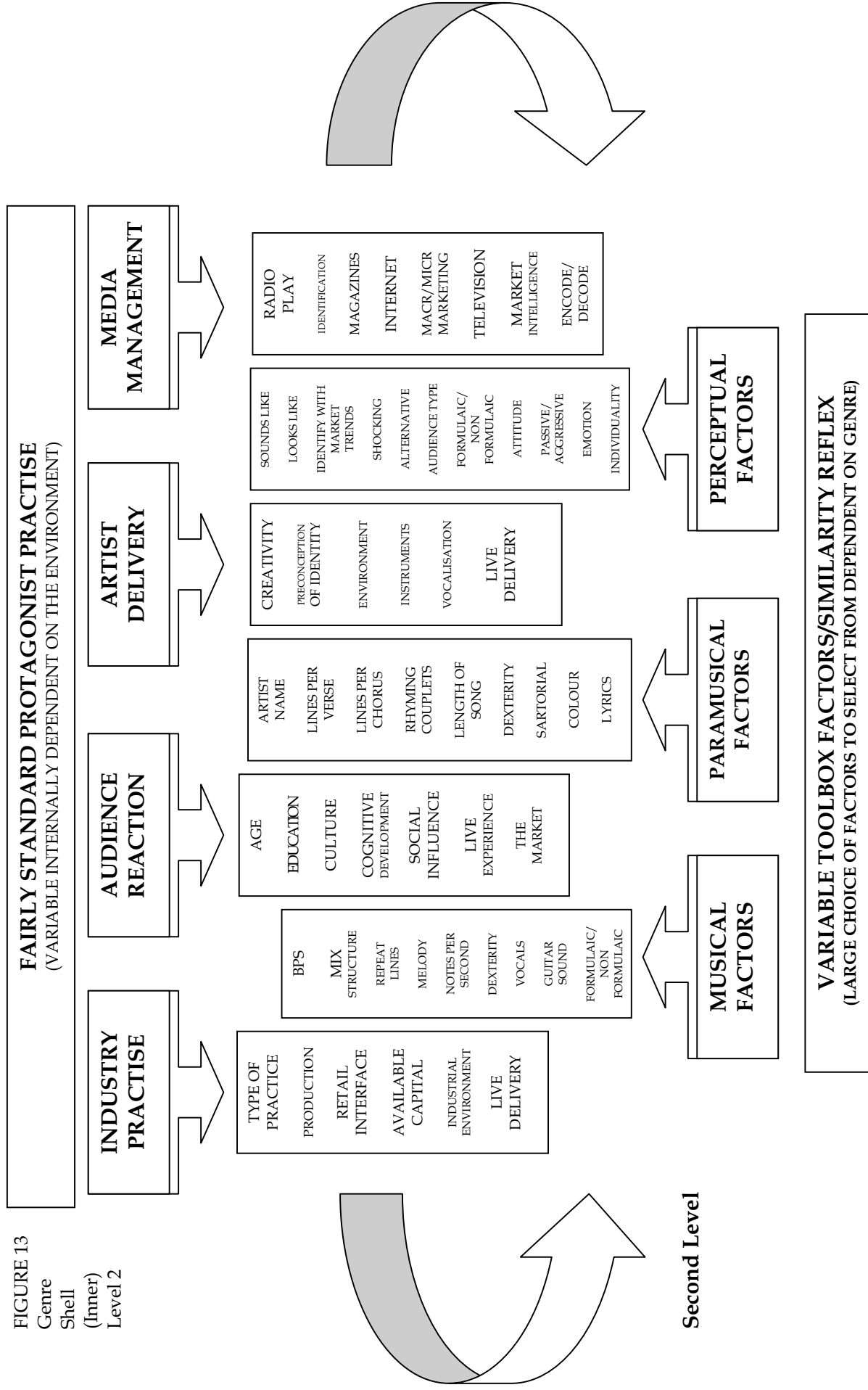
To validate the transferability of the work accomplished in this thesis both the general and specific research must be contemplated independently. The generic identification factors inherent within the triangulated evidence indicate the transferability of a number of the major concepts throughout the study of music genre. These include both musical and paramusical factors. Musically the vocalisation, guitar sound and the melodic factors are all transferable to other

genres. Paramusically the major/independent identification of the artists, the similarity reflex, the number of beats per second, the mix structure of the instruments involved and the length of the song are all generally transferable. However, the specific identification codes related to *punk* and *nu punk* will vary greatly from those related to other musical genres, thus further free listing, and pile sort would be utilised to identify pertinent variables for each genre. The identified variables would be appropriated from the genre toolbox and enable the identification of the genres in question.

The contribution that the study makes to theory and practice is wide and varied and is associated with the work already carried out in the area. The work of Negus (1999), Tagg (1982) and Fabbri (1981) was extremely influential in the development of the study and it is the enhancement of the work already undertaken that was a prime focus in this thesis. The added dimension of a holistic approach to genre identification proved that both musical and paramusical influences are important in genre identification and that the integration of the qualitative and quantitative elements form an underpinning theoretical framework on which to develop further work on genre nomenclature.

Secondly, the utilisation of discriminant analysis and the Midi Toolbox (Eerola & Toiviainen in print) in the development of genre identification was a new orientation for the study of genre theory and practice. The tertiary contribution made by this thesis to theory and practice is the identification and reiteration of the importance of the industry, media, artist and consumer in the genre naming process and that the influence of the media in genre development is guided if not manipulative. As such in contemporary popular music, the media and industry produce and promote a greater range of synthetic rather than organically developed artists and musical episodes. Fourthly, the development of simplistic diagrammatic models of genre identification and development make a complex process more transparent.

FIGURE 13  
Genre  
Shell  
(Inner)  
Level 2



Second Level

## 7.2 The Limitations to the Research

During the research, a number of limitations became evident and these are outlined below.

### 7.2.1 Problems with Musical and Paramusical Misinterpretation

From the identification of variables and the varying responses of the interviewees and focus group members it is important to note that a number of respondents may have misinterpreted the distinct difference between what is termed musical and what is paramusical in the study. It is possible that by such misinterpretation respondents may have inadvertently given unsatisfactory responses to the questions posed. This problem was highlighted during the compilation of the findings where ambiguity was detected in some of the answers to the questions. A prime example of this is the confusion between the placing of the instruments in the mix and the sound identifying those instruments. One respondent clearly identifies the sound of the guitar rather than its placing in the mix and thus confuses the musical and the paramusical.

### 7.2.2 The Integration of the Quantitative and Qualitative Research

At the outset of the study the integration of the qualitative and quantitative data was identified as a major obstacle. The differentiation of the two types of methodology and the use of a combined delivery although difficult was extremely rewarding. However, had the data been either qualitative or quantitative in nature the study would have been far more manageable in the period identified. Without the combinational methodology, however a holistic interpretation of musical genre identification would not have been accomplished.

### 7.2.3 The Lack of Textual Evidence on Nu Punk and Hardcore

The lack of academic textual evidence pertaining to *nu punk* and hardcore made the collection of relevant information on part of the study difficult. Web pages, industry interviews and magazine articles had to be substituted for the dearth of academic texts in the area. In the study, it was often difficult to achieve a balance between the *punk* and *nu punk* elements as such a breadth of material on all aspects of *punk* genre was not available.

### 7.2.4 The Lack of Information in the Area of Musical Genre Identification

A secondary limitation pertaining to a lack of evidence on the subject matter concerns the information in regards to music genre identification. The major source areas for genre identification are literature and film but little has been

written on the identification of music genre. Much of the information on musical analysis is related partly to genre identification but it is usually specific and the majority of the body of knowledge does not focus on popular music. The main sources for such information was the works of Franco Fabbri, Phillip Tagg and Keith Negus whose work the author is indebted to as their identification, delivery and evidence is easily understandable, assimilable and transferable to any genre of music.

### **7.2.5 The Identification of the Songs as Punk**

One major limitation of this study is the definition of which musical episodes constitute *punk* and *nu punk* at the outset of the study. Although the evidence assimilated at the beginning of the study is relatively robust and the temporal signifiers transparent, the changing context of the two types of music utilised over the time span of the study caused differences in input and output elements of musical episodes. For example some musical episodes were classified differently at the outset and the conclusion of the study, i.e. Greenday were a *hardcore* band at the start of the thesis and a *pop punk* band by the end.

## **7.3 Recommendations for Further Research**

Whilst carrying out this thesis a number of recommendations for further research have become apparent. These are usually manifest when a subject or element begins a tangential movement away from the main purpose of the study and before the study becomes too wide has to be constrained and refocused. These recommendations also focus on how the study would differ if approached with the value of hindsight. The following elements have been identified as recommendations for further research.

### **7.3.1 The Expansion of the Genre Tested**

From the work already carried out on *classical* and *folk* music using the Midi Toolbox (Eerola & Toiviainen, in press), a wealth of musical information concerning these two types of music exists at the University of Jyväskylä. The comparison of the computer coded *punk* data with that of the classical and folk data would enable a wider testing of the variables and structures initiated in this thesis.

### **7.3.2 An Expansion or Change of the Variables**

In the experimentation carried out in this thesis only 23 variables were utilised in the discovery phase of the study. An expansion of variables or the utilization of different variables would enable the theories developed in this study to be

further tested for validity. For example if the discriminant analysis carried out on new or expanded variables yielded the same results then the validity of the study would be further verified.

### **7.3.3 Utilisation of Other Musical Episodes**

To test a further 100 *punk* and 100 *nu punk* songs with the same variables and repeating the experimentation in the same way further validation of the results could be afforded. In such an analysis many of the lessons learned from the initial experimentation could be employed to enable expedience and a more focussed approach.

### **7.3.4 The Further Fragmentation of the Musical Episodes**

By the fragmentation of *punk* and *nu punk* songs into as many sub categories as possible in the initial stages of a secondary study and then carrying out variable analysis to enable variable specificity, the sub and sub, sub genre systems could be explored. Such exploration would enable the identification of categories specific to these fragmented sub genres and thus further validate a holistic approach.

### **7.3.5 Difficulties in Genre Orientation**

It is difficult to establish whether the categories that artists are assigned to enable correct genre identification or whether such categories are utilised for marketing purposes primarily to sell a type or style of music or para-music.

### **7.3.6 Ethnicity as a variable**

One interesting approach for further research would be to explore the genre preferences and identification traits associated with those from different ethnic minorities, as this is one variable, which the researcher is conscious, was not explored within this thesis.



## YHTEENVETO (Résumé in Finnish)

### Kohti musiikin genreluokittelun kokonaisvaltaista tulkintaa

Musiikin tutkimus on aiemmin keskittynyt formalistien ja referentialistien suoritamiin analyysihin erilaisista sosiaalisista, semioottisista ja antropologisista näkökulmista, kuten Yestonin (1977) schenkeriläisestä, Econ (1977) semioottisesta ja Ruwet'n (1987) motiivianalyttisestä näkökulmasta. Kullakin näistä on omat ansionsa musiikin formaalissa analyysissä, mutta harvat tutkivat musiikillista genreä. Musiikin genretutkimuksessa musiikillisten, ulkomusiikillisten ja havaintoon liittyvien tekijöiden tutkimus on aihealueen perinpohjaisen ymmärtämisen kannalta olennaista. Johnson (ks. Zorn 2000:29) kannattaa tällaisen perspektiivin omaksumista perustellessaan musiikin analysoimista holistisen lähestymistavan avulla.

Musiikin ja sen luomiseen, kehittämiseen ja levittämiseen liittyvien diskurssien moninainen luonne ilmenee identifikaatioon liittyvien merkitysijöiden monitahoisuudessa; tämä puoltaa "hybridimetodologian" (Wickens 1999) käyttöä, so. määrällisten ja laadullisten menetelmien yhdistämistä. Tämä väitöskirja tutkii musiikkiteollisuutta musiikin tuottajien, tiedotusvälineiden, artistin ja kuluttajan näkökulmista. Menestyksekkäs holistinen tulkinta musiikin genren olemuksesta olisi merkittävä lisä alalla tehtyyn tutkimustyöhön. Käsillä oleva holistinen tutkimus perustuu kvalitatiivisiin haastatteluihin ja fokusryhmiin; näistä saatua tutkimustietoa on täydennetty kvantitatiivisella tutkimuksella, joka on keskittynyt musiikillisten episodien sijoittumiseen eri kategorioissa. Tärkeimmät johtopäätökset liittyvät tiedotusvälineiden avainasemaan musiikillisen genren määrittämisessä, orgaanisten ja synteettisten musiikillisten episodien kehittymiseen ja tapaan, jolla tutkimuksessa käytetyt muuttujat ilmentävät samankaltaisuutta ja eroavaisuuksia genren ja alagenren määrittelyssä.

Asiasanat: genre, musiikillinen, ulkomusiikillinen, havainto, tiedotusvälineet, management, homogeenisuus, ero, alagenre, luokittelu

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 IFPI The Music Industry in Numbers 1996 IFPI  
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### Individual Musical Tracks and Albums mentioned in the text

1 Against I	1998	Nailed to the Floor	Epitaph 6534-2
999	1978	Emergency	United Artists UP 36399
Adam & the Ants	1978	Young Parisians	Decca F31803
AFI	2002	Dream of Waking	NITRO 14586-2
Agnostic Front	1998	Gotta Go	Epitaph 6534-2
Alberto Y Los	1977	Kill	Stiff Last 2
Trios Paranoas			
All	2001	She Broke my Dick	Epitaph 6615-2
Alternative TV	1977	How Much Longer	Deptford Fun City DFC 002
American Steel	2000	Got a Backbeat	Lookout LK235
Angelic Upstarts	1978	Murder of Liddle Towers	Dead AU 1024
Anna Beretta	2000	Better Days	Lookout LK235
Anne Beretta	2000	Like a Riot	Lookout LK235
Au Pairs	1979	You	021 Records OTO 2
Avril Lavigne	2002	Sk8ter Boi	BIEM/GEMA 743219312
Bad Religion	1976	Give you Nothing	Epitaph 6484-2
Bad Religion	1985	American Jesus	Epitaph LC2576
Beatsteaks	2001	Let me in	Epitaph 6615-2
Black Cat Music	2000	Wine in a Box	Lookout LK235
Blondie	1977	Rip Her To Shreds	Chrysalis, CHS 2180
Bodyjar	2002	Not the Same	NITRO 14586-2
Bomshell Rocks	2001	Radio Control	Burning Heart BHR 136
Bryan Adams and Melanie Chisholm	2001	When you're Gone	Mercury 5828212
Chelsea	1977	Right to Work	Step Forward, SF2
Citizen Fish	2000	Digging a Hole	Lookout LK235
CIV	1995	Cant Wait One Minute	LAVA PRCD6284-2
Cleveland Bound	2000	Love American Style	Lookout LK235
Death Sentence			
Common Rider	2000	Carry On	Lookout LK235
Common Rider	2000	Signal Signal	Lookout LK235
Dead Boys	1977	Sonic Reducer	Sire, SRE 1004
Descendents	1996	Coffee Mug	Epitaph 6484-2
Deviates	2001	Come With Me	Epitaph 6615-2
Devo	1978	Jocko Homo	Stiff DEV 1
DFL	1996	Thought Control	Epitaph 6484-2
Divit	2002	Misunderstanding	NITRO 14586-2
Donots	2001	Maybe	
		Today	Burning Heart LC02576
Down By Law	1996	Grusome Gary	Epitaph 6484-2
Down by Law	1998	No Equalizer	Epitaph 6534-2
Downset	2001	Pure Trauma	Epitaph 6615-2
Dr Frank	2000	Ask Beth	Lookout LK235
Dropkick Murphys	2001	The Gauntlet	Epitaph 6615-2

DUMDUMS	2000	Everything	GB-CDGOOD1
Dwarves	1998	Everybody's Girl	Epitaph 6534-2
Eater	1977	Thinkin' Of The USA	The Label TLR3
Eddie and the Hotrods	1976	Teenage Depression	Island, WIP 6354
Enemy You	2000	City of Lost Children	Lookout LK235
Ensign	2002	Black Clouds vs Silver Linings	NITRO 14586-2
Fatboy Slim	2001	Praise You	SKINT42
Gang of Four	1978	Damaged Goods	Fast Fast 5
Gas Huffers	1998	Rotten Egg	Epitaph 6534-2
Generation X	1977	Your Generation	Chrysalis, CHS 2165
Good Charlottes	2002	Girls & Boys	EPIC 5094889
Green Day	1994	Welcome to Paradise	Reprise WO269
Guttermouth	2000	Secure Horizons	Epitaph 6588-2
Guttermouth	2002	Hit Machine	NITRO 14586-2
H2O	2000	Guilty by Association	Epitaph 6588-2
Heideroosjes	2001	Home	Epitaph 6615-2
Hot Water Music	2001	Jack of all Trades	Epitaph 6615-2
Ian Dury and the Blockheads	1977	Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll	Stiff Buy 17
Jackie Papers	2000	Crip Girl	Lookout LK235
Jilted John	1978	Jilted John	Rabid Tosh 105
Joe Jackson	1978	Is She Really Going Out With Him	A&M AMS 7459
John Cooper Clarke	1977	Psyche Sluts	Rabid TOSH 103
Johnny Moped	1978	Hard Lovin Man	Chiswick NS 41
Johnny Thunders	1978	You Can't Put Your Arms Round A Memory	Real Records ARE 3
Jonathan Richmann and the Modern Lovers	1977	Roadrunner	Beserkley, BZZ1
Joy Division	1978	Warsaw	Enigma PS 139
Klark Kent	1978	Don't Care	Kryptone KK 1
Larry Wallis	1977	Police Car	Stiff, BUY 22
Lawnmower Deth	1991	Kids in America	Earache MOSH39T
Led Zeppelin	1975	Kashmir	Swan Song SSK 89400 D
Leftover Crack	2002	Atheist Anthem	Hellcat 6588-2
Less Than Jake	2001	Is this thing on	Golf HOLE047
Madball	2000	Hold it Down	Epitaph 6588-2
Magazine	1978	Shot by Both Sides	Virgin VS 200
Me First and the Gimie Gimie	1996	Only the Good Die Young	Epitaph 6484-2
Menace	1978	G.L.C.	Small Wonder Small 5
Millencolin	1996	Bullion	Epitaph 6484-2
Mink Deville	1977	Spanish Stroll	Capitol CL 103
Moral Crx	2000	Bomb for the Mainstream	Lookout LK235
Mute	2000	Slow Motion Riot	Epitaph 6588-2
Necromantix	2002	Who Killed the Cheerleader	Hellcat 6588-2
New Bomb Turks	1996	Jukebox Lean	Epitaph 6484-2
Nick Lowe	1976	So it Goes	Stiff, BUY 1
No Fun At All	2001	My Extraordinary Mind	Burning Heart BHR 136
NOFX	1996	Whatever Didi Wants	Epitaph 6484-2
Not Sensibles	1979	I'm in Love With Margaret Thatcher	Redball Records RR2

Original Sinners	2002	Birds & Bees	NITRO 14586-2
Osker	2001	Strangled	Epitaph 6615-2
Pansy Division	2000	Used to Turn me on	Lookout LK235
Patrick Fitzgerald	1978	Safety Pin Stuck in My Heart	Small Wonder Small 4
Penetration	1977	Don't Dictate	Virgin, VS 192
Pennywise	1996	Perfect People	Epitaph 6484-2
Pere Ubu	1977	The Modern Dance	Hearpen, HR 014
Poison Idea	1976	Just to Get Away	Epitaph 6484-2
Protex	1978	Don't Ring Me Up	Good Vibrations GOT 6
Public Image Ltd	1978	Public Image	Virgin VS 228
Puffball	2001	Back on the Sauce	Burning Heart BHR 1366
Pulley	1996	Cashed In	Epitaph 6484-2
Punishment of Luxury	1978	Puppet Life	Small Wonder Small 8
Radio Stars	1977	Nervous Wreck	Chiswick, NS 23
Ramones	1976	The Blitzkreig Bop	Sire, 6078 601
Rancid	1976	Sidekick	Epitaph LC 2576
Randy	2001	Summer of Bros	Burning Heart 6615-2
Red Aunts	1998	Poison Steak	Epitaph 6534-2
Rich Kids	1978	Rich Kids	EMI EMI2738
Richard Hell and the Voidoids	1976	(I Belong To) The Blank Generation	Stiff, Buy 7
Riff Raff	1978	Romford Girls	Chiswick SW34
Rudi	1978	Big Time	Good Vibrations GOT 1
Ruffio	2002	Still	NITRO 14586-2
Salt n Pepa	1999	Brick Track vs Gitty Up	SCD373
Screeching Weasel	2000	Acknowledge	Lookout LK235
Sex Pistols	1976	Anarchy in the UK	EMI, EMI 2566
Sex Pistols	1977	Never Mind The Bollocks, Here's The Sex Pistols	Virgin V 2086
Sham 69	1978	Borstal Breakout	Polydor 2058 966
Shelter	1995	Civilised Man	Roadrunner RR 8938-2
Simple Plan	2002	The Worst Day Ever	Lava/Atlantic 7567-83534-2
Siouxsie and the Banshees	1979	The Staircase (Mystery)	Polydor POSP 9
Skids	1978	Sweet Suburbia	Virgin VS 227
Slaughter and the Dogs	1977	Where Have All the Bootboys Gone	Decca FR 1372
Snatch	1978	All I Want	Lightning LIG 505
SNFU	1996	Don't Have the Cow	Epitaph 6484-2
Son of Sam	2002	Michael	NITRO 14586-2
Southport	2001	Pilot	Burning Heart LC02576
Spawn	1999	Spawn	Immortal/Epic/Sony Music Soundtrax EPC 488118 2
Spizzenergi	1979	Where's Captain Kirk	Rough Trade RTSO 4
Squeeze	1978	Take Me I'm Yours	A&M AMS 7335
Squirtgun	2000	Writ off Today	Lookout LK235
Stavesacre	2002	You Know How it is	NITRO 14586-2

Stiff Little Fingers	1978	Alternative Ulster	Rough Trade RT004
Stiff Little Fingers	1994	Get a Life	Castle ESSCD 210
Straight Faced	1998	Green Motivates	Epitaph 6534-2
Suburban Studs	1978	I Hate School	Pogo Pogo 2
Subway Sect	1978	Ambition	Rough Trade RT 007
Swell Maps	1978	Read About Seymour	Rather Gear 1
Television	1977	Marquee Moon	Elektra K12252
Television	1978	Part Time Punks	Kings Road Records 001
Personalities			
Ten Foot Pole	1998	ADD	Epitaph 6534-2
Terrorgruppe	2001	Do you mind	Epitaph 6615-2
The Adverts	1977	One Chord Wonders	Stiff Buy 13
The Avengers	2000	I Want In	Lookout LK235
The Boomtown Rats	1977	Looking After No. 1	Ensign ENY 4
The Bouncing Souls	2001	True Believers	Epitaph 6615-2
The Boys	1977	First Time	NEMS, NES 111
The Buzzcocks	1977	Orgasm Addict	United Artists UP36316
The Clash	1977	Complete Control	CBS, CBS 5664
The Cure	1978	10:15 Saturday Night	Small Wonder Small 11
The Damned	1976	New Rose	Stiff, BUY 6
The Damned	2002	Looking for Action	NITRO 14586-2
The Dead Kennedys	1980	California Uber Alles	Fast Fast 12
The Dickies	1978	Paranoid	A&M AMS 7368
The Dictators	1977	Search and Destroy	Asylum, K13091
The Distillers	2002	Sick of it All	Hellcat 6588-2
The Donnas	2000	Hook it Up	Lookout LK235
The Drones	1977	Bone Idol	Valer VRS 1
The Electric Chairs	1977	Fuck Off	Sweet FA, WCP3
The Flys	1978	Love and a Molotov Cocktail	Harvest EMI 2747
The Groove Ghoulies	2000	Carly Simon	Lookout LK235
The Heartbreakers	1977	Born to Lose	Track. 2094 135
The Humpers	1996	Mutate With Me	Epitaph 6484-2
The Jam	1977	In the City	Polydor, 2058 866
The Joykiller	1996	Hate	Epitaph 6484-2
The Killjoys	1977	Johnny won't go to Heaven	Raw, Raw 3
The Leyton Buzzards	1978	19 & Mad	Small Wonder Small 7
The Lillingtons	2000	Phantom Maggot	Lookout LK235
The Lurkers	1977	Shadow	Beggars Banquet BEG 1
The Mekons	1978	Where Were You	Fast FAST 7
The Members	1978	Solitary Confinement	Stiff OFF 3
The Monochrome Sect	1979	The Monochrome Set	Rough Trade RT008
The Mopes	2000	Babydoll	Lookout LK235
The Mr T	2000	Tomorrow is a Harsh Mistress	Lookout LK 235
Experience		Gabrielle	Chiswick SH 9
The Nipps	1979	Ain't Bin to no Music	Rabid Tosh 102
The Nosebleeds	1977	School	
The Offspring	1998	Staring at the Sun	Columbia COL 491656 2
The Offspring	2002	A Thousand Days	NITRO 14586-2



The Offspring	1998	Pretty Fly for a White Guy	Columbia COL 4916562
The Only Ones	1978	Another Girl Another Planet	CBS CBS 6628
The Outcasts	1978	Justa Nother Teenage Rebel	Good Vibrations GOT 3
The Pop Group	1979	We are all Prostitutes	Rough Trade RT 023
The Queers	2000	Never Ever	Lookout LK235
The Radiators from Space	1977	Television Screen	Chiswick, S10
The Rezillos	1977	I Can't Stand my Baby	Sensible FAB 1
The Ruts	1979	In a Rut	People Unite RUT 1
The Saints	1976	(I'm) Stranded	Fatal, MA 7158
The Slits	1979	Typical Girls	Island WIP 6505
The Smugglers	2000	Flying Buttress	Lookout LK235
The Stranglers	1977	Get a Grip	United Artists, UP 36211
The Table	1977	Do the Standing Still	Virgin VS 176
The Turbo A.C.'s	2002	Hipnotized	NITRO 14586-2
The Undertones	1978	Teenage Kicks	Good Vibrations GOT 4
The Users	1977	Sick Of You	Raw Records, Raw 1
The Vandals	2002	Why are you Alive	NITRO 14586-2
The Vibrators	1977	Baby Baby	Epic, EPC 5302
The Wasps	1977	Can't Wait 'Til '78	Nems NEL 6013
The Yachts	1977	Suffice to Say	Stiff, BUY 19
These Animal Men	1994	Sharp Kid	Rise FLATCD 8
Tom Robinson Band	1978	Up Against The Wall	EMI EMI 2787
TSOL	1996	Code Blue	Epitaph 6484-2
TSOL	2002	Sold	NITRO 14586-2
UK Subs	1978	CID	City NIC 5
Ultravox	1977	Young Savage	Island WIP 6392
Undeclinable	1998	7 Years	Epitaph 6534-2
Ambuscade			
Undeclinables	2001	Whatever	Epitaph 6615-2
Union 13	1998	Never Connected	Epitaph 6534-2
Union 13	2001	Innocence	Epitaph 6615-2
Voodoo Glow Skulls	1996	El Coo Cooi	Epitaph 6484-2
Wayne Kramer	1998	Bad Seed	Epitaph 6534-2
Welt	2001	Two Years	Golf HOLE047
Wire	1977	Mannequin	Harvest HAR 5144
Wreckless Eric	1977	Whole Wide World	Stiff BUY 16
X Ray Spex	1977	Oh Bondage up Yours	Virgin, VS 189
Xentrix	Ghostbusters		
XTC	1977	Science Friction	Virgin VSS 188
Zeke	1998	Telepath Boy	Epitaph 6534-2
Zen Guerilla	2000	Slow Motion	Epitaph 6588-2

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

**A&R:** Artist and repertoire. A&R representatives sign new talent to labels.

**Airplay only chart:** A chart created by the number of plays a record gets on the radio. This does not equate to the number of singles sold but does often influence the sell through of product.

**Alternative music:** Music that is not mainstream or that is countercultural also used to describe post *punk* music in the late 1970s and early 80s. This term is often substituted by the terms *new wave* or *indie* in this context.

**Contemporary Popular Music:** This term refers to music from the 1950s to the present day which is identified under the terms popular identified within the thesis.

**dance:** The use of references to *dance* in this text are almost exclusively identifiable with music attributed to raves from the mid eighties to 2003. References to dance are attributable to all other forms of dance including contemporary Latin American, ballroom, rock 'n' roll etc.

**DIY:** Do it yourself music pertains to the whole philosophy behind *punk*. Bands being created on a shoestring with members who possibly could not play their instruments. Such bands created their own sartoriality, practiced in their garages, created their own records on their own labels. The basic premise behind DIY is doing both the elements of production and those leading to consumption without the help of others in the music industry.

**Ecstasy:** A common colloquialism for MDMA a drug that causes mass euphoria but is dangerous owing to its free radical adaptation stopping the transfer of acetylcholine and adrenaline in the cerebral cortex often causing dehydration and death.

**Formal Identification:** Takes place when the media categorise the music in a genre group.

**Gabba:** A sub genre of dance music eliciting beats over and above 200 bpm.

**Genre borders:** Contestable areas of genres where more than one tag may be attributed to an artist as these areas are contested between this and other genres. An example of this is an artist who may be classified as grunge, metal or

punk because attributable elements of their music fit into any of the three categories.

**Genre Toolbox or Rule Bank:** This term is used to identify an umbrella to cover the plethora of possible tools used to define genre. The toolbox may encapsulate a wide range of tools but at any given moment or in any given context only a small number of these tools may be used.

**Hardcore:** Artists following the punk philosophy from the 1970s into the 1980s rather than seeking financial gain through the diversification of *punk* into *new wave*.

**Hybrid Genres:** The creation of a musical genre by the utilisation and addition of aspects from one or more other genres creating a 'new' genre or sub genre. An example is *grunge* where elements from both *rock* and *indie* were combined to create a 'new' genre.

**Informal Identification:** Takes place on the street before the media make a more formal identification.

**Kerrang:** is the only weekly heavy *metal/rock/thrash/grunge* magazine in the UK. It is known as the *heavy metal* bible because it has the biggest readership of any of the magazines within this genre.

**Macro media:** Mass cultural media channels such as TV, newspapers and commercial and National radio.

**Macro-environment:** The overarching environment which globally effects all businesses. These factors comprise the following factors: Geographical, financial, economical, legal, political, environmental, social etc.

**Marketing Category:** The development of a tag the main purpose of which is to market a group of artists to a single or multiple markets. Examples of marketing categories are *grunge* and *electro-pop*.

**Marketing Tools:** Comprise a wide range of elements utilised to attract sales to the consumer. These include posters, mailing lists, newspaper adverts, editorial, pictures, magazines, the internet, SMS texting etc.

**Micro media:** Minority interest channels of media utilised to spread the word of minority genres, pirate radio channels, leaflets in specialist shops, specialist websites and SMS texting are all part of this system of marketing.

**Micro-environment:** The micro environment applies to practices and factors which singularly affect individuals or businesses. For example, a change in price of a ticket at one venue may affect the number of consumers going to the

concert. However, this does not globally affect other venues, although it may affect venues within the surrounding area.

**Moral Panic:** The creation of a panic through the media usually over the dangers of drugs, music or sex connected to youth culture. An example is the effect of adverse *dance* publicity through the hyping of ecstasy's relationship with *dance* culture.

**Musical Episode:** This term is used to describe a song or piece of music or raft of musical pieces.

**NME:** *New Musical Express*

**Nu punk:** See Chapter 3

**Osmosis:** The assimilation of a process by being in the same area as the process is taking place. For example, a stage worker working on a large event will understand the processes needed to put up any stage just by working for a period of time with stage setting.

**Punk:** See Chapter 3.

**QANGO:** Quasi Autonomous Non Governmental Associations are bodies set up by the Government to distribute funds to organizations. They are the mouth and the funds of the Government acting as a third party or go between. An example is the Arts Council

**Scene:** Often used to describe either a sub culture, youth culture or group of similar artists emerging in one area of the country. The dual use of the term is often confusing. For example, the *punk* scene is the framework that supports the music, whereas the Manchester scene is defined by location rather than music.

**Shipped:** The term for sell through of record company or other product related with the music industry.

**Subculture within the study:** The identification of subculture within the study: The use of the terms subculture and the bracketed sub ([sub]) between youth and culture will be used in the thesis to differentiate between mainstream or mass culture and alternative culture.

**Symbiosis:** A biological term used to describe reliance by two or more parties on each other for survival. For example, the artist, the venue manager, the promoter and the agent have a symbiotic relationship. If any of these four elements are missing from a promotional equation, a promotion cannot normally take place.

**The Similarity Reflex:** The identification of an artist or musical episode by reference to an earlier artist or musical episode.

**Tween:** A cross between a young child and a teenager used in experimentation and dialogue where the two ages are combined.

**UK:** The term UK in the text refers to England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

**Umbrella Categories:** Categories used as catchall categories such as rock, pop and indie.

**Unit sell through:** The number of copies sold of an album or single.

**Urban Warriors:** A term used to describe *new age travelers*, *cyberpunks* and *tribes*.

**US:** The US in this text refers to the sixty-four states in the United States of America but concentrates mainly on the West and East Coasts.

## Appendix 2

### The Vocalisation Scale

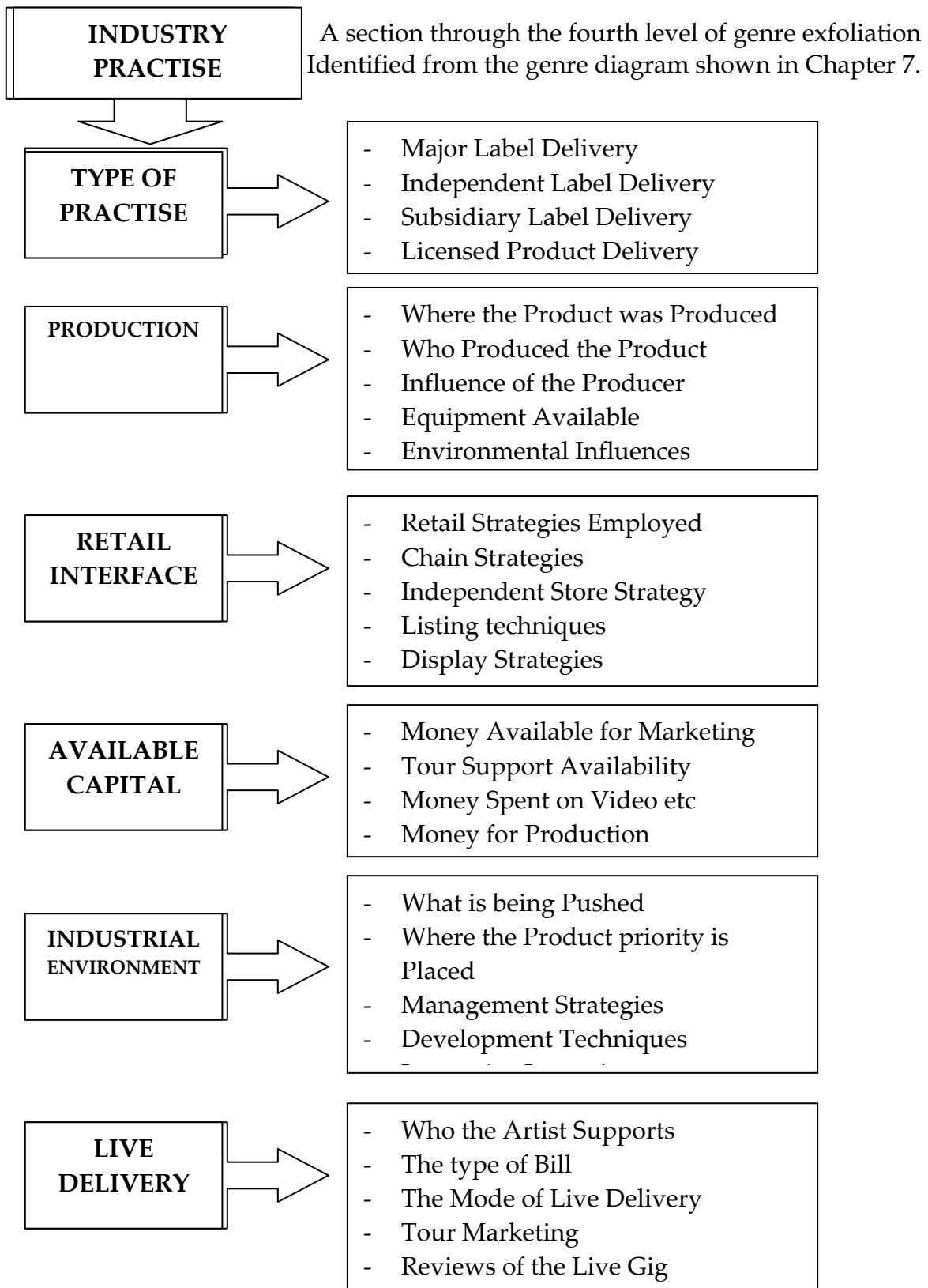
Value	Signifier
10	All vocals shouted
9.5	
9	Song aggressively sung
8.5	
8	Song partly shouted
7.5	
7	Emphasis on certain words
6.5	
6	Sung discordantly or monotone
5.5	
5	Sung in tune and time
4.5	
4	Partly spoken
3.5	
3	Spoken
2.5	
2	Partly whispered
1.5	
1	Whispered
0.5	

## Appendix 3

### The Deviancy Scale

Value	Signifier
10	Extreme deviancy and use of expletives
9.5	
9	Death, violence and conflict
8.5	
8	Sinister connotations
7.5	
7	Phallic imagery
6.5	
6	Social undesirability
5.5	
5	Connotations to deviant behaviour
4.5	
4	Humorous or tongue in cheek deviancy
3.5	
3	Mention of slight deviancy
2.5	
2	Odd connotations with ambiguous meanings
1.5	
1	No deviant connotations
0.5	

## Appendix 4



## Appendix 5

### The Test Pieces

Key 1-100 = 'Early' punk      101-200 = 'Late' punk

1	Eddie and the Hotrods	Teenage Depression	Island, WIP 6354	October 1976
2	Sex Pistols	Anarchy in the UK	EMI, EMI 2566	1976
3	The Damned	New Rose	Stiff, BUY 6	1976
4	Ramones	The Blitzkreig Bop	Sire, 6078 601	1976
5	Nick Lowe	So it Goes	Stiff, BUY 1	1976
6	Richard Hell and the Voidoids	(I Belong To) The Blank Generation	Stiff, Buy 7	1976
7	The Saints	(I'm) Stranded	Fatal, MA 7158	1976
8	The Clash	Complete Control	CBS, CBS 5664	1977
9	The Jam	In the City	Polydor, 2058 866	1977
10	Generation X	Your Generation	Chrysalis, CHS 2165	1977
11	The Boys	First Time	NEMS, NES 111	1977
12	The Vibrators	Baby Baby	Epic, EPC 5302	1977
13	The Stranglers	Get a Grip	United Artists, UP 36211	1977
14	The Yachts	Suffice to Say	Stiff, BUY 19	1977
15	Jonathan Richmann and the Modern Lovers	Roadrunner	Beserkley, BZZ1	1977
16	Penetration	Don't Dictate	Virgin, VS 192	1977
17	The Radiators from Space	Television Screen	Chiswick, S10	1977
18	Larry Wallis	Police Car	Stiff, BUY 22	1977
19	Chelsea	Right to Work	Step Forward, SF2	1977
20	The Killjoys	Johnny won't go to Heaven	Raw, Raw 3	1977
21	Dead Boys	Sonic Reducer	Sire, SRE 1004	1977
22	The Dictators	Search and Destroy	Asylum, K13091	1977
23	The Users	Sick Of You	Raw Records, Raw 1	1977
24	The Heartbreakers	Born to Lose	Track. 2094 135	1977
25	Pere Ubu	The Modern Dance	Hearpen, HR 014	1977
26	The Electric Chairs	Fuck Off	Sweet FA, WCP3	1977
27	X Ray Spex	Oh Bondage up Yours	Virgin, VS 189	1977
28	Radio Stars	Nervous Wreck	Chiswick, NS 23	1977
29	Blondie	Rip Her To Shreds	Chrysalis, CHS 2180	1977
30	The Rezillos	I Can't Stand my Baby	Sensible FAB 1	1977
31	The Nosebleeds	Ain't Bin to no Music School	Rabid Tosh 102	1977
32	Ian Dury and the Blockheads	Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll	Stiff Buy 17	1977



33	Mink Deville	Spanish Stroll	Capitol CL 103	1977
34	The Adverts	One Chord Wonders	Stiff Buy 13	1977
35	Wreckless Eric	Whole Wide World	Stiff BUY 16	1977
36	Wire	Mannequin	Harvest HAR 5144	1977
37	The Drones	Bone Idol	Valer VRS 1	1977
38	XTC	Science Friction	Virgin VSS 188	1977
39	Slaughter and the Dogs	Where Have All the Bootboys Gone	Decca FR 1372	1977
39	John Cooper Clarke	Psyche Sluts	Rabid TOSH 103	1977
41	The Table	Do the Standing Still	Virgin VS 176	1977
42	Alberto Y Los Trios Paranoas	Kill	Stiff Last 2	1977
43	The Wasps	Can't Wait 'Til '78	Nems NEL 6013	1977
44	Ultravox	Young Savage	Island WIP 6392	1977
45	The Buzzcocks	Orgasm Addict	United Artists UP36316	1977
46	Television	Marquee Moon	Elektra K12252	1977
47	Alternative TV	How Much Longer	Deptford Fun City DFC 002	1977
48	Eater	Thinkin' Of The USA	The Label TLR3	1977
49	The Boomtown Rats	Looking After No. 1	Ensign ENY 4	1977
50	The Lurkers	Shadow	Beggars Banquet BEG 1	1977
51	Rich Kids	Rich Kids	EMI EMI2738	1978
52	Klark Kent	Don't Care	Kryptone KK 1	1978
53	Rudi	Big Time	Good Vibrations GOT 1	1978
54	Protex	Don't Ring Me Up	Good Vibrations GOT 6	1978
55	Tom Robinson Band	Up Against The Wall	EMI EMI 2787	1978
56	The Outcasts	Justa Nother Teenage Rebel	Good Vibrations GOT 3	1978
56	999	Emergency	United Artists UP 36399	1978
57	The Members	Solitary Confinement	Stiff OFF 3	1978
59	Johnny Thunders	You Can't Put Your Arms Round A Memory	Real Records ARE 3	1978
60	The Leyton Buzzards	19 & Mad	Small Wonder Small 7	1978
61	The Flys	Love and a Molotov Cocktail	Harvest EMI 2747	1978
62	Riff Raff	Romford Girls	Chiswick SW34	1978
63	The Mekons	Where Were You	Fast FAST 7	1978
64	Angelic Upstarts	Murder of Liddle Towers	Dead AU 1024	1978
65	Skids	Sweet Suburbia	Virgin VS 227	1978
66	Stiff Little Fingers	Alternative Ulster	Rough Trade RT004	1978
67	The Undertones	Teenage Kicks	Good Vibrations GOT 4	1978
68	Public Image Ltd	Public Image	Virgin VS 228	1978
69	Joy Division	Warsaw	Enigma PS 139	1978
70	The Cure	10:15 Saturday Night	Small Wonder Small 11	1978
71	Gang of Four	Damaged Goods	Fast Fast 5	1978

72	Snatch	All I Want	Lightning LIG 505	1978
73	Squeeze	Take Me I'm Yours	A&M AMS 7335	1978
74	Swell Maps	Read About Seymour	Rather Gear 1	1978
75	Adam & the Ants	Young Parisians	Decca F31803	1978
76	Sham 69	Borstal Breakout	Polydor 2058 966	1978
77	Suburban Studs	I Hate School	Pogo Pogo 2	1978
78	Joe Jackson	Is She Really Going Out With Him	A&M AMS 7459	1978
79	Menace	G.L.C.	Small Wonder Small 5	1978
80	Television Personalities	Part Time Punks	Kings Road Records 001	1978
81	Magazine	Shot by Both Sides	Virgin VS 200	1978
82	Patrick Fitzgerald	Safety Pin Stuck in My Heart	Small Wonder Small 4	1978
83	Johnny Moped	Hard Lovin Man	Chiswick NS 41	1978
84	Jilted John	Jilted John	Rabid Tosh 105	1978
85	The Only Ones	Another Girl Another Planet	CBS CBS 6628	1978
86	UK Subs	CID	City NIC 5	1978
87	Punishment of Luxury	Puppet Life	Small Wonder Small 8	1978
88	Subway Sect	Ambition	Rough Trade RT 007	1978
89	The Dickies	Paranoid	A&M AMS 7368	1978
90	Devo	Jocko Homo	Stiff DEV 1	1978
91	The Ruts	In a Rut	People Unite RUT 1	1979
92	Not Sensibles	I'm in Love With Margaret Thatcher	Redball Records RR2	1979
93	Spizzenergi	Where's Captain Kirk	Rough Trade RTSO 4	1979
94	The Nipps	Gabrielle	Chiswick SH 9	1979
95	Siouxsie and the Banshees	The Staircase (Mystery)	Polydor POSP 9	1979
96	Au Pairs	You	021 Records OTO 2	1979
97	The Monochrome Sect	The Monochrome Set	Rough Trade RT008	1979
98	The Pop Group	We are all Prostitutes	Rough Trade RT 023	1979
99	The Slits	Typical Girls	Island WIP 6505	1979
100	The Dead Kennedys	California Uber Alles	Fast Fast 12	1980
101	Bad Religion	Give you Nothing	Epitaph 6484-2	1976
102	Poison Idea	Just to Get Away	Epitaph 6484-2	1976
103	The Mr T Experience	Tomorrow is a Harsh Mistress	Lookout LK 235	2000
104	Stiff Little Fingers	Get a Life	Castle ESSCD 210	1994
105	These Animal Men	Sharp Kid	Rise FLATCD 8	1994
106	Greenday	Welcome to Paradise	Reprise WO269	1994
107	Rancid	Sidekick	Epitaph LC 2576	1976
108	CIV	Cant Wait One Minute More	LAVA PRCD6284-2	1995
109	Shelter	Civilised Man	Roadrunner RR 8938-2	1995
110	Pennywise	Perfect People	Epitaph 6484-2	1996
111	Millencolin	Bullion	Epitaph 6484-2	1996

112	Voodoo Glow Skulls	El Coo Cooi	Epitaph 6484-2	1996
113	DFL	Thought Control	Epitaph 6484-2	1996
114	Descendents	Coffee Mug	Epitaph 6484-2	1996
115	Pulley	Cashed In	Epitaph 6484-2	1996
116	Me First and the Gimmie Gimmies	Only the Good Die Young	Epitaph 6484-2	1996
117	The Joykiller	Hate	Epitaph 6484-2	1996
118	TSOL	Code Blue	Epitaph 6484-2	1996
119	NOFX	Whatever Didi Wants	Epitaph 6484-2	1996
120	SNFU	Don't Have the Cow	Epitaph 6484-2	1996
121	New Bomb Turks	Jukebox Lean	Epitaph 6484-2	1996
122	Down By Law	Grusome Gary	Epitaph 6484-2	1996
123	The Humpers	Mutate With Me	Epitaph 6484-2	1996
124	The Offspring	Staring at the Sun	Columbia COL 491656 2	1998
125	Deviates	Come With Me	Epitaph 6615-2	2001
126	Straight Faced	Green Motivates	Epitaph 6534-2	1998
127	Zeke	Telepath Boy	Epitaph 6534-2	1998
128	Union 13	Never Connected	Epitaph 6534-2	1998
129	Agnostic Front	Gotta Go	Epitaph 6534-2	1998
130	Down by Law	No Equalizer	Epitaph 6534-2	1998
131	Wayne Kramer	Bad Seed	Epitaph 6534-2	1998
132	Gas Huffers	Rotten Egg	Epitaph 6534-2	1998
133	Red Aunts	Poison Steak	Epitaph 6534-2	1998
134	Ten Foot Pole	ADD	Epitaph 6534-2	1998
135	Undeclinable Ambuscade	7 Years	Epitaph 6534-2	1998
136	1 Against I	Nailed to the Floor	Epitaph 6534-2	1998
137	The Donnas	Hook it Up	Lookout LK235	2000
138	Common Rider	Carry On	Lookout LK235	2000
139	The Groove Ghoulies	Carly Simon	Lookout LK235	2000
140	Anne Beretta	Like a Riot	Lookout LK235	2000
141	The Lillingtons	Phantom Maggot	Lookout LK235	2000
142	The Avengers	I Want In	Lookout LK235	2000
143	American Steel	Got a Backbeat	Lookout LK235	2000
144	Enemy You	City of Lost Children	Lookout LK235	2000
145	Dr Frank	Ask Beth	Lookout LK235	2000
146	Citizen Fish	Digging a Hole	Lookout LK235	2000
147	Screaching Weasel	Acknowledge	Lookout LK235	2000
148	The Queers	Never Ever	Lookout LK235	2000
149	Moral Crux	Bomb for the Mainstream	Lookout LK235	2000
150	The Mopes	Babydoll	Lookout LK235	2000
151	Jackie Papers	Crip Girl	Lookout LK235	2000
152	Cleveland Bound Death Sentence	Love American Style	Lookout LK235	2000
153	The Smugglers	Flying Buttress	Lookout LK235	2000
154	Black Cat Music	Wine in a Box	Lookout LK235	2000
155	Anna Beretta	Better Days	Lookout LK235	2000
156	Common Rider	Signal Signal	Lookout LK235	2000
157	Squirtgun	Writ off Today	Lookout LK235	2000
158	Pansy Division	Used to Turn me on	Lookout LK235	2000

159	Mute	Slow Motion Riot	Epitaph 6588-2	2000
160	H20	Guilty by Association	Epitaph 6588-2	2000
161	Zen Guerilla	Slow Motion	Epitaph 6588-2	2000
162	Guttermouth	Secure Horizons	Epitaph 6588-2	2000
163	Welt	Two Years	Golf HOLE047	2001
164	Dwarves	Everybody's Girl	Epitaph 6534-2	1998
165	Less Than Jake	Is this thing on	Golf HOLE047	2001
166	Hot Water Music	Jack of all Trades	Epitaph 6615-2	2001
167	The Bouncing Souls	True Believers	Epitaph 6615-2	2001
168	Osker	Strangled	Epitaph 6615-2	2001
169	Randy	Summer of Bros	Burning Heart 6615-2	2001
170	Dropkick Murphys	The Gauntlet	Epitaph 6615-2	2001
171	Southport	Pilot	Burning Heart LC02576	2001
172	Madball	Hold it Down	Epitaph 6588-2	2000
173	All	She Broke my Dick	Epitaph 6615-2	2001
174	Donots	Today	Burning Heart LC02576	2001
175	Heideroosjes	Home	Epitaph 6615-2	2001
176	Downset	Pure Trauma	Epitaph 6615-2	2001
177	Beatsteaks	Let me in	Epitaph 6615-2	2001
178	Union 13	Innocence	Epitaph 6615-2	2001
179	Undeclinables	Whatever	Epitaph 6615-2	2001
180	Terrorgruppe	Do you mind	Epitaph 6615-2	2001
182	No Fun At All	My Extraordinary Mind	Burning Heart BHR 136	2001
183	Bomshell Rocks	Radio Control	Burning Heart BHR 136	2001
184	AFI	Dream of Waking	NITRO 14586-2	2002
185	Bodyjar	Not the Same	NITRO 14586-2	2002
186	Ruffio	Still	NITRO 14586-2	2002
187	Puffball	Back on the Sauce	Burning Heart BHR 1366	2001
187	Stavesacre	You Know How it is	NITRO 14586-2	2002
188	Ensign	Black Clouds vs Silver Linings	NITRO 14586-2	2002
189	Guttermouth	Hit Machine	NITRO 14586-2	2002
190	Divit	Misunderstanding Maybe	NITRO 14586-2	2002
191	The Vandals	Why are you Alive	NITRO 14586-2	2002
192	The Damned	Looking for Action	NITRO 14586-2	2002
193	TSOL	Sold	NITRO 14586-2	2002
194	Original Sinners	Birds & Bees	NITRO 14586-2	2002
195	Son of Sam	Michael	NITRO 14586-2	2002
196	The Turbo A.C.'s	Hipnotized	NITRO 14586-2	2002
197	The Distillers	Sick of it All	Hellcat 6588-2	2002
198	The Offspring	A Thousand Days	NITRO 14586-2	2002
199	Leftover Crack	Atheist Anthem	Hellcat 6588-2	2002
200	Necromantix	Who Killed the Cheerleader	Hellcat 6588-2	2002

## Appendix 6

### Secondary Research Interview References

1988 08 07	Marketing Director of HMV	Respondent (1)	London
1992 02 02	Recording artist	Respondent (2)	Milton Keynes
1992 06 10	Director of Juice	Respondent (3)	Milton Keynes
1994 02 11	Director of Music for Nations	Respondent (4)	London
1994 02 11	Agent with M P I	Respondent (5)	London
1996 03 18	Director Agents Association	Respondent (6)	London
1997 03 03	A&R Director at V2 Records	Respondent (7)	High Wycombe
1998 10 04	Agent with Helter Skelter	Respondent (8)	Milton Keynes
1999 03 05	MD Manor Studios	Respondent (9)	Milton Keynes
1999 04 21	Manager Rondor Records	Respondent (10)	High Wycombe
1999 12 10	Manager of the Astoria	Respondent (11)	Milton Keynes
2000 01 06	Manager of Faithless	Respondent (12)	London
2002 10 20	Manager of Relentless Records	Respondent (13)	San Francisco
2003 11.8	Manager of The High	Respondent (14)	London
2003 11 8	Agent with ITB	Respondent (15)	London
2003 11 10	Singer with US punk band	Respondent (16)	London

## Appendix 7

### Qualitative Interview References

2002 03 17	Respondent (A)	WEA/London Records, London (I)
2002 02 05	Respondent (B)	Radio 2 DJ, London
2002 02 05	Respondent (C)	Roadrunner Records, London
2000 12 08	Respondent (D)	Classical Percussionist, London
2002 02 05	Respondent (E)	Bassist and Manager of Faithless, London
2002 02 05	Respondent (F)	Agent at MPI, London
2002 03 28	Respondent (G)	Freelance Journalist ,London
2002 03 20	Respondent (H)	Author, London (I)
2002 05 30	Respondent (I)	Blackout Records, Los Angeles (I)
2002 03 28	Respondent (J)	Punk Venue Manager, London
2002 06 05	Respondent (K)	Punkersville Records, New York (I)
2002 06 30	Respondent (L)	Guitarist, Glastonbury
2002 06 07	Respondent (M)	Vitaminpillen Records, Amsterdam (I)
1998 12 03	Respondent (N)	Musician, New York (I)
2002 05 29	Respondent (X)	Record Company Management, Los Angeles (I)
2002 07 15	Respondent (P)	Punk Compilation producer, London
2002 07 15	Respondent (Q)	Agent,London

## Appendix 8

### Questions and Rationales for Interviews with the Industry, the Media, Consumers and Artists

#### Questions and Rationales for Interviews (The Industry)

These questions will be posed in no particular order but will be used in conjunction with a semi-structured interview technique as the situation demands. All questions will be covered.

1. **Please can you give me a short resume of your background in the music industry?**

Rationale: To establish terms of reference for asking the questions which follow. From this the context and the setting can be established. This question can also be used to compare the backgrounds of the participants and to deduce whether there are common threads linking executives and thus denoting similar genre identification techniques within their companies. This question may also uncover patterns of participation, situated activity and the individual's social experience within the bounds of the industry and specifically genre identification.

2. **When new styles of music appear how do you first identify them?**

Rationale: This question aims to establish how the industry identifies that a new genre of music has been created and thus which signifiers are used to create genre nomenclature for the type of music. The question also addresses values and traditions of nomenclature within each business creating comparative data. There will be a focus on emergent meanings and understandings as well as definitions, which will help establish a framework for the nomenclature.

3. **How do you establish which genre an artist belongs to when they are signed to the company?**

Rationale: To establish whether the act is signed because of the genre it already belongs to or if the act is signed and then a genre decided upon. It may become apparent that both these techniques are practiced. The question is asked to establish whether the genre is pre-ordained or whether it is shaped by the industry after the act is signed. This question will also establish whether there is a framework for the development of genre, whether genre is decided on extraneous paramusical rather than musical factors, or whether genre is decided by arbitrary means.

**4a Do you think that the music media play a part in the defining of genre?**

**4b Do music managers control genre nomenclature?**

Rationale: This question has been posed to establish the perception of the music industry as to who controls generic nomenclature. This question will uncover whether the media and music industry play a dual role in genre definition or whether media or management drives it. It may also uncover any tensions between the two industries through the emergent meanings, understandings and definitions afforded by the subjects.

**5. Does the artist have any influence over the genre that they are attributed to? This applies to those artists that generally do not fit into set categories in the first place.**

Rationale: This question is posed to ascertain whether the artist has any influence over the genre that they are placed within. Are there any factors which the industry take into consideration from the artist perspective when choosing generic groups for the artist? Is self-identity taken into consideration in the choosing of genre?

**6a Do artists move from genre to genre?**

**6b If so what are the reasons for such movement ?**

Rationale: To establish whether genre movement is common practice and the reasons behind the movement from one genre to another. It is apparent, as artists become more popular or mainstream that the boundaries of the genre appropriated to them are less well defined. Is there a conscious move by the industry or the media within a framework, which changes the artist from one genre to another? Is this move from one genre to another motivated by any macro environmental factors such as economic, geographical, social or political?

**7a What do you understand by the term musical genre?**

**7b How does it evolve and what are the main reasons for such evolution?**

Rationale: To establish terms of reference for the historical development of genre nomenclature. To ascertain whether those players within the industry responsible for genre nomenclature are acting within a pre-ordained historical framework or whether the choice of genre is arbitrary. This will also ascertain whether each individual within each company uses the same norms and values in the decision making process or whether different factors and value sets are used by each individual business.

- 8a. What are the main benefits of genre nomenclature?**  
**8b. What are the disadvantages of genre nomenclature?**

Rationale: To establish how useful genre nomenclature is and what the positive and negative elements to the industry, the media and the artist are. It important that we ascertain whether the benefit is shared or singular to a dominant partner in the process. If a contract is signed does the industry have full control of the genre nomenclature of the artist or does the artist shape their genre destiny.

- 9. When a new genre is discovered or created does the industry actively seek out new artists within that genre forsaking other promising artists in not so popular genres?**

Rationale: To ascertain whether there are micro or macro motives for developing genre which are more important to the industry than those genre already under development. Considerations of practicality, economic viability and mass media development may come into play here.

- 10. Is longevity taken into consideration in a genre placement strategy?**

Rationale: To ascertain whether the industry has well developed long term strategies regarding the naming of genre or whether these are created on a whim. Do all companies have the same short term and long term frameworks or do companies differ? What are the main factors that are shared by companies and what are the differing factors that set one company apart from another? The development of this question will again look at the context and setting of the industries being scrutinised and will focus on emergent meanings, understandings and definitions surrounding the naming of musical genre.

### **Questions and Rationales for Interviews (The Media)**

**These questions will be posed in no particular order but will be used in conjunction with a semi-structured interview technique as the situation demands. All questions will be covered.**

- 1. Please can you give me a short resume of your background in the media industry?**

Rationale: To establish terms of reference for asking the questions which follow. From this the context and the setting can be established. This question can also be used to compare the backgrounds of the participants and to deduce whether there are common threads in those media players that denote genre in their companies. It will also show patterns of participation, situated activity and the individuals social experience within the bounds of the industry and specifically genre identification.



**2. When new styles of music appear how do you first identify them?**

Rationale: This question aims to establish how the media identifies that a new genre of music has been created and thus how media players create genre nomenclature for types of music. The question also addresses values and traditions of nomenclature within each media business creating comparative data. There will be a focus on emergent meanings and understandings as well as definitions, which will help establish a framework for the nomenclature.

- 3a. How do you establish which genre an artist belongs to when you are first exposed to their music?**  
**3b. Are there set protocols or a framework that is adhered to in the definition of genre nomenclature?**

(Note: Although this is a double question and goes against any framework of questionnaire development, the questions will not be asked as one but will be split during the interview situation).

Rationale: To establish whether the genre is pre-ordained or whether the media shapes it after the act is first exposed. This question will also establish whether there is a framework for the development of genre, whether genre is decided on extraneous paramusical rather than musical factors or whether genre is decided by arbitrary means.

- 4a. Does the music industry play a part in the defining of genre?**  
**4b. Does the media control genre nomenclature?**

Rationale: This question has been posed to establish the perception of the media as to who controls generic nomenclature. This question will uncover whether the media and music industry play a dual role in genre definition or whether media or management drives it. It may also uncover any tensions between the two industries through the emergent meanings, understandings and definitions afforded by the subjects

- 5. Does the artist have any influence over the genre that they are attributed to? This applies to those artists that generally do not fit into set categories in the first place.**

Rationale: This question is posed to ascertain whether the artist has any influence over the genre that they are placed within. Are there any factors that the media take into consideration from the artist's perspective when placing the artist in a generic group? Is self-identity taken into consideration in the choosing of genre?

- 6a. Do artists move from genre to genre?**  
**6b. What are the reasons for movement if this is the case?**

Rationale: To establish whether genre movement is common practice and the reasons behind the movement from one genre to another. It is apparent as artists become more popular or mainstream that the boundaries of the genre appropriated to them are less well defined. Is there a conscious move by the industry or the media within a framework, which changes the artist from one genre to another? Is this move from one genre to another motivated by any macro environmental factor such as economic, geographical, social or political?

- 7a What do you understand by the term musical genre?**  
**7b How does it evolve and what are the main reasons for such evolution?**

Rationale: To establish terms of reference for the historical development of genre nomenclature. To ascertain whether those players within the media responsible for genre nomenclature are acting within a pre-ordained historical framework or whether the choice of genre is arbitrary. This will also ascertain whether each individual within each company uses the same norms and values in the decision making process or whether different factors and value sets are used by each individual business.

- 8a. What are the main benefits of genre nomenclature?**  
**8b What are the disadvantages of genre nomenclature?**

Rationale: To establish how useful genre nomenclature is and what the positive and negative elements to the industry, the media and the artist are. It important that we ascertain whether the benefit is shared or singular to a dominant partner in the process. If a contract is signed does the industry have full control of the genre nomenclature of the artist or does the artist or the media shape their genre destiny.

- 9. When a new genre is discovered or created does the media actively seek out new artists within that genre forsaking other promising artists in not so popular genres?**

Rationale: To ascertain whether there are micro or macro motives for developing genre which are more important to the media than those genre already under development. Considerations of practicality, economic viability and mass media development may come into play here.

- 10. Is longevity taken into consideration in a genre placement strategy?**

Rationale: To ascertain whether the media industry has well developed long term strategies regarding the naming of genre or whether these are created on a whim. Do all media companies have the same short term and long term

frameworks or do companies differ. What are the main factors that are shared by media companies and what are the differing factors that set one media company apart from another. The development of this question will again look at the context and setting of the industries being scrutinised and will focus on emergent meanings, understandings and definitions surrounding the naming of musical genre.

### **Questions and Rationales for Interviews (The Artist)**

**These questions will be posed in no particular order but will be used in conjunction with a semi-structured interview technique as the situation demands. All questions will be covered.**

**1. Please can you give me a short resume of your background as an artist?**

Rationale: To establish terms of reference for asking the questions which follow. From this the context and the setting can be established. This question can also be used to compare the backgrounds of the participants and to deduce whether there are common threads in experiences of those interviewed. It will also show patterns of participation, situated activity and the individuals social experience within the bounds of the industry and specifically genre identification.

**2. When you created your style of music how did you identify which genre it was situated within?**

Rationale: This question aims to establish how the artist identified the genre of their music. The question also addresses values and traditions of nomenclature within each artists scheme of knowledge and terms of reference creating comparative data. There will be a focus on emergent meanings and understandings as well as definitions, which will help, establish a framework for the nomenclature.

**3. How did the company to which you were signed react to the genre placement that you had devised for your music? Were you signed because of the genre you belonged to or were you signed and then a genre decided upon by the industry?**

Rationale: To establish whether the genre pre-ordained or the genre shaped by the industry were factors that affected the final choice of genre nomenclature. This question will also establish whether there is a framework for the development of genre, whether genre is decided on extraneous paramusical rather than musical factors or whether genre is decided by arbitrary means.

**4. Does the music media play a part in the defining of genre or do the music managers control genre nomenclature?**

Rationale: This question has been posed to establish the perception of the artist as to who controls generic nomenclature. This question will uncover whether the media and music industry play a dual role in genre definition or whether media or management drives it. It may also uncover any tensions between the artist and the two industries through the emergent meanings, understandings and definitions afforded by the subjects.

**5. Do you have any influence over the genre that you are attributed to?**

Rationale: This question is posed to ascertain whether the artist has any influence over the genre that they are placed within. Does the artist feel that there are any factors which the industry take into consideration from their perspective when choosing generic groups? Is self-identity taken into consideration in the choosing of genre?

**6a. Do artists move from genre to genre?**

**6b. What are the reasons for movement if this is the case?**

Rationale: To establish whether genre movement is common practice and the reasons behind the movement from one genre to another. It is apparent, as artists become more popular or mainstream that the boundaries of the genre appropriated to them are less well defined. Is there a conscious move by the industry or the media within a framework, which changes the artist from one genre to another? Is this move from one genre to another motivated by any macro environmental factor such as economic, geographical, social or political? This will also ascertain whether the artist knows that there is a change in genre or whether the change in genre is a gradual unnoticed movement?

**7a. What do you understand by the term musical genre?**

**7b. How does it evolve and what are the main reasons for such evolution?**

Rationale: To establish terms of reference for the historical development of genre nomenclature. To ascertain whether artists understand the historical development and whether they are acting within a pre-ordained historical framework or whether the choice of genre is arbitrary. This will also ascertain whether each individual artist has the same views on the decision making process or whether different factors and value sets are used by each individual business.

**8. What are the main benefits and drawbacks of genre nomenclature?**

Rationale: To establish how useful genre nomenclature is and what the positive and negative elements to the industry, the media and the artist are. It important

that we ascertain whether the benefit is shared or singular to a dominant partner in the process. If a contract is signed does the industry have full control of the genre nomenclature of the artist or does the artist shape their genre destiny.

- 9. When a new genre is discovered or created does the artist feel that industry actively seeks artists within that genre forsaking other promising artists in not so popular genres?**

Rationale: To ascertain whether there are micro or macro motives for developing genre which are more important to the industry than those genre already under development. Considerations of practicality, economic viability and mass media development may come into play here. It will also ascertain how the artists feel about this situation.

- 10. Is longevity taken into consideration in a genre placement strategy?**

Rationale: To ascertain whether the artists feel that industry has well developed long term strategies regarding the naming of genre or whether these are created on a whim. Do artists feel that all companies have the same short term and long term frameworks or do companies differ. What are the main factors that are shared by companies and what are the differing factors that set one company apart from another. The development of this question will again look at the context and setting of the industries being scrutinised and will focus on emergent meanings, understandings and definitions surrounding the naming of musical genre.

### **Supplementary Questions to be asked to all three groups**

- 1. In which genre grouping would you place the following tracks?**

Rationale: This will ascertain whether each group of respondent or indeed members of the same group of respondents identify tracks as being from the same generic group. This will identify norms, values and definitions of genres from each participant within each participant group.

- 2. What means are you using to identify the genre?**

Rationale: To ascertain whether members of the same group or members of different groups use different methods to ascertain what the genre is.

**Supplementary Questions to be directed at the Artist only.**

**1. What genre do you perceive that you belong to?**

Rationale: To ascertain what genre the artist feels that they belong to. This will identify traits of belonging, norms, values and social developments that have paved the way for the genre identification by the artist.

**2. What genre do the media feel that you belong to?**

Rationale: To ascertain what genre the artist feels that the media feel that they belong to. This will identify traits of belonging, norms, values and social developments that have paved the way for the genre identification by the media.

**3. What genre does the industry feel that you belong to?**

Rationale: To ascertain what genre the artist feels that the industry feels that they belong to. This will identify traits of belonging, norms, values and social developments that have paved the way for the genre identification by the industry.

**4. Does your audience feel that you belong to one genre and is it the genre that you yourselves feel that you belong to?**

Rationale: To ascertain whether the artist feels that their audience perceive them as belonging to the same generic group that they feel that they belong to. Are the norms, values, sartoriality and social development of the audience in tandem with those of the artist? This question will bring all these elements to the fore.