A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO CONSUMPTION ANALYSIS IN THE POPULAR MUSIC MARKET

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF COMMERCE

of

RHODES UNIVERSITY

by

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January 2006

Abstract

This thesis seeks to gain a holistic understanding of consumption issues in the popular music market, such that it needs to account for the influence of 1) technological factors, 2) institutional factors, 3) cultural factors, and 4) an ontological aspect; as these are identified to be the most prominent aspects in the literature on the market. While there is a bourgeoning literature on the market, there has been little formal attempt to link such issues in a comprehensive fashion. The methodology applied provides a critique of the literature on specific consumption theories which have apparent pertinence to the music market. Each of the sociological, psychological, and economic theories (neoclassical and radical) is found to be too generalized to provide such an understanding, in that many issues concerning the music market would need to be eschewed if these theories were to be applied in an orthodox fashion. Moreover, the theories tend to point towards each other for the possibility of a credible, holistic consumption analysis. The most useful and all-encompassing consumption theory reviewed is the *systems of provision* approach advanced by Fine and Leopold (1993), in that the approach aims to be sensitive to the difference between commodities in terms of the economic and social processes and structures by which they become commodities, and thus it can allow one to consider adequately the four requirements identified above for a holistic understanding of the market.

This approach is then applied to the western music market with the aim of 1) testing the approach identified, and 2) making a specific comment of the market. The market is found to be characterized historically by three distinct periods, each with distinct systems of provision (i.e. each with the four factors identified above relating to each other in a certain manner). It is proposed that preference formations in the final period identified have been institutionalized to a large extent, and there is a low probability of change occurring. The systems of provision approach is argued to be beneficial in highlighting which aspects of the existing consumption theories are relevant to the market at a point in time, and to what extent. Thus the richness of the approach stems from its ability to gain a holistic understanding, and to identify theoretical discussion topics, such as those concerning political economy.

The approach is then applied to the South African music market, using the same historical methodology, in conjunction with current empirical evidence from the market. Doing this allows one to test the generality of the systems of provision approach, and to attempt to make a comment on the South African market. The techniques for obtaining empirical evidence are argued to be sound, but resource constraints prevented the research from reflecting a holistic view of the market. Nonetheless, a rich perspective is provided from interviews with prominent agents in the market, and thus the chapter is argued to provide the beginning of an understanding of preference formations in the South African music market, in which little research has been conducted (Stella, 2005).

Contents

Acknowledgements

This thesis owes a great thanks to my supervisor, David Fryer, whose continued thought dedicated to the project perpetually guided the arguments and revealed original perspectives for analysis. His time dedicated to reading and criticizing draft chapters in the face of his impending PHD thesis submission is commendable and very much appreciated.

A special thanks needs to be given to my parents, for their continued support and for funding a research trip to Johannesburg, including travel to Johannesburg, and travel and subsistence within Johannesburg.

The candidates interviewed in this thesis added great value, and particular thanks are directed to those agents in the South African music market who took time out of their schedules to provide their perspectives on the market. Nicole Fox and Nick Grubb at 5fm were prepared to give detailed answers to questions in writing, and their extra effort is noted and much appreciated.

Thank you to anyone who aided in discussion from any perspective related to this thesis. Popular music is a subject matter very close to a great many people, and their opinions were considered when attempting to balance the natural elitist perspective inherent in academic writing.

Final thanks are given to the unnamed external examiners of this thesis who are prepared to dedicate their time and effort to furthering the development of knowledge in South Africa.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Goals

The aim of this thesis is essentially twofold. First, it seeks analyze aspects of various existing consumption theories in order to locate a holistic theory, and to apply this theory to two different popular music markets. Thus the first aim is effectively to test the applicability of this approach against those markets. Second, in applying the theory to specific markets, it seeks to provide credible commentary on the markets and consumption practices within these markets, with the hope of providing innovative insights into the respective markets.

1.2 Context

Consumption theories are generally approached from the vantage point of a particular social science. As a result, "each theory lumps together great bundles of disparate goods which are bent collectively to follow the contours set out by that particular theory. Commodities that differ in important respects are typically subsumed under the catch-all term, 'consumer goods.'" (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 21) The "contours" followed by each grand narrative may differ, for example economics explains consumption in terms of utility maximization, sociology often does so in terms of class emulation, etc. As a result, they seldom explore the "contours" of other theories. The starting point of this thesis is that most of these theories have many relevant aspects, but each on its own is inadequate to provide a credible, holistic view of consumption, as it necessarily ignores the useful aspects of other theories.

This is akin to the literature on the popular music market in the western world. While it is a bourgeoning literature, most commentators approach the market from a particular discipline (not necessarily consumption-based), and those who do acknowledge different vantage points of the market rarely make an attempt to link them formally. There thus exists a gap in the literature to place these perspectives in a holistic context. Thus Frith and Goodwin (1990: xi) issue "a challenge to students of pop to analyze the process of consumption with all conceptual tools at their disposal." The factors affecting a music market at any time can be summarized as 1) technological factors, 2) institutional factors[1], 3) cultural factors, and 4) the different types of consumers in a market, defined ontologically.

The South African music market in particular is lacking this kind of holistic research. Because of South Africa's notable cultural diversity, much of the literature is primarily concerned with cultural aspects exclusively. This sentiment is expressed by record company executive, Antos Stella (2005): "I think the industry really, really needs to do research."

1.3 Methodology

The majority of the research conducted for this thesis stems from literature surveys of consumption theories and the popular music market, and is thus largely qualitative in nature. Similar to Fine and Leopold's methodology (1993), a critique is given of certain consumption theories, setting the context for a holistic approach. This approach is then applied to specific markets, using historical analysis as the primary tool of investigation. Different to their methodology, however, this thesis highlights the benefits of each theory (whereas they stress the weaknesses), and uses the theories to form expectations about what one can expect to have an effect on consumption practices in a market. The specific theories were chosen because of their apparent pertinence to consumption in the popular music market. Fine and Leopold's holistic approach is used to provide insightful commentary of the popular music market.

The theoretical findings of the western popular music market were then used as the conceptual foundation for the analysis of the South African music market, and from which current empirical findings were sought in the market.

Interviews were conducted with thirteen agents in the market, including record company executives, artists, and radio personnel. A snowballing technique was used

[1] Less focus is placed in this thesis on the role of class on preference formations, as compared to the role of corporations. Thus while class is an important factor affecting preference formations, chapters 3 and 4 deal more specifically with the role of corporate institutions.

in establishing a network of contacts. The primary purpose of these interviews is not to form the basis of the study, but to support (or to test the plausibility of) the theories proposed in the thesis. The majority of interviews are of a person-to-person format, and two are in electronic format. The personal interviews were recorded for authenticity, and for future reference, should they be required at a later stage.

The theoretical findings were also used as a conceptual framework for the basis of a consumer survey, attempting to establish preference formations of South African music consumers. Self-completion questionnaires were left in various public places during the Grahamstown National Arts festival over a period of four days. These had a low return rate, and thus most of the questionnaires completed were done so in the presence of the researcher. Such consumers were approached more or less at random in public venues, but adherence to the age group of sixteen to thirty-four was attempted, as this demographic is deemed to be the primary record-buying public, according to the record company and radio personnel interviewed.

1.4 Structure and Outcomes

1.4.1 Consumption Theories

Chapter 2 provides a critique of various existing consumption theories. Its starting point acknowledges connotations of pop music being contingent with that of a consumer culture, or a ‘plastic culture’ - pop music is part of a constructed culture that we mindlessly consume. As such, the origins of our so-called ‘Consumer Society’ are sought. A pioneering study conducted by McKendrick et al. (1982) locates the origins of such a culture to eighteenth century England. Their work suggests that the Industrial Revolution was supported largely by the middle class emulating aristocracy. The ease with which people increased their propensity to emulate is noted. Campbell’s (1987) study of the same period highlights a change in peoples’ attitudes towards consumption ultimately recognizing the ethic of Romanticism, which has persisted to the present day, as supporting a consumer culture. Campbell’s study formed the basis of his theory of modern autonomous imaginative hedonism, in which he believes most people gain pleasure simply from the act of imagining consumption. Akin to this is McCracken's theory of displaced meanings, in which he asserts that people associate commodities with certain unattainable ideals, thus fuelling demand for those commodities.

While the above theories place a biased emphasis on consumers, Galbraith and the Frankfurt school place a similar bias on the role of producers in the market. They assert that it is producers who control consumers wants and stimulate a demand based on false consciousness. While these theories appear to be at odds with those discussed above, it is asserted that Campbell and McCracken's theories in fact provide the basis for these institutionalist assertions, and thus they seem to point towards one another for a complete analysis.

Neoclassical economic consumer theory is discussed at length due to the dominance of the paradigm in academic studies, in the wake of economic hegemony.[2] The theory assumes the doctrine of consumer sovereignty, defined generally as "the part played by consumers' demand schedules in settling the flow of production under a capitalist system." (Fraser, 1939: 544) From this doctrine arises many simplifying assumptions that characterize neoclassical comparative-static analysis. This thesis contends that those who attack the doctrine seldom give it due consideration. A historical critique of the doctrine is given, focusing on the work of Bentham and Hutt, and it is found that it does not necessarily encompass all of the simplifying assumptions attributed to it. Those assumptions are the result of neoclassical economists applying them as useful *heuristics* in aiding mathematical calculations, and thus they are not an ontological foundation.

Becker and Stigler argued that they can account for seemingly irrational behaviour without dropping the assumption of changing preferences. A critique of their work exposes many weaknesses, and concludes that they may indeed not have accounted for unchanging tastes, but their work is seen to be critical in providing an interface between economics and other consumption theories. They do not account for the context in which consumers make their decisions, and thus their work can benefit

[2] See Fine (2000).

from acknowledging specific contexts, which suggests that their work points towards the institutionalist approach of Galbraith and the Frankfurt school.

Fine and Leopold's *systems of provision* approach acknowledges the specifities of certain commodities, and recognizes that different factors can affect different commodities, to different degrees, at specific moments in time. The approach thus advocates an analysis of all factors acting on the market for a good, using historical analysis to illustrate. It is asserted here that, by applying this approach, the effectiveness of the discussed theories can be placed in context at each point in time.

1.4.2 The Application of the Systems of Provision Approach to the Western Popular Music Market [3]

Applying the systems of provision approach to the western popular music market allows for the recognition of three distinct periods in which the functioning of the market is idiosyncratic to each period. It also allows for the development of another tool of analysis described here briefly as the location the primary signal in the market.[4] The era preceding rock music was characterized by a focus on adult consumption, low product differentiation, and high market concentration. The signal was generated primarily by the corporations involved in music publishing. The advent of rock'n'roll saw a notably low seller concentration, which continued into the genre's evolution into rock music. Rock music is founded on a paradox. Its ideology indulges separateness from the mass, yet it was adopted by the mass. Rock music saw the dialectic of 'high' and 'low' culture attempting to find a synthesis in the market. Key to this was an increased demand for 'authenticity' in artists by some (elitist)

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[3] Because most of the literature on the western popular music market is focused on the American and British markets, not much attention is given in this thesis to the European popular music market outside of the UK, or to the Australasian market. The main focus of chapter 3 is the American market, and the British market is referred to more sparingly. As such, it would be incorrect to claim the chapter to be a study of the American market exclusively, and since more focus is given to the American market than the British market, it would be misleading to claim that it is a study of the Anglo-Saxon market. Without being able to eschew these definitional problems, the market is referred to generally as the western market. As such, reference to the western market in this thesis refers to the markets that were studied, viz. the American market and, to a lesser extent, the British market. This generalization is justified (partially, at least) as these markets are representative of patterns of music consumption by western consumers. Though consumption issues in France or Australia, for example, would not be identical to the issues highlighted in chapter 3, many of the issues would be greatly applicable.

[4] While the term, as it is used by Spence (2002) denotes information transfers, it is used in this thesis to represent power relations.

consumers, but 'authenticity' is a shadowy commodity and thus inappropriable. It is this paradox of rock, its exclusion of 'pop' music, and the low property rights attributable to 'authenticity' that have characterized the music market (particularly the American market) until the present day. This thesis asserts that preference formations have become institutionalized in the music market.

1.4.3 The Application of the Systems of Provision Approach to the South African Popular Music Market

Historical analysis shows that the signal in the music market was governed by the Nationalist government for many years. The government had an over-arching role over preference formations. A picture of the market in its current state is provided by interviews with market agents. While this thesis does not claim to provide a totalizing analysis of the South African music market,[5] a rich perspective is presented reflecting these agents' opinions. It is found that the corporate powers in the market tend to be more passive than they are in America, and seem to be passively reflecting the preference formation patterns established during apartheid. The rigidity of market segmentation along racial lines observed in the consumer survey supports this suggestion. It should be noted, however, that while the research techniques are thought to be a strength of the project, an incomplete portion of the industry cross section was able to be utilized. So rather than being seen as a reflection of the music market in South Africa, chapter 4 should be seen to represent the *beginning* of an understanding of the market, to show usefulness of the application of the systems of provision approach, and to show that the theoretical elements developed in chapter 3 seem plausible.

1.4.4 Conclusion

The goals of the thesis, as well as the strengths of the systems of provision approach are briefly examined in retrospect in chapter 5. It is realized that the same methodology might be applied using different consumption theories to begin with, and some suggestions are advanced. Discussion topics opened up by the analysis of

[5] Such a project would require generous funding, and thus resource constraints prevented the analysis of the South African market from being the primary focus of the thesis.

the western music market (the institutionalization of preference formations), that could not be pursued here because of spatial constraints, are highlighted, illustrating the lucrativeness of the approach taken in this thesis.

Chapter 2: Consumption Theories

2.1 Introduction

The fact that humans are fundamentally limited is evidenced in music (Meyer, 1998). As concerns music *in itself*, there are no universals. There is an infinite range of tonal and rhythmic combinations. What limits music to the realm of finity is mankind's cognitive constraints[6]. Thus Meyer (1998: 13) makes the distinction between music as a phenomenon, and our experience of that phenomenon: "To call a work of art 'profound' is to characterize the experience of that work, *not* to comprehend the general principles upon which it is based." In order for people to be enabled with the ability to experience music, Meyer asserts that there are firstly innate, universal constraints within people that allow them to make sense of the phenomenon of music; and secondly, there are those factors which are learned and variable. The former determine what music people are physically *capable* of experiencing. Without these limitations, people would not be able to experience any music.[7] The latter set of factors determines what people are *accustomed* to incorporating in their experience of music, and is variably determined by their environment. These factors determine which music people will have a *propensity* to consume, as opposed to which music they have the *ability* to consume. This theory of music consumption is important to the study of popular music for two primary reasons[8]:

1) The fact that people are limited in their ability to experience music (or put differently, to make decisions), and universally require constraints which are drawn from their environment, creates an obligation for their environment to provide signals which guide them in making their decisions. This is the focus of much of the literature on popular music, which usually analyzes the role of culture, the role of institutions, *or* the role of technology in providing these signals.

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[6] Even the twelve note tonal system, which might appear axiomatic to music studies today, is a limitation placed on music by humans so that they are able to process and experience it.
[7] Meyer (1998: 6) recognizes five "bio-psychological" universal constraints in people: "neuro-cognitive constraints, syntactic and statistical parameters, classification, hierarchic structures, and redundancy."
[8] The consumption of music here is defined as "the act of listening to a piece of music." (Lacher and Mizerski, 1994: 366)

2) It acknowledges something that is inherent within people, and if this is so, it cannot be absolutely controlled (guided) without dehumanizing people. This allows for a totalizing study of the dynamics of music consumption to incorporate the realm of the ontological.

As concerns the first point above, most particular pieces of literature on popular music concerned with the ‘control of cultural space’ are typically one-sided, equipped with the double-edged function of analysis and persuasion. As concerns the second point, a thorough survey of the literature on popular music suggests that its commentators are of mixed opinions, and the notion has scarcely been formalized.

2.1.1 Goals of the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to examine various theories that exist that can aid in explaining the dynamics of the consumption of popular music. While these theories are useful in many respects, they are found to be too limited in their scope, as they pay little attention to the effects of technology and market structure in explaining consumption, or conversely, they pay too much attention to these factors. Thus they need to be incorporated into a synthesized approach to consumption analysis in the music market. This approach needs to acknowledge four different aspects that can affect consumption in a market:

1) The effects of technological forces,
2) The effects of institutional factors,
3) The effects of cultural factors, and
4) It needs to incorporate the possibility of an ontological construct.

Such an approach is provided by Fine and Leopold (1993). The basis of their approach is that “it is inconceivable that any one theory of consumption will suffice. There would simply be too much *ceteris paribus* to swallow.” (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 4) Thus their *systems of provision* approach necessitates that the dynamics of the consumption of a particular product needs to be analyzed within the specificities of that product’s market. In so doing, the approach allows for the incorporation of the four key factors that can influence consumption, as identified above. The specific factors, as they occur in the music market, are identified in the next chapter, when the approach is applied to – and tested against – the market.

2.1.2 Structure of the Chapter

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first looks at popular music within the context of the hedonistic consumer culture that is frequently thought to preside over western culture. In order to determine why consumerism is such a central focus of modern western lifestyle, one needs to examine at what point this focus on consumerism occurred, and what the reasons were for this shift in focus. To this end, the pioneering study conducted by McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb (1982) is reviewed, as well as the primary elaboration on this study, put forth by Campbell (1987). The significance and limitations of each are examined as they apply to consumption in the contemporary music market. However limited these studies are in providing an all-inclusive approach to music consumption analysis, they do provide a strikingly different picture of consumerism to that has developed in mainstream microeconomic texts.

The second section of the chapter provides a cursory examination the perspective of such institutionalists as Galbraith and Adorno. While the first and third sections of the chapter pay little attention to the role of institutions in determining consumptive practices, the purpose of this section is to provide a counter perspective. While the institutionalist perspective might be typically thought of as an 'opposite' of a Campbell-type analysis, in that the former focuses on the role corporations while the latter focuses on the role of consumers in preference formation, the two perspectives are argued here to complement one another.

The third section of the chapter critically examines neoclassical economic consumer theory. A common practice one encounters in spanning research suggesting alternative consumption theories that arise out of a discontent with neoclassical economics, is that these theories merely dismiss the doctrine of neoclassical economics by stating its limiting assumptions, and how they cannot hold in reality. This practice provides a genuine lack of depth, and an unjust bias against the doctrine. On explaining the fundamentals of Economic Theory, Lord Lionel Robbins (1999:

133) remarks, “All this is quite obvious if we only consider the actual sphere of application of economic analysis, instead of resting content with the assertions of those who do not know what economic analysis is.” The assertion in this thesis is that neoclassical economics is not ineffectual in analyzing consumptive behaviour, though its scope of application is limited. In keeping with the methodology of historical analysis, what is attempted here is an account of the development of neoclassical economic thought, so as to highlight precisely where this scope shows its limitations, instead of merely stating the assumptions of the theories and dismissing them. The aim is not merely to show the limitations of the doctrine, but to assess the role it has in analyzing the music market. Placing significant focus on neoclassical economics is important for two reasons. First, it is a dominant scholarly doctrine. For many students, it is the first (and perhaps the last) perspective of consumerism provided to them, and so constructive criticism is imperative. Second, in the face of economic imperialism (See Fine, 2000), many social scientists from neighbouring disciplines are lured by the exactness of neoclassical economics. It is precisely that exactness that is shown here to be such a limiting factor in extending the scope of application of neoclassical economics, and its scope can rather be extended by integrating into other social sciences, and not visa versa.

The fourth section of the chapter gives a detailed account of the SOP approach as it is set forth by Fine and Leopold (1993), and examines its benefits and criticisms. Additionally, it illustrates how the preceding sections of the chapter can be incorporated into the approach to help explain the complexities present in analyzing the consumption practices of human beings specific markets.

2.2 Consumption and Consumerism

Every man builds his world in his own image. He has the power to choose, but no power to escape the necessity of choice. – Ayn Rand[9]

“Consumerism is ubiquitous and ephemeral. It is arguably the religion of the late twentieth century” (Miles, 1998:1). Popular music is certainly ubiquitous in western

[9] Quoted from *Atlas Shrugged*, p. 735.

culture, and it is ephemeral in the vast majority of cases. The notions of ubiquity and ephemerality are consistent with the connotations of pop music being contingent with that of a consumer culture, or a ‘plastic culture’ - pop music is part of a constructed culture that we mindlessly consume. As such, this perspective is a good starting point for consumption analysis in the popular music market. The notion of a constructed culture is encapsulated in the work of institutionalists such as Galbraith and the Frankfurt school, but it is useful to first give a full account of the consumerism to which they refer, both in its origin, and in so doing, its definition. Though the studies examined here on the history of consumerism were written after Galbraith’s writing, it is argued here that they (intentionally or not) provide the bedrock for the institutionalists’ arguments. Thus the origin of consumerism (focusing on consumers) is examined first, followed by an examination of the effects of other modes of operation on consumerism (as is advocated by corporate institutionalist theories) in section 2.2.

“In the modern world, it has become cliché to suggest that we inhabit, are even victims of, a ‘consumer society’; that ‘consumerism’ is rampant; that we are dominated by ‘consumer culture’, having passed through a ‘consumer revolution.’” (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 62) This quote suggests that the concept of a consumer society has many connotations, but lacks concreteness in its arguments. In fact, surveying the literature on the topic of a consumer revolution does not allow one to arrive at a succinct, neatly defined concept. Since historical analysis is invariably its primary methodology, this is likely always to be the case. Fine and Leopold (1993: 63) suggest that the lack of concreteness in defining a consumer society can be attributed additionally to the fact that the concept is usually used in a supporting role, in aiding the explanations of other phenomena. In other words, its assumptions and connotations, however blurred, are assumed to be almost common knowledge, and little focus is given to the actual concept itself. However imprecise the concept might be, what is important is the common threads that appear throughout the literature, pointing to a change in religious beliefs towards consumption in the western world, the rise of the pursuit of novelty for pleasure, the spread of the consumption of certain goods (that might previously have been deemed luxury goods) across classes, a recognition and acceptance of individual expression, the development of an insatiability of wants among individuals, and new modes of production and distribution sparked by the industrial revolution (and consequently, the exchange of goods through market forces).

Generally, 'consumerism' can be used to describe the change in attitude and behaviour of the masses towards the notion of consumption. "Consumerism describes a society in which many people formulate their goals in life partly through acquiring goods that they clearly do not need for subsistence or for traditional display." (Stearns, 2001: ix) Obviously, consumption has existed for as long as life has existed[10], but consumerism is a more recent phenomenon. As such, various studies have been conducted in tracing the origins of consumerism, mostly pointing to eighteenth century England. Of particular importance is the study conducted by McKendrick et al. (1982), which pioneered a shift in focus concerning the era from production to consumption, and following from their developments, the study conducted by Campbell (1987) which elaborates on specific cultural and political causes which could justify a focus on consumption during the period. To place McKendrick et al. and Campbell's studies in context, it is illuminating to describe consumption prior to Britain in the 1700s. This makes apparent what exactly they sought to uncover.

2.2.1 Pre-modern Consumerism

Stearns notes the primary barrier to the development of consumerism prior to 1700 as being consumerism's incompatibility with the dominant value systems at the time. These value systems can be divided broadly into religious value systems (taken up in great detail by Campbell) and traditional value systems, which had a primary focus on the community rather than the individual. Distinct from Campbell's study, Stearns spans many major belief systems at the time, all of which had to define or redefine their attitudes towards consumerist tendencies with the rise of international trade and merchant travels. All of Buddhism, Christianity, and Hinduism were generally "suspicious of any devotion to material goods." (Stearns, 2001: 4) Islam was consistent with merchant activity and approved of profit making; those wealthy in Islam society were obligated to distribute their wealth. However, "as with all major

[10] (in the sense that one can consume air, or food, for example)

religions, the real purpose of life was salvation, not enjoyment of material goods." (Stearns, 2001: 4) Nonetheless, early signs of consumerism were apparent among the upper class[11]. Two essential differences between consumerism in this pre-modern era, and consumerism in the modern consumer society, are that 1) the participants were limited to an elite few, and 2) new items were not consistently generated. Stearns notes that among those lacking wealth, termed "ordinary people," the primary obstacle blocking consumerism was the availability of luxury goods. Even those goods that did infiltrate their lives (e.g. via traveling merchants) were not consumed in a consumerist fashion. Salt, the most abundant good, was used primarily for meat preservation rather than flavouring. While some peasants had more wealth than others, they would usually buy more land for future security. Often surplus goods were contributed to community works. Many were afraid that excessive material consumption would draw too much attention to the individual which was "inappropriate in terms of group and sometimes religious norms." (Stearns, 2001: 10) In sum, society (societies) before 1700 blocked the rise of consumerism by their "beliefs, the gap between rich and poor, [and] the organization of manufacturing and trade." (Stearns, 2001: 10) These observations point out how modern society has changed to accommodate a consumerist ideology, an ideology into which the music industry was born.

The most fruitful studies of early consumerism relate the consumerist experiences that developed during the industrial revolution. The pioneering study in this vein was conducted by McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb (1982). The most useful contribution to this study was conducted by Campbell (1987). These studies provide the historical foundation of the present consumer culture, and aid in explaining both how consumers began to play active roles in consumption, and how corporate institutions were able to capitalize on these practices. The idea of commodity fetishism is popular in the present day, for example as advocated by Schor (1999), and these studies provide the roots of this concept. The idea of a 'consumer revolution' occurring during this period is frequently disputed on the grounds that consumer behaviour is inadequate on its own to provide an account of consumption occurrences, e.g. by Fine

[11] Primary examples are the emergence of sugar, tea, tea sets, and silk to the wealthy in various societies, giving rise to the development of "consumer sectors" in certain major cities (Stearns, 2001: 6).

and Leopold (1993), and various other studies of the period have been carried out advocating the salience of other features of the period in explaining the rise of consumption. MacLeod (1988), for example, notes the development of the patent system as integral to understanding the period; Mui and Mui (1989) give a historical account of how the development of the British shop-keeping and trade system fostered the revolution; and Borsay (1989) recognizes the rise of the new urban culture as a primary determinant of cultural differentiation and consumption practices. McKendrick et al. and Campbell's studies are reviewed here because a biased focus on consumers is infrequent in the literature, and they play an important role in understanding consumerism.

2.2.2 The Birth of a Consumer Society

2.2.2.1 McKendrick et al. – Emulation and Trickle-down

If consumerism existed before 1700, as observed above by Stearns (2001), what was necessary to create a consumer society was the spread of this consumerism from an elite few to the masses. This is typically thought to have occurred in England during the industrial revolution, and this period is the site of McKendrick et al.'s study. Their argument centers on the concept of social emulation, which they attribute to Thorstein Veblen, calling it 'the Veblen effect.'[12] Key to their argument is that the consumer revolution was a result of the spending patterns of the middle classes, and thus the emulation that drove the revolution was that of the middle class aspiring to the aristocracy: "Servants mimicking their masters are an age-old phenomenon, one rank in society being eager to join a higher group is just as old, and London as a centre of

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[12] Veblen was among the earliest consumer theorists to recognize the social significance of consumption, and among the first to advocate the absurdity of a failure to explain the nature of demand in economics. He viewed wealth as the basis of social honour and prestige, and he believed that emulation and display were primary determinants of peoples' consumption patterns (Veblen, 1899: 53). A concept seen as mundane today, Veblen was the first to write in social terms about the phenomenon of 'keeping up with the Joneses'. He suggested two ways in which people could demonstrate their wealth, and coined them "conspicuous leisure" and "conspicuous consumption" (Veblen, 1899: 33). The former refers to how individuals spent their leisure time. The main aim of this, in Veblen's time, was to demonstrate to other people that an individual possessed enough wealth not to have to work. (Veblen, 1899: 37). Conspicuous consumption is more useful in modern times where even incredibly wealthy people often work. It refers simply to the purchase of status goods, or the purchase of excessive amounts of goods. For a critique of the methodological weaknesses of Veblen's work, see Campbell (1995), who argues that Veblen is more commonly recognized for his role as a radical critic than as a theorist.

conspicuous consumption was by no means new." (McKendrick et al., 1982: 22) In this respect, taste formations were essentially led by the upper classes, and filtered down to the middle classes through this process of emulation. This is fundamentally the idea of the 'trickle down' theory expressed originally by Simmel (1904), who explained changing fashions by the fact that as the lower classes (at least, lower than the upper class) adopted the styles of their 'superiors', so the upper classes sought new styles so as to distinguish themselves from the middle class (Simmel, 1904: 135). Within this consumer revolution, McKendrick et al. make reference to a leisure revolution, which sparked involvement in many activities such as theatre, dancing, sport and music (McKendrick et al., 1982: 282). The middle class again sought to emulate their social superiors in mimicking these activities, and so production of commodities facilitating these activities became directed toward the middle class. McKendrick et al.'s main point of departure from prior studies of this era is that it was this drive of the middle class to emulate the upper class that essentially allowed for the success of the industrial revolution, in providing the appropriate mode of consumption in the form of emulation. According to this view, it was in fact the population's increase in propensity to consume that led the industrial revolution. Apart from its status as pioneer, this study is useful in that it challenges the sole explanation of Say's Law (at least Keynes' interpretation thereof, that supply creates its own demand) as a motive for increased spending during the industrial revolution. This is not to say that its focus was exclusively on consumption practices. In accounting for the sudden surge in emulation leading to actual consumption, the factors McKendrick et al. posit are not consumer-related. They refer to the arrival of the prominence of the wage system and the progress made by advertising and sales techniques (McKendrick et al., 1982: 22), to which end they relate at length the endeavors of pottery entrepreneur, Josiah Wedgwood. As such, their view of the consumer revolution resembles as much a dependence of the industrial revolution on the consumer revolution (which they strived to argue), as it does visa versa. The importance of the study recognizes that that a propensity to emulate had likely been present, but it was increased during the period, evidenced by the ease with which people embraced emulation.

Fine and Leopold (1993: 132) fault McKendrick et al.'s line of argument because of its narrow scope. In explaining the development of clothing, they point to the fact that there existed two simultaneous systems of provision, one for cheaper, mass-produced goods, and one for luxury, bespoke (tailor-made) goods. The former consisted of printed cotton items that were generally consumed by the working class and the middle class alike, an observation omitted by McKendrick, who focused entirely on the role of luxury goods in determining product differentiation. Apart from a failure of reference to other systems of provision, McKendrick et al. failed to account for the workings of the system of provision that they analyzed, in that there is no mention of "either the changing sources and diffusion of income, nor in changes in the overall pattern of distribution." (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 135) In particular, Fine and Leopold find problems in the employment of Simmel's trickle down theory. McKendrick placed much emphasis on servants emulating their employers. Fine and Leopold (1993: 125) point to the fact that servants were not in a position to afford the fashions of their employers. Additionally, employers often clothed their servants so as to create a certain aesthetic in the household. These clothes were thus a reflection of the employer's tastes, and not of the servants'. In further argument against the trickle down theory, they point to the spread of the protestant ethic in dress, emphasizing modesty and conformity, and the occurrence of the frock-coat as an item that transcended all class connotations (but starting from the middle and working classes), in suggesting that "the trend towards equality in dress emanated from below, pushing its way upwards towards the wealthier classes, as well as from above and trickling down." (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 129)

2.2.2.2 Campbell – Change in Dominant Beliefs and Consumer Attitudes:

Campbell's final assessment of McKendrick et al.'s study is that it in fact does not provide any explanation of why the increased propensity to consume occurred, nor does it provide sufficient insight into modern consumerism generally. It provided evidence of the changes in behaviour necessary for suggesting changes in attitudes, but fundamentally failed to account for the actual changes in attitudes (1987: 23). Campbell's standpoint is that we live now in a hedonistic society obsessed with pleasure seeking as one of life's primary functions. The cause of this hedonistic pursuit dates back to the consumer revolution. Prior to the consumer revolution the British middle class predominantly followed a particularly rigid sect of religious Puritanism called Calvinism, which severely discouraged the "spontaneous enjoyment of possessions whilst also restricting consumption, especially of luxuries." (Campbell, 1987: 103) The public's propensity to consume was thus minimized by this asceticism. Discontent with the rigidities of Calvinism came from a new Puritanical sect, the Cambridge Platonists, who advocated that "religion was a matter of deep moral conviction with humility and charity counting for more than ritual or dogma." (Campbell, 1987: 113) And so people were compelled to act out of pity or charity in order to express their virtue, and it became commonplace for these acts to take the form of consumption. People realized that they obtained pleasure out of performing good deeds, or buying things for others, and began simulating these acts for the sake of selfish pleasure, and not for the virtue of religion. With the advent of the ethic of sensibility, defined roughly as a hypersensitive expression of emotions, particularly that of shedding tears, virtue became associated with dramatic weeping, as opposed to acts of benevolence.

Campbell (1987: 151) goes on to explain that it was an aristocrat, the Third Earl of Shaftesbury, who made the major link between virtue and aesthetics: "Following the classical association of goodness and beauty, he claimed that the virtuous soul must necessarily be characterized by harmony … with the consequence that there is beauty in goodness and goodness in beauty." Since virtue became a quality of aesthetics, a lack thereof was referred to as the person having bad taste. Due to the difficulty of instantly judging the degree of someone's virtue by his or her actions, a more practical way of doing so was by judging the degree of someone's aesthetic appreciation. This marked a major shift towards the consumption of luxury goods as a display of virtue. The same fear that had always driven the Puritans not to consume 'frivolously' now drove them to consume voraciously: the fear of not displaying virtue.

Sensibility declined after about 1770 after being frequently attacked for its promotion of deceitful behaviour. People had become so obsessed with shedding tears that they barely required a reason to do so, and so sensibility was seen to promote an indifference to others instead of the compassion for which it was intended (Campbell, 1987: 173 – 174). In order to defend the philosophy of feeling, those who advocated it did so through the doctrine of Romanticism, claiming that the insincerity expressed by people in the era of sensibility did so because of a duty to customs and etiquette, and these concepts became scapegoats for sensibility. Romanticism as a philosophy requires too much space to debate here. Campbell summarizes the essence of the doctrine succinctly by viewing it more as a cultural movement on par with the Renaissance, and as a way of feeling. Quoting Gauderfroy-Demombynes: "romanticism is a way of feeling, a state of mind in which sensibilitě and imagination predominates over reason; it tends towards the new, towards individualism, revolt, escape, melancholy, and fantasy", to which he adds: "dissatisfaction with the contemporary world, a restless anxiety in the face of life, a preference for the strange and curious, a penchant for reverie and dreaming, a leaning to mysticism, and a celebration of the irrational." (Campbell, 1987: 181)[13] It thus had much of its focus on imagination, and viewed art as the main way of awakening this imagination (Campbell, 1987: 187). In this age of Romanticism, finally, pleasure became a medium of moral expression, and so pleasure as the primary reason for doing something became seen as virtuous (Campbell, 1987: 191). What is significant here, for Campbell (1987: 193) at least, is because people had such a preoccupation with the pursuit of pleasure, Romanticism devalued the appeal and significance of utilitarian notions of comfort, thus it undermines the neoclassical model of consumerism[14]. Campbell believes that it is this ethic of Romanticism that has been carried forward into the present, and it is this ethic that underlies the modern spirit of consumerism, and is able to explain the modern hedonistic society. An important outcome of this historical study, as Campbell asserts, is that people fundamentally gain pleasure from the act of imagination.

An obvious inadequacy of Campbell's study is its single-minded focus on consumerism, paying no heed to mechanisms of production, distribution, circulation,

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[13] Grana (quoted in Stratton, 1981: 149) has compiled a list of the key features of high culture, embodied by Romanticsm: "The ideal of self-expression… The freedom of self-expression… The idea of genius… The rejection of general or rational causality… 'Cosmic self-assertion'… The social alienation of the literary man… The hostility of modern society to talent and sensitivity… World-weariness and 'the horror of daily life'…"

[14] This perception of the neoclassical model of consumerism is argued to be incorrect, or at least misunderstood. It is shown in section 2.3 that Bentham, in setting forth his notions of utility, intended them not to refer solely to comfort, but to in fact incorporate the consumption of many of the notions typically associated with Romanticism. Thus it is argued here that Campbell's formulation is not strictly a backlash against neoclassical consumer theory (as he would have it), but instead that the two theories point towards each other and require more formal links.

or exchange[15]. Additionally, it seems to hold Romanticism as ubiquitous among the people of the time. Stearns (2001: 19) points out that "The eighteenth century also saw the rise of strict new religious movements, such as Methodism and Pietism, which focused sharply on the spiritual side of life and discouraged vulgar display." Though the focusing on consumers alone is obviously shortsighted, it is valuable in that it provides the polar opposite of what most studies of the time produced, focusing on the production end of the spectrum.

The observation of peoples' willingness to embrace sensibility is significant as concerns pop music. As is seen in the next chapter, many authors recognize that it is pop music's hyper-indulgence in sentimentality that attracts so many listeners to the music (e.g. Straw [2001], Frith and McRobbie [1990], Garrat [1990]). That people began to view the ethic of sensibility as insincere foreshadows the position taken by elitist ('avant-garde', 'high-brow') consumers in distinguishing themselves from 'the commercial mass'. The ideology of rock music is often viewed (however correctly) to distinguish itself from the 'falseness' of pop music. These issues are crucial to understanding the music market, and are essential to the developments of an ontological critique of music consumers. They are dealt with extensively in chapter 3, but it is useful to mention them briefly here to highlight the usefulness of Campbell's findings.

But the most important aspect of Campbell's study to this thesis is the conceptual link between consumerism and Romanticism, in that it essentially allows for the recognition of the difference between what a commodity is, physically, and what it can represent to the individual. Essentially, it allows for the assignment of use values to commodities beyond what they materially represent. It transforms the function of a piece of music from the purely musicological to the social, cultural, psychological, and political. Stearns (2001: 29) notes, on the relation of consumerism to

[15] Stearns (2001: 30-31) highlights various social factors that contributed to the spread of consumerism. Linking to emulative behaviour, he points to the blurring of social orderings made possible by commercialization. Many who had not been born into much material wealth were given equal opportunity to those more inherently fortunate than themselves in wage earnings. Merchants did not occupy an upper class occupation, but many gained considerable wealth, and saw consumption as a means of expressing that. This appeal to consumption was natural, as traditional symbols of wealth, such as land acquisition, were made far more difficult by the increase in population, which literally doubled between 1750 and 1800 (Stearns, 2001: 31). This sparked an urban migration, which brought exposure to urban styles and values, thus disseminating the commercial goods offered by the cities.

Romanticism, that "People saw in consumerism a means of expressing their individual essence." These use values can be assigned by the individual through their imagination, or they can be assigned to the commodity by social and cultural forces (or producers), and interpreted by the individual's imagination, essentially appealing to (or not) their imagination. Sahlins (1976) notes that a key feature of both neoclassical and Marxist economics is their neglect of the social significance of commodities, as opposed to their purely physical value. Thus despite any shortcomings of Campbell's study, it is important in that it recognizes in society a tendency to attach personal or social meanings to a commodity. Paradoxically, in allowing for the potential of alternative use values to be attached to commodities, this change in consumer attitudes makes way for two conflicting lines of argument in consumption literature. Firstly, it is useful in accounting for subcultural practices, in that consumers are *empowered* to construct their own social and individual meanings for commodities. Secondly, it can account for the argument utilized by modern institutionalists such as Galbraith (1958), in that corporations are empowered to construct additional meanings for commodities, which can appeal to the imaginations of 'weak', or uninformed, consumers. Both of these arguments are significant as concerns the popular music market, as is illustrated in detail the next chapter. The fact that this theory can (seemingly paradoxically) account both these arguments is indicative of 1) the inadequacy of the theory in supporting a full consumption analysis, and 2) the need for an ontological view of consumers, which is developed in the next chapter in examining the literature on active and passive consumers in the music market.

2.2.3 Consumer Revolution – Overview

I suppose daydreaming is an art. It's just something you work on and get better and better at. You don't lose it if you try to keep hold of it. It's a wonderful thing to have. I think I'd crack up if I couldn't do it.[16]

Campbell (1987: 34) states, in summary of the consumer revolution:

> Certain crucial features were noted … about the consumer revolution. It was, for example, a predominantly middle-class affair (at least in this early

[16] Quote from a music fan in Frith and Goodwin (1990: 490).

> stage), and consisted chiefly of a new demand for luxury or non-essential products. At the same time, it was clearly related to larger changes that were taking place in English society, ones which involved a shift in values and attitudes. Obvious examples here are the enthusiasm for leisure and leisure-time pursuits, the rise of the novel with the associated demand for fiction, and the cult of romantic love.

This summation points both to major accomplishments of the consumer revolution, and to Campbell's clear disregard for modes of operation other than consumption in defining consumer practices. Clearly, a full account of the concept of our 'consumer society' would include an analysis of the relationship of consumption to its 'apparatus.' Essential elements to be drawn from these studies, however, are found in the shifts in consumer behaviours. McKendrick et al.'s (1982) recognition of increased emulative behaviour is useful. While it may not apply to the same degree to class emulation in popular music, it is argued in the next two chapters that the emulation of superstars/celebrities is a vital component of popular music consumption and production[17]. Campbell's association of consumerism with Romanticism and its associated ideology of imagination, individualism, and escapism allows for much meaningful analysis of current consumption phenomena, but as indicated above, is not sufficient on its own in providing a full account of the consumption of popular music (or any product). As concerns Meyer's (1998) contention – that consumers need to look to their environment in order to make sense of what music they should consume – these studies provide an account of how consumers have learned to utilize their environment. The industrial revolution resulted in an abundance of product information being presented to the masses. These studies indicate that consumers grew accustomed to attaching social and individual attributes to products. Additionally, as will be seen momentarily, they paved the way for the argument supported by institutionalists: that corporate institutions can manipulate peoples' wants. This is apparent when this perspective of consumers is viewed in accordance with other modes of operation than consumption, especially that of advertising.

[17] For a comparable study on Veblenesque emulative behaviour during the period, see Weatherill (1988).

2.2.4 Outcomes

Campbell's historical study, in particular, opens the possibility for many current theories that utilize imagination (thereby aiding the institutionalist perspective) in explaining our consumer culture. In fact, the purpose of his historical study was to develop his own theory of modern autonomous imaginative hedonism. Campbell's point of departure for this theory is a distinction between traditional and modern hedonism. In the case of the former, the individual anticipates the pleasure she will gain from a commodity based on passed experience of that commodity (Campbell, 1987: 85). The case of modern hedonism requires the commodity to have a quality of novelty. In this way, since the pleasure attainable from that item is unknown, the individual can speculate on what pleasure she will gain in the form of day-dreaming. The act of day-dreaming is in itself pleasurable, and so desire, rather than possession, becomes the core of pleasure seeking (Campbell, 1987: 86). When the desired item is attained, the consumer will compare the actual pleasures attained from the good to the pleasures they imagined they would attain from it: "The consummation of desire is thus a necessarily disillusioning experience for the modern hedonist as it constitutes 'testing' of his day-dream against reality, with the resultant recognition that something is missing." (Campbell, 1987: 86) Thus the consumer will begin the act of pleasure seeking again by day-dreaming about another novel item.

Akin to Campbell's theory of modern autonomous imaginative hedonism is McCracken's theory of displaced ideals[18]. According to Corrigan (1997: 44 – 46) McCracken attributes the nature of individuals' demands to the idea that individuals all have certain ideals, and they associate these ideals with certain goods. The link between the ideal and the good is that neither is easily attainable to the consumer, but much less so the ideal. The consumer displaces the meaning of her ideal to the good so that the ideal still appears to her to be attainable, i.e. she escapes the reality of the ideal never being attained, but keeps that ideal alive by transferring its essence onto an object. An example of an ideal might be the idea of a perfectly happy future which the consumer attributes to his/her first home. Usually the consumer attributes only a portion of this ideal to a specific good, and so the ideal is kept alive. Although this

[18] While McCracken does not necessarily acknowledge Campbell's historical study as an influence of his theory, Campbell's study can at least be seen to help validate McCracken's theory.

illusioning experience is the responsibility of the imagination, the purchase of a good with displaced meaning is a realistic step towards the attainment of the ideal. Once the good is attained and becomes part of one's reality, the consumer must look to another good onto which he/she can defer the ideal, hence consumers' demands are insatiable until they attain every good they desire, i.e. until they become void of ideals.

The application of McCracken's displaced meaning to popular music is fairly obvious. Both music genres in general, and superstars particularly, come to represent certain ideals. By consuming products belonging to those genres, or performed by those stars, the consumer can associate herself with the ideals of that genre or star. Fairly recent examples can include Nirvana's nihilistic ideology in the early 1990s, which easily appealed to romantic notions of teenaged angst, or the association of U2's Bono with philanthropy. Many critics associate rock music's ideology generally with high-brow culture, as compared to pop music. Campbell's distinction between modern and traditional hedonists is central to product development in the music industry, and links closely to the literature on active and passive consumers in the market. While Campbell asserts that most people in modern society are modern hedonists (i.e. enjoy novelty), the literature on the music market suggests that most people are traditional hedonists (i.e. passive consumers). These issues are dealt with in detail in chapter 3.

2.3 Corporate Institutions and Consumerism

Perhaps the most formalized and popular version of a consumerist society is John Kenneth Galbraith's Affluent Society (1958). Galbraith was concerned with the position of production as paramount in 1950s conventional wisdom. He argued that this was essentially a self-preserving tactic employed by the doctrine of economics to stop people from questioning the nature of demand, which was in fact caused by production itself. This he termed "the Dependence Effect." (Galbraith, 1958: 136) Essentially, his argument follows the conventional interpretation of Say's Law, that supply creates its own demand.[19] Simply by increasing production, consumers' wants

[19] For a comprehensive analysis of the different interpretations of Say's Law, see Baumol (1999).

were created. The reason that these wants were so easily manipulated or created among the affluent is because they were not very urgent wants. Thus the distinction between luxury goods and goods needed for survival is critical. He drew his distinction between the needs generated for each of these goods from Keynes. He observed that the needs of human beings "fall into two classes – those needs which are absolute in the sense that we feel them whatever the situation of our fellow human beings may be, and those which are relative only in that their satisfaction lifts us above, makes us feel superior to, our fellows." (Keynes, quoted in Galbraith, 1958: 130). The first class, he agrees with Keynes, is satiable, where the second class is (at least potentially) insatiable. Galbraith's dissatisfaction with economics was that it was unconcerned with the relative needs experienced by different people, and the relative states of mind of the people who experienced the different classes of needs[20]. In Galbraith's opinion, the second class of needs was very often lacking in virtue: "Consumer wants can have bizarre, frivolous, or even immoral origins…" (1958: 132) Problems abound then in determining what wants may be considered genuine, as expressed by Fine and Leopold (1993: 68): "Beyond the bare minimum of physical survival, all needs are socially determined and it is arbitrary to divide them into those that are genuine and those that are not." More important to this thesis than debating the virtue of certain goods is Galbraith's conception of the dependence effect, which "accords to the producer the function both of making the goods and of making the desires for them." (Galbraith, 1958: 134) He observed further that this process of want-creation can be passive and/or active. In summary:

> As a society becomes increasingly affluent, wants are increasingly created by the process by which they are satisfied. This may operate passively. Increases in consumption, the counterpart of increases in production, act by suggestion or emulation to create wants. Or producers may proceed actively to create wants through advertising and salesmanship. Wants thus come to depend on output. (Galbraith, 1958: 135)

One can see how this concept both enriches, and is enriched by, the studies examined in section 2.1. Incorporating the roles of producers and advertisers into McKendrick et

[20] Galbraith's writing was not long after the attempt to establish economics as a purely positive science by such eminent economists as Lionel Robbins and Paul Samuelson, as is discussed in section 2.3. As such, economics was indeed unconcerned with relative states of mind experienced by consumers.

al. and Campbell's studies allows for a more thorough analysis of why people consume what they do. Similarly, incorporating those studies into Galbraith's assertion enriches his dependence effect, in that they aid in explaining the "bizarre, frivolous, … [and] immoral origins" of consumer wants. If consumers look to commodities to gain or reinforce their sense of identity, corporations have the opportunity to connote these commodities with various attributes that pertain to essentially constructed identities. This concept is expressed strongly by Lefebvre (quoted in Fine and Leopold, 1993: 67):

> Needs are seen as clearly defined gaps, neatly outlined hollows to be stopped up or filled in by consumption and the consumer until satiety is achieved, when the need is promptly solicited by devices identical to those that led to satiety; needs are thus incessantly re-stimulated by well-tried methods until they begin to become rentable once again.

McCracken's theory is particularly useful in justifying this assertion. One might assert that McCracken believes that most people incur a kind of splintering of their identity, so that that identitiy is left free-floating in the sociological environment, and corporate institutions have an opportunity to attach that identity to their products by appealing to their imagination.

Galbraith's work is significant in that he is arguably the most popular critic of corporate institutions. Following from Veblen, he was primarily concerned with the immorality present in consumption practices and the absurdity of a failure to explain the nature of demand by economists. While Veblen was concerned with the institutionalism of the class system in manipulating consumers, Galbraith argued convincingly that corporations can play a role in manipulating consumers' wants. While he is not the only theorist to do this, he argued against the perils of corporate manipulation so vehemently that he is still (arguably) the most referenced theorist on this topic and his work may represent the core argument of most such institutionalists.

This conception is important as concerns the popular music market. As is shown in the next chapter, it accords strongly with the popular notion of gatekeepers in the market controlling the dominant signal. Much of the popular music literature argues, or assumes, like Galbraith, that the average consumer passively reinforces this dependence effect. Galbraith's work is most strikingly analogous to that of Theodor Adorno's[21]. Adorno devoted much of his writing to how the corporate institutions of the music industry were successful in standardizing music "into a system of response mechanisms wholly antagonistic to the ideal of individuality in a free, liberal society." (Adorno, 1990: 305) This argument is developed at length in chapter three. It was Adorno, along with Horkheimer, who coined the phrase, "the culture industry" in 1972 (Chandler, 1994).

While Galbraith and Adorno presented powerful arguments, they are argued here not to provide a satisfactorily general explanation of music consumption practices. Like neoclassical economics, and like Campbell's study, their arguments make sweeping generalizations that cannot apply to every consumer. If neoclassical economics is the arbiter of consumer sovereignty, these arguments provide its polar opposite. Interestingly, in their discrediting of consumers, they pay more attention to demand formation than does neoclassical consumer theory. The two theories seem to point strongly towards one another in providing a satisfactory analysis of consumption behaviour in markets.

[21] Adorno is also widely referenced on this subject, and he was perhaps even more pessimistic than Galbraith on the matter. He was one of the most prominent scholars of the Frankfurt School (along with Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse), and his pessimism is often argued to stem from the political turmoil prevalent during the time of his writing. Negus (1996: 8) notes that Adorno lived through the 1914-1918 war as a Jew in Germany, and fled to America when the Nazi party seized power in 1933. "While the Nazi party were making maximum use of these media technologies [i.e. radio, cinema, and phonographs] in Germany, Adorno arrived in the United States to find the same media being used to produce and distribute forms of commercial culture." (Negus, 1996: 9) Since much of his writing in arguing this institutionalist point of view concerned popular music, he is briefly given specific attention here, and is analyzed in more detail in chapter 3.

2.4 The Neoclassical Theory of Consumption

High Heaven rejects the lore / of nicely-calculated less or more. – William Wordsworth[22]

While a calculus of rational choice seems well-suited to the problems of the theory of the firm, it has never fitted as well in the area of consumer choice. – Joseph Persky[23]

The notion of consumer sovereignty is in stark contrast to the assertions of the above literature. If there is such support of institutional power in the market literature, one might wonder how anyone can conceive of the possibility that consumers are sovereign over their decisions. The notion, however, is central to the doctrine of neoclassical economics: "The liberal view on markets for consumer goods has adherents in many disciplines, but its core analytic argument comes from standard economic theory, which begins from some well-known assumptions about consumers and the markets in which they operate." (Schor, 1999) These assumptions are widely known, which Schor lists as: 1) consumers are rational, 2) consumers are well-informed, 3) consumers' preferences are consistent (both at a point in time and over time), 4) each consumer's preferences are independent of other consumers' preferences, 5) the production and consumption of goods have no "external" effects, and 6) there are complete and competitive markets in alternatives to consumption. These assumptions encapsulate the notion of consumer sovereignty in neoclassical economics. While the concept is often criticized at an empirical level, or at an intuitive level, the origins of consumer sovereignty are seldom explored. The first part of this section seeks to examine these origins, with the finding that its current connotations are at odds with how it was originally conceived, and it has evolved to become limiting as concerns the scope of application of neoclassical theory. The second part of this section provides a brief overview of how and why it has become so limiting, by reviewing some of the foremost thinkers in the history of neoclassical thought. At this point, neoclassical economics tends to point towards the above theories to expand its scope of application. The third part of this section examines the possibility of including neoclassical economics into an interdisciplinary approach by considering the work of Becker and Stigler (1977), highlighting the relevance of their work in its ability to link to the above theories.

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[22] Quoted from *Within King's College Chapel, Cambridge*
[23] Persky (1993: 190)

2.4.1 The Origin of Consumer Sovereignty

Ross (1999: 9) asserts that neoclassical economics is practically an “application of classical utilitarian Political Philosophy.” Whereas the pre-classical and classical economics traditions sought to define value in a strictly material sense (in terms of land and labour, respectively), the neoclassical tradition defines value in terms of utility, which itself is not strictly defined materially, though “material commodities are typically among the elements which contribute to utility.” (Ross, 1999: 8) In this sense, neoclassical economics is a giant leap forwards in terms of a theory of consumption as it need be applied to most modern markets. One can scarcely conceive of the consumption of music being explained in terms of land relations, and one can see obvious shortcomings of the sole application of labour relations alone. Thus the pre-classical and classical traditions are over-looked here in attempting an explanation of music consumption. Again, using historical analysis as a tool proves here to be hugely illuminating both in providing a comprehensive examination of neoclassical economics, and in its relevant application to the consumption of music commodities. In keeping with Ross’s assertion, one must trace the origins of utilitarian Political Philosophy, beginning with Jeremy Bentham in the later half of the eighteenth century. Whether utilitarianism is the bedrock of neoclassical economics, as Ross argues, or not (as will be seen, many economists of the previous century distanced themselves from this notion), it is seen here as a crucial element of analysis, since utilitarianism arose as the basis of democracy (as described below), and the popular music market in the western world was born into this democracy. In this sense, the respective realms of economics and politics are inextricably linked. The specific relationship between economics and politics is examined section 2.3.1, making reference to some of the most important figures in the history of neoclassical economic thought.

Though the assertion of the primacy of consumers has long been present in the field of economics[24], the term ‘consumer sovereignty’ is fairly new in the field, and is

[24] Adam Smith proposed that “Consumption is the sole end of all production; and the interest of the producer ought to be attended to, only so far as it may be necessary for promoting that of the consumer,” (Smith, quoted in Persky, 1993: 183)

usually traced back to William Harold Hutt in 1936 (Persky, 1993: 183)[25]. Accordingly, Hutt's stance on consumer sovereignty is examined after an inspection of Bentham's work, followed by a discussion of the key findings of their work as they apply to the popular music market.

2.4.1.1 Jeremy Bentham

Bentham formulated his philosophy out of a discontent for the paternalistic government that ruled in his time. According to the ethic of paternalism, the privileged members of society decided what was best for the masses who were considered inferior in making welfare decisions "through a lack of social station, property and education." (Ross, 1999: 10) He thus sought a democratic system, which he defined as the antithesis of paternalism (Ross, 1999: 13). Bentham's starting point is such: "My notion of man is, that, successfully or unsuccessfully, he aims at happiness, and so will continue to aim as long as he continues to be a man, in everything he does." (Bentham, 1999: 34) In pursuit of this happiness, mankind is required to act in a largely self-interested manner, or in Bentham's terms, "Self-preference has a place everywhere." (Ross, 1999: 13)[26] Bentham (1999: 35) continues by proposing that man will have an interest in any subject that he views as a source of pleasure or a means of averting (potential) pain, which may present itself as a thing (material) or a service that a person can provide. This 'subject' he then deems a 'good,' used synonymously with 'commodity' in neoclassical economics. Of note is the preconditions he cites to man's acting on possessing a certain good, in that that person must first have had an "interest", felt a "desire", "aversion", "want", "hope", or "fear" of not possessing it, in order to equip that person with such volition as to decide whether she would benefit from acquisition of the good or not (Bentham, 1999: 36). Such notions are the basis of much criticism regarding mainstream economics and consumerism, as economics typically refers to 'wants,' and utility is seen to denote only 'comfort' (and therefore is seen to ignore a range of human

[25] Though Hutt himself acknowledged that Ropke had used the phrase 'democracy of the consumers' and Hayek had used the phrase 'sovereignty of the consumer' in 1935 (Persky, 1993: 184).
[26] It is interesting to note here that, because of this contention that individuals are self-interested, Bentham's moral philosophy (and hence the fundamental underpinnings of neoclassical economics) is often seen to be hedonistic (Ross, 1999: 10). This view is significant when considering Campbell's (1987) dissatisfaction with the doctrine.

emotions), thus giving it (unjust) connotations of a narrow scope of application[27]. Bentham supports his notion of individual self-interest by stating that even if someone does something that benefits another, they are doing it with the expectation of a kindness in return. Failing that, they are doing it simply because they receive pleasure (utility) from helping others. Key to Bentham's conception of utilitarian democracy were that 1) "All individuals are sovereign with respect to their judgements as to what does and does not bring them utility," and 2) "All preference-structures must be weighted equally in the establishment of laws and public policies; and all such laws and policies must then, taking these preference-structures into account, be justified on… the grounds that they maximize the overall societal balance of pleasure over pain." (Ross, 1999: 13) These maxims are the foundations of neoclassical 'consumer sovereignty.' Bentham (1999: 51) notes that every element of happiness, or "dimension of value" is dependent on "*intensity, duration, propinquity, certainty*; add, if in a political community, *extent*." Significantly, he noted that intensity (of utility obtained by an individual from a commodity) is immeasurable, a problem which has plagued theorists into the present day. This can allow one to observe ordinality in preference rankings, but not cardinality; i.e. someone can rank her preferences with respect to rock, reggae, and disco, but they cannot ascertain to what extent they prefer rock to reggae, or reggae to disco, or whatever the case may be. Apart from the problem of intensity being the subject of many economic works in the twentieth century, it was a problem that plagued Bentham immensely. The most often raised criticism against Bentham is that individuals are subjected to the 'tyranny of the majority' if they prefer a good that is not preferred by the majority (Ross, 1999: 13). This is a fundamental problem in considering capitalistic markets, not least that of popular music. This is considered in more detail after an analysis of Hutt's work below. Another insight key to modern economics that Bentham foresaw was the phenomenon of decreasing marginal utility, which he viewed as a hindrance to utility

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[27] A typical criticism is expressed by Slater (1997: 45): "Utility is a highly formal and abstract concept because it replaces the multiplicity of desires with a single desire, the desire for utility; it replaces the variety of social motives with the single, and individual, self interested motive of 'maximising utility'. In a sense it replaces 'society' and 'culture' with 'reason' and abstract calculation and with quantification." But the definition of utility, as it is expressed here by Bentham, discredits these kinds of criticisms. It is not the concept of utility that is concerned with "abstract calculation" or the 'marginalization of the scale of human emotions', but the way it was applied by later thinkers, e.g. Samuelson.

analysis, but which would later be used centrally in advancing neoclassical economics through the marginalist revolution (Ross, 1999: 17).

Of primary importance concerning the application of Bentham's work to economics is that he was fundamentally concerned with the individual's sovereignty in the role of resource (utility) allocation, and with the overall maximization of utility in society. The latter he viewed as immeasurable, thus his work may be seen as idealistic, in that he did not attempt to provide practical suggestions for how his work may be applied (Ross, 1999: 13). Whether economists have explicitly acknowledged Bentham's influence (e.g. Jevons) or have explicitly dissociated themselves from it (e.g. Samuelson), the attempt of neoclassical economics over the last century (and more) to find ways of measuring utility, first for individuals, and second for overall society, is support for the view that Bentham's principles lie at the foundation of the doctrine. That Bentham himself was unclear about what relationship should exist between societal utility maximization and individual rights has been central to economics culminating with the works of Kenneth Arrow and Amartya Sen.

2.4.1.2 William Harold Hutt

As stated earlier, Hutt is most often believed to be the first writer to explicitly frame the concept of 'consumer sovereignty' in the field of economics. Hutt's definition of consumer sovereignty was as follows: "It [consumers' sovereignty] simply refers to the controlling power exercised by free individuals, in choosing between ends, over the custodians of the community's resources, when the resources by which those ends can be served are scarce." (Hutt, quoted in Persky, 1993: 184) Essentially then, as the term suggests, consumer sovereignty gives power to consumers. Additionally, each consumer should have equal opportunity to express their choices. This is the underpinning of democracy, linking directly to Bentham's work. "In a capitalist democracy there are essentially two methods by which social choices can be made: voting, typically used to make 'political' decisions, and the market mechanism, typically used to make 'economic' decisions." (Arrow, 1999: 306) Thus Arrow summarizes the voting analogy used by Frank Fetter in 1905, where "Every buyer determines in some degree the direction of industry. The market is a democracy where every penny gives a right of vote." (Fetter, quoted in Persky, 1993: 185).[28] The relationship between consumer sovereignty, democracy, and the market is assessed momentarily. Of importance to this thesis is that Hutt believed that the economy is essentially demand-driven: "Hutt thus asserted that in a market economy the sphere of freedom and power is that of the consumer, while the sphere of obedience and restriction is that of the producer." (Persky, 1993: 187) Hutt's justification for this "rests on the common-sense view of history which suggests that people will consent to be ruled only in a regime which can be seen to give them equal rights and equality of opportunity." (Hutt, quoted in Persky, 1993: 188) For Hutt, each individual needs to be viewed as both consumer and producer. By confining the individual-as-producer with impersonal constraint, viewing the individual-as-consumer as sovereign provides a balance and gives the individual a degree of freedom. This results in a social tolerance, and hence a political and social stability, and for this reason Hutt advocated consumer sovereignty (Persky, 1993: 188).

A crucial aspect of Hutt's work (at least as concerns this thesis) lay in his view of preference formation. In advocating consumer sovereignty, he did not believe tastes to be given, as neoclassical economics does, but believed instead that they evolve according to individuals' environments. He deemed people to be fundamentally creatures of habit. Furthermore, he did not believe that consumers possess perfect self-knowledge in determining what will benefit them the most (in contrast to Bentham): "His [Hutt's] assertion that tastes are formed and not given highlighted the fallible and human aspects of the individual consumer. At any time, many individuals raised and habituated to error make quite poor decisions concerning their own state of welfare." (Persky, 1993: 189) In a Hayekan fashion, Hutt believed that while consumers may not be the best judges of their own welfare, society lacked the ability to agree on a better pattern of consumption, and thus the individual-as-consumer need necessarily be treated as sovereign. Persky (1993: 189) notes that while Hutt's arguments focused on the pragmatism of consumer sovereignty in the short run, he did have hope that it could lead to long run social improvement. In a manner almost

[28] A paradox lies here in that every person should have an equal number of pennies in order to carry an equal "right of vote." Thus egalitarianism is also a prerequisite of equal sovereignty. To this end, Hutt advocated extensive government intervention "which went well beyond what existed in capitalist countries," (Persky, 1993: 185) which was at odds with his defence of liberalism, and allowed free-marketeers to attack his stance.

pre-emptive of Becker and Stigler's work, he believed that over time some individuals might learn from experience and change their tastes according to changes in circumstance. Essentially, time gives the "more venturesome and original… the chance of sampling these higher pleasures, and spreading the tidings of higher things." (Hutt, quoted in Persky, 1993: 189) This observation becomes crucial in chapter 3 in attempting an overall assessment of the music industry and developing an ontological construct. Persky's conclusion is that "Hutt's approach suggests a multidisciplinary research program on the formation and evolution of tastes… An empirical understanding of tastes would put economists in a far better position to consider how consciously we wish our institutions, both public and private, to wield influence on peoples' preferences." (Persky, 1993: 190)

2.4.1.3 Analysis of Consumer Sovereignty, Democracy, and the Market – Towards an Ontological Stance

If the public is an ignorant despot with the power to decide once and for all whether a song is a hit or not, it is for this very reason an impotent despot who never has control over the terms of his dictates and whom a clever courtesan can always seduce if she knows better than the despot himself what pleases him – Antoine Hennion[29]

As noted above, Bentham's formulation of Utilitarianism arose from a discontent for the ethic of paternalism, in that a few were judged to be the best decision makers for the many. In his antithesis of paternalism, then, consumer sovereignty was essential. This is then the ontological position of the neoclassical consumer theory, that it is only fair to assume that each person has equal volition. What this implies is that each person has equal capacity for information processing, and this is fundamentally wrong, and can at best be taken as useful heuristic.

The view that each person must have equal rights to make their preference decisions is supported here, but not that they have equal ability. This was amply expressed by Hutt, in whose opinion many people are not able to make self welfare-maximizing decisions. Central to the notion of consumer sovereignty is the idea that demand governs supply, which is in sharp contrast to the institutionalist perspective (epitomized by Galbraith's dependence effect). Hutt's argument seems confusing. He

[29] Hennion (1990: 203)

believes many people are not maximizing their welfare out of ignorance, and that producers will passively cater for these ill-informed consumers. In this respect, it seems more plausible that producers will attempt to guide these misguided individuals (if individuals' habits are not too strong, producers might propose a habit for them). On this topic, Hutt raised an interesting point: since our preferences are almost completely "imposed upon us by the teachings, the tastes and the standards of those among whom we live;" (Hutt, quoted in Persky, 1993: 188) if corporate institutions form part of our environment and our culture, is the institutionalism of corporations much more immoral or worrying than that of cultural and social institutions? If peoples' consumption choices do not really reflect their unique being, does it matter that corporate institutions provide opportunity for people to think that they do? What was more important to Hutt was that individuals had equal opportunity to consume what they wished to consume (whether it was what they really wished for, or what they thought they wished for, was not as relevant). This suggests that an obligation lies with each individual to make an asserted *effort* to *assess* what will improve her overall utility. Clearly then, some people will do this, and some people won't (this too will depend on many factors, e.g. the amount of leisure time a person has, or what type of person they are at an ontological level). This was even expressed by Hutt when he spoke of the "more venturesome and original" individuals. This point is very important for the discussion of the literature on active and passive consumers in the music market in chapter 3, and in the overall assessment of the market.

As noted above, Hutt's stance is dependent on his view of producers as passive, in that consumers would not allow themselves to be governed by a regime that would give them unequal opportunity. This too is at odds with his admission that many people do not maximize their own welfare. If many people are passive consumers governed by habit, surely these consumers would not be aware that they are being presented with unequal opportunity. In other words, if producers are active, they can extensively provide a limited range of products to the public, who will continue to habitually consume them, unaware that they are being 'robbed' of exposure to other goods which might fundamentally increase their welfare if they were exposed to it. One might posit that habit essentially limits a person's imaginative tendencies, leading to their being a traditional hedonist, in Campbell's terms. It seems then, in order to maximize overall social utility, that an obligation should lie either with consumers to educate themselves, or the producers/gatekeepers should be obligated to have a sufficient level of education to judge what will maximize social utility (as with paternalism). It is interesting to note that a similar argument is used by the American pragmatists in political theory. Essentially, John Dewey believed that the most efficient political outcomes could be achieved by democracy if the public was educated, whereas Walter Lippmann (who seems akin to Hutt in some ways) believed that a more efficient outcome could be achieved by ensuring that the political elite were sufficiently educated to decide on public policy (see MacGilvray, 1999).

In sum, it is reasonable to assume that there exist some consumers in the market who are sovereign in that they are governed by their existing habits, and that producers will cater for these people; there are some consumers in the market who are sovereign in that they will actively seek out new commodities while actively assessing their welfare situations, and producers will cater for these people too; and there are some consumers in the market who are not sovereign over their decisions in that their tastes are formed by producers. This is essentially the ontological stance taken in this thesis, and is applied to the music market in chapter 3 with some effect, in the overall assessment of the market.

It is interesting to note here two different aspects that can be taken from the concept of consumer sovereignty (particularly as it is set forth by Bentham): 1) it can be viewed in terms of the rights of an individual to choose goods, and 2) it can be viewed in terms the ability of individuals to choose. As concerns the first aspect, it is highly conceivable that the rights afforded to consumers may change over time, depending on the market structure, thus a historical analysis of any market assessing this aspect would be valuable. As concerns the second aspect, it is necessary to locate the abilities of consumers into an ontological construct, as is done in the preceding paragraph. In order to assess the complex relationships that exist between the different kinds of consumers and market structures, a historical study is required. Therefore both aspects point to the need for a historical approach to consumption analysis in a market. The intersections of the literature also point clearly to the need for an interdisciplinary approach. While the above works relate specifically to the subject matter of political economy, what needs to be done first is to analyze neoclassical economics proper, to assess how and why the utilization of the concept of consumer sovereignty has changed, and to locate any links between the doctrine and the literatures already discussed in this chapter.

2.4.2 Further Developments in Neoclassical Utilitarian Economics

The marginalist revolution occurred in 1871, and is so named because of the techniques employed by William Stanley Jevons and Leon Walras in applying the concept of utility as the primary measure of value to economics. (Ross, 1999: 26). The marginal technique is widely known, and is not detailed here.[30] What is important, though, is that "The comparative utility of several portions is… the most important point. Utility may be treated as a quantity of two dimensions, one dimension existing in the quantity of the commodity, and the other in the intensity of the effect produced upon the consumer." (Jevons, 1999: 94) Since the utility of a good is only measured as compared to another existing, available good, the theory essentially distances itself from any concerns of corporate influence on taste. Since this time, very little has been done to remedy this in neoclassical economics, but much has been done to worsen it. In order for the mathematical models of marginal calculation to hold, it is imperative to enforce assumptions about individuals, namely that consumers are rational utility-maximizers and are sovereign over their consumption decisions. The role of the state or of institutions has not since figured into the "lore of nicely-calculated less or more."

While Jevons explicitly supported Bentham in the practical application of utilitarianism to consumption, the prominence of utilitarianism in political economy was in many respects abandoned in the first half of the twentieth century (Ross, 1999: 26). The issue of gatekeepers in place in markets, if it is a concern, seems to fall in the domain of market analyses and has been unable to creep into explicit neoclassical consumer theory, and so the role of exposure to goods does not feature prominently in neoclassical consumer theory further than saying "supply creates its own demand."[31] The absence of the effect of exposure to goods in neoclassical consumer theory is demonstrated suitably by the work of the eminent welfare economist, Paul Samuelson (1999a), in his formulation of a revealed-preference theory. As the name suggests,

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[30] See Jevons (1999) for an uncomplicated, first-hand report.
[31] Incidentally, this interpretation of Say's Law was made famous by Keynes, who was not concerned with the concept of utility at all (Ross, 1999: 150).

Samuelson advocated that preferences are to be observed by the actions of consumers under certain conditions, i.e. "preferences are *revealed* by behaviour;" (Ross, 1999: 171) they are not explained by behaviour. Two of Samuelson's biggest concerns were the presence of the the inconsistent psychological qualities of utility (as with his interpretation of Bentham), and the extent to which economics should associate itself with moral political philosophy:

> First, there has been a steady tendency toward the removal of moral, utilitarian, welfare connotations from the concept. Secondly, there has been a progressive movement toward the rejection of hedonistic, introspective, psychological elements. (Samuelson, 1999b: 191)

Samuelson believed that the removal of both of these elements strengthened the empirical significance of economics as a science. Samuelson and his contemporaries then (including Robbins, Bergson, Kaldor, and Scitovsky), attempted to establish economics as an entirely positive doctrine. Lord Robbins (1999: 133) echoes the amoral concern that economics should display:

> The economist is not concerned with ends as such. He is concerned with the way in which the attainment of ends is limited. The ends may be noble or they may be base. They may be 'material' or 'immaterial' – if ends can be so described. But if the attainment of one set of ends involves the sacrifice of others, then it has an economic aspect.

Utilizing this description of the economic domain the role of economics is to analyze what might happen if gatekeepers in the music market allow one artist to filter through the modes operation instead of another, but it is not concerned with which artist might benefit society more. According to Robbins, this is the realm of policy makers who should use this economic methodology to decide which ends to pursue. However, since Robbins (and neoclassical economics) was only concerned with how price and income structures could affect the scarcity of ends, the occurrence of gatekeepers is still of limited applicability to neoclassical economics at this stage, and continues to be so until it is applied in conjunction with the work of Becker and Stigler (1977).

The development of social indifference curves by Bergson, Scitovsky, and Samuelson, and their subsequent disproof by Arrow's famed impossibility theorem is important as concerns the history of economic thought, but it is not imperative as concerns the progress of the applicability of neoclassical thought to the contemporary music market, or the role that neoclassical economics should play in analyzing the music market. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that the development of social indifference curves was not possible without at least some normative intuition. Bergson (1938) required the initial redistribution of resources, but fairness as regards the redistribution principles was admittedly normative (Ross, 1999: 209). Ironically, in Samuelson's (1999c) attempt to construct measurable social indifference curves (following from Scitovsky, 1942), he uses a technique that seems to introduce both aspects of psychology and morality. Essentially, Samuelson's argument begins by analyzing family politics. He notes (1999c: 216) that since the family is considered an independent (unified) agent in microeconomics (this is justified because most household incomes are pooled), to refute this would spell the end of microeconomics. Since all agents are sovereign over their preferences, this applies equally to individuals and to families. To account for this inconsistency, he proposes that most families must then reach some kind of consensus "that represents a meeting of the minds, or some compromise between them." (Samuelson, 1999c.: 217) This he attributes to a decentralization of decision-making in western households. Here he explicitly explains the dependence of this hypothesis as a result of the phenomenon of altruism. While this achievement by Samuelson is not discredited here, nor are the details of his model considered absolutely necessary (due to its tremendous impracticability), it is interesting, as regards the history of economic thought, to note the role that economics is required to play, and what kinds of additional tools it is permissible to utilize, in aiding the development of its scope, if one of its biggest advocators of its positivity has himself resorted to normitivity, using it to justify the validity of an economic agent (the family).

Kenneth Arrow's (1999) impossibility theorem arises out of attempting to define social welfare according to a utilitarian society. Using the famous "voter's paradox," he comes to the conclusion that "we cannot both aim to achieve maximization of utility and respect the principles of antipaternalism and democracy… Our long search for a way of measuring overall social utility has tripped over the very principles that motivated it." (Ross, 1999: 300) Furthermore, Amartya Sen (1999) added to this theorem by substituting two of Arrow's conditions for utilitarianism with a principle of (weak) individual liberalism, and proved that the concept of Pareto efficiency is incompatible with individual liberalism: "if someone does have certain liberal values, then he may have to eschew his adherence to Pareto optimality. While the Pareto criterion has been thought to be an expression of individual liberty, it appears that in choices involving more than two alternatives it can have consequences that are, in fact, deeply illiberal." (Sen, 1999: 340) Whereas Arrow's analysis of the voter's paradox can be seen to show the falseness of the assumption of the transitivity of social preference, Sen's analysis does not require this assumption. Thus Arrow and Sen's work seems to show that positive individualism is a cul-de-sac.

As is seen in chapter 3, it is a primary empirical feature of the music industry that what is filtered through the modes of operation by gatekeepers will have an effect on people's consumption patterns. None of the above developments pays any heed to this. They all assume preferences to be exogenously determined, without providing any justification other than that their models would not hold if this were not true. This is true to the point that "an economic agent is *defined by* their preference-structure, 'preference' must be given a technical interpretation such that utility-functions are held fixed for each agent." (Ross, 1999: 234) In fact, analysis of gatekeepers in the market, and their effect on consumption, seems only to highlight the inadequacy of the neoclassical consumption theory, until the behavioural advancements of Becker and Stigler are applied.

2.4.3 Towards an Interdisciplinary Approach

The drive to realize economics as an entirely positive doctrine resulted in a number of simplifying assumptions being applied to market conditions. One such assumption is that consumers' preferences remain constant over time, provided that the endowed income of the consumer does not change, and the price of the good (relative to other goods and to income) does not change (Ross, 1999: 175). This is one of the basic elements that constitutes an 'economic agent.' Thus if one does not display this quality, one cannot be considered an agent in the market, but one can still have an (external) *effect* on the market. This assumption can be attributed to Samuelson's belief that any attempt to measure (though he might prefer the word 'impose') cardinality must require some degree of normative intuition, and so he sought to rigorously apply ordinality through logic: "even if we permit the individual's own preference to 'count,' there is still no need for any cardinal measure of utility." (Samuelson, 1999a: 184) As described by Ross (1999: 182), a positive science is "one which can offer predictions about what *will* happen given particular policy choices, but cannot tell us what we should do." The irony here lies in, that by making it entirely positive, the model becomes even less predictable because it assumes too much, or it ignores too many aspects that are *likely* to have an exogenous effect on the results: "whatever the model cannot itself explain will be left to be externally accommodated, i.e., taken as exogenous and hence unexplained." (Fine and Leopold, 1992: 84). Even if economics is not concerned with the moral good of society, how is it supposed to provide politics with the necessary tools to act on what it perceives to be moral? By describing someone as an economic agent, it does not necessarily mean that that person will act as one. The extension of the scope of economics requires the reduction of the behavioural scope of humans. As applies to the music industry, intuition, or introspection, would tell someone that this is severely limiting. One's preference order of a bundle of songs might change on a weekly basis, or perhaps more frequently. The preference order for a bundle of different genres might even change as frequently. A number of different things would result in this besides income or the price of the music. Empirically, it is shown in the next chapter that different styles 'unexpectedly' appear as popular (according to this theory of consumption), such as the explosion of rock and roll in the 1950s. These phenomena cannot be explained by revealed preference theory alone. Revealed preference theory only becomes fairly useful again once the new genres are established, so that new preference orders are formulated. After the fundamental restructuring of people's preferences, the theory can apply its retroactive technique again, and again claim (however paradoxically) that these preferences are constant, until the emergence of the next major genre. No account seems to be given of how or why the genre would appear, how the force of this emergence might be affected by modes of production, distribution, circulation, or how this would affect the degree to which people consume the new products. In other words, it does not even account for what might cause a new mode of consumption. While over-looking these aspects does allow for powerful mathematical justifications (positivity), which it claims adds to its effectiveness, the sheer shortsightedness of it signals a loss of effectiveness.

2.4.3.1 "The New Theory of Consumption"

The most important advancement of neoclassical economics to this thesis arose as a sophisticated defense of this assumption of constant preferences. The argument asserts from the outset that "tastes neither change capriciously nor differ importantly between people." (Becker and Stigler, 1977: 76) The starting point of the thesis is the utilization of a reformulation of consumer theory, first expressed by Becker and Michael (1974). This new theory "transforms the family [consumer] from a passive maximizer of the utility from market purchases to an active maximizer also engaged in extensive production and investment activities." (Becker and Stigler, 1977: 77)[32] The authors use this theory to explain various consumption phenomena usually used as criticisms against neoclassical economics, such as the role of addiction, habit-formation, advertising, and fads and fashions in consumption, and provide genuine economic explanations for these phenomena (i.e. in terms of price/income/capital). According to this view, consumers actively seek 'techniques' that will help them to gain the maximum amount of utility possible from a given market good. Thus Becker and Stigler distinguish between a good or service bought in the market place (for simplicity's sake to be termed a 'good' in this simplified description of the theory), and the 'commodity' that is actually consumed by the individual, of which the good is just one input. Thus the active utility maximizer uses this good as well as various 'techniques' relating to this good as inputs, to produce extra utility, which is attached to the commodity and consumed. The 'techniques' commonly cited as additional inputs include the amount of time spent on consumption (t), any skills acquired to aid consumption of the commodity (S), and the level of education of the consumer (E). Total utility is a function of the commodities a consumer wishes to consume, and in turn, each commodity is a function of some good, time, skills, education, and any other inputs that could increase utility production. These other inputs are collectively termed "human capital," or "consumption capital." The prices of commodities to the

[32] This distinction is particularly relevant to the analysis of the music market as it is asserted by Malm and Wallis (1990) that there is a positive correlation between the pervasiveness of music and the degree of passivity of consumers (generally).

consumer are not equal to the respective prices of the market goods, they are a function of the amount of utility produced by the consumer as the product of her inputs, the good and the consumption capital. I.e. the more positive consumption capital the consumer invests into the commodity (into utility production), the lower will be the cost of consuming the commodity, relative to the consumer's full income (incorporating monetary and time constraints). This price, not given a nominal value, is termed the commodity's "shadow price." (Becker and Stigler, 1977: 77) Generally, then, Becker and Stigler, without dropping the assumption that tastes are constant, can account for any consumption behaviour displayed by the consumer resulting from adjustments of the shadow prices of the commodity presented to the consumer, which can result from a change in the stock of consumption capital invested into a commodity, the stock of the good invested, or a change in full income: "tastes are not accounted for."

Addiction: Becker and Stigler use this theory to account for the consumptive behaviour of various phenomena that are commonly used as evidence of unstable tastes: the effects of addiction, tradition, advertising, and fashions on consumers. As concerns addiction, they posit that addiction to music is a result of one's preference for consuming the commodity, music appreciation (M_m), where "Music appreciation is produced by a function that depends on time allocated to music (t_m), and training and other human capital conducive to music appreciation (S_m)." (Becker and Stigler, 1977: 78) They assume the first and second derivatives of t_m and S_m with respect to M_m to be positive. The assumption is so, because this is their definition of addiction, that quantity consumed rises over time with exposure to the good. In their terms: "An increase in this music capital increases the productivity of time spent listening to or devoted in other ways to music." (Becker and Stigler, 1977: 78) Briefly then, the stock of consumption capital accumulated increases with time. The result is an increased return on investment (i.e. a higher utility) from producing the commodity (music appreciation), and thus a lower marginal cost (shadow price) of producing this commodity. In accordance with basic economic principles, if the price falls, quantity consumed will rise. The case of addiction is the only case where they use music as an example. Incidentally, in terms of the findings of this thesis, it is perhaps the least applicable case for the consumption of popular music.

Customs and Tradition: In explaining the effects of customs and traditions, it would be more effective to the popular music industry (as we have dealt with it so far) to think of these concepts as more mundane habits, though traditions and customs in the strict sense are applicable, especially when considering musics outside the western world. Becker and Stigler claim that a reluctance to change consumptive patterns when they are established as habits is a result of an investment of time and other consumption capital inputs used in the accumulation of knowledge. The following excerpt applies with a certain degree of clarity to a proposal put forth by Malm and Wallis (1990: 171) in 1984, namely that the increasing pervasiveness of popular music into western lifestyle is resulting in an increased 'passivity' of many listeners:

> "The making of decisions is costly, and not simply because it is an activity which some people find unpleasant. In order to make a decision one requires information, and the information must be analyzed. The costs of searching for information and of applying the information to a new situation are such that habit is often a more efficient way to deal with moderate or temporary changes in the environment than would be a full, apparently utility-maximizing decision." (Becker and Stigler, 1977: 82)

Briefly, the argument justifying stable tastes is that time is required to accumulate appropriate knowledge and skills to deal with one's environment (say, the environment is the mass popularity of a certain music) - in this case, there is a double effect if one analyzes this in conjunction with the previous analysis of addiction, but this is not done here to isolate the effect of habit rather than addiction. Assume that the consumption capital inputs, in this case, consist of complementary dress, vernaculars, and dance styles that one has invested. The cost of searching for new knowledge (if presented with a new environment – the domination of a new genre) is in inverse proportion to the frequency of the searches, since the consumer relies on feedback from her last search. If the change in environment is seen to be temporary, it would not pay the consumer to disinvest the capital accumulated in coping with the environment. Also, the older the consumer, the slower she will react to a permanent change, as younger consumers will have less capital to disinvest, and lower search costs for accumulating the new consumption capital (i.e. lower shadow prices). In the case of music lovers, older consumers usually never entirely disinvest their capital, as they can always at least partly surround themselves with their old environment (i.e. they can listen to their choice of music if they have temporal control of it).

Advertising: Stigler and Becker reply to the fact that advertising generates new wants (changes tastes) by viewing every advertisement purely as information. What they (adverts) produce is knowledge that consumers can use as a human capital input, along with the consumption of the good. Whether the knowledge is true or not is irrelevant to the consumption of the final commodity: "A consumer may indirectly receive utility from a market good, yet the utility depends not only on the quantity of the good but also the consumer's knowledge of its true or alleged properties." (Becker and Stigler, 1977: 84) They note that the *commodity* market may consist of competition between seemingly dissimilar *goods* that are both used as inputs for the production of the same commodity. It is useful to use the example of fashion and music again. Both may be used in production of a certain commodity, say, the commodity of status (perhaps as a separate identity from one's parents). Dressing differently than one's parents, and listening to different music than them, may both be used as market good inputs (though it seems that they should rather be seen as complementary goods than supplementary goods as Becker and Stigler hint at). The chosen example in this case hints at the massive scope of application for this theory. Paradoxically, this also hints at the potential lack of strength of the theory, as will be explained shortly. For the present, note that the commodity, status, can apply to any kind of youth culture, or sub culture, or to class. In so doing it incorporates many different academic aspects of analysis. As far as the hypothesis that each song *is* an advertisement for itself (and for an album, and for a commodity) is concerned, the song should convey as much information as possible to the consumer as quickly as possible, so that the consumer can instantly (as quickly as possible) use this information to produce her respective commodity, before selecting something else to listen to (changing the radio channel, etc). This is, of course, taking into account the consumer's *full* income, where time is scarce. This may aid in accounting for the similarity in song structures of the songs that are commonly given radio airplay. This hypothesis will be scrutinized in full in the following chapter.

Fads and Fashions: Becker and Stigler's explanation of taste stability in the face of fashions and fads is logically very similar to the above explanations. Distinct from the above explanations, they view utility obtained from social distinction as a function of both the contribution of a consumer's social environment to their distinction, and their own personal contribution to their distinction. In other words, the stronger the extent of a fashion in a social context, the more the individual will have to consume market goods in order to produce utility from social distinction (the commodity): "This is why people are often 'forced' to conform to new fashions." (Becker and Stigler, 1977: 88) Of course, the converse is true, in that it would decrease the shadow price of gaining distinction from consuming non-mainstream goods. In this case, a change in 'tastes' from commercial to non-commercial music would be attributed to a lower (shadow) price relative to that consumer.

2.4.3.2 Limitations

The above examples as they are applied to the consumption of music demonstrate a tremendous increase in the scope of application of neoclassical economics to the explanation of consumptive behaviour. This approach demonstrates for the first time a consideration of the effect that exposure to a good can have on people's consumption practices, in that exposure to a market good allows one to accumulate the necessary consumer capital to produce and consume extra utility from a desired commodity. Similarly, it considers how exposure to complementary goods (such as education) can have an affect on consumption capital as it relates to other market goods, thus decreasing the shadow price of a particular commodity. This is analogous to the usual explanation of complementary goods, such as cars and tyres, in that one is given a use value by the other, but distinct in that it opens up genuine economic theoretical consideration for how the consumption of one good can create use values for other goods for a specific consumer, but not necessarily for others. If a person invests in a car, they will want tyres. If they invest in education, they will want a bundle of commodities that will differ from what other people who made the same investment will want. The key feature of this approach is that it attributes these reactions to a result of price and income changes:

> The great advantage, however, of relying only in the changes in the arguments entering household production functions is that *all* changes in behavior are explained by changes in prices and incomes, precisely the

> variables that organize and give power to economic analysis. (Becker and Stigler, 1977: 89)

There is, however, an obvious lack of concreteness in the approach concerning practical application (positivity). Despite proving that this analysis is consistent with standard algebraic neoclassical arguments, the approach deals fundamentally with the production and consumption of utility, which is not cardinal. Since the active utility maximizer can accumulate consumption capital to increase (or decrease) the amount of utility attained from a commodity (which is seen to be basically subjectively preferred), what this does essentially is rearrange her ordinal preference-structure of *market goods* (as opposed to commodities). Though this rearrangement can be accounted for by dealing with a certain commodity's utility produced and consumed at the margin (hence preferences are argued to be constant), which is analogous to marginal costs of consumption of that commodity, the specific commodity consumed will invariably lack definition. A commodity can have various market good inputs, of which, say, music can be one, and simultaneously any particular market good (music) can be used as an input into many commodities. This is illustrated in the above examples by applying music consumption to each of Becker and Stigler's scenarios. Music was seen as an input to the commodities, music appreciation, status/social distinction, style, and a mechanism of coping with one's environment. In Becker and Stigler's explanations, and much more so in the above examples, it is difficult to distinguish which particular commodity is being consumed. Also, music is seen as but one (complementary? supplementary?) input into the production of social distinction. Even in considering the consumption of music appreciation, to what extent is the consumer actually consuming this commodity, rather than this commodity merely being an input into another ('higher') commodity, such as social distinction (the utility one might get – produce and consume, in this analysis – from being seen as 'cultured')? Yet more damning, with this blurred conception of commodities, it would be impossible to distinguish a preference-structure for them, or whether the ordinal preference-structure of these commodities might change over time (*de gustibus* est *disputandum*). Consider but one commodity, social distinction. It would, in most cases, be extremely difficult (if possible at all) to deduce whether that person gains more utility from 'fitting in' (avoiding being ostracized) than from 'standing out' (relishing individual attention). Thus the practical application of this approach, as far as pure economics is concerned, would require considerable normative postulates. However, if Becker and Stigler did not provide adequate motivation for constant preferences, what they did accomplish is a broadly economic motivation for why preferences may change.

Another issue that could be raised against Becker and Stigler is that they justify a consumer's rationality according to a context, but the situation that brings the consumer into that context is considered inconsequential. As Jameson (1991: 269) states, "such representation would reveal a world peculiarly… without perspective (death is here, for example, just another matter of utility maximization)." Yet more extreme, suicide might be utility maximizing. Not considering what made it become a better option than other alternatives seems decidedly irrational. By considering individuals as free, simply because they are free to choose at a point in time between limited options, one needs to consider firstly whether those consumers are properly informed as to their alternatives, and secondly whether they are actually free at all, or just 'prisoners' of social processes. By assuming that preferences for commodities are constant, Becker and Stigler are essentially avoiding the issue of the possibility that demand for this commodity can be increased or decreased by other factors, such as corporations, or other mechanisms that invoke emulation, for example. Thus any particular Becker-Stigler type analysis needs to be *placed* in a context, and not assumed to *happen* in a context. More practically, these considerations are important, because the contexts in which consumers 'find' themselves are essentially free floating, and can be captured. This can be done by culture, or by corporations. Typically, corporations do indeed place consumers within contexts which may benefit them, for example by endowing them with the human capital to consume a certain type of product (say, pop music). Becker and Stigler assume that the consumer is free *within* that context, and thus their work comes across in this respect as an *apologetic* against 'the way things are.' If this were taken to extreme, utility maximization for every consumer in society would not need to constitute searching at all – there could exist a couch-ridden utility maximizing society. Whereas neoclassical economics generally assumes that preferences are unmediated, Becker and Stigler seem to say that it does not matter if they are mediated. By analyzing the origins of specific consumers' contexts, their work can be put to greater effect.

2.4.3.3 Merits

The purpose of this detailed analysis, however, is not to discredit Becker and Stigler's effort, but instead to advocate its applicability to the ultimate aims of this thesis. The concept of the active utility maximizer (the basis of much of Becker's work) is extremely useful, in that it recognizes activity that occurs beyond the market place. The idea of consumption capital equips the consumer with various (production) techniques so that she is able to extract as much utility as possible out of a certain market good (or a good in general – anything that gives them utility in the first place. Note that this is consistent to Bentham's conception of the purpose of every person on earth). The distinction between a market good and a commodity allows for the completely necessary realization that different people consume different products for different reasons. In Lionel Robbins' (1999) terms, market goods are not ends in themselves. They are means in the production of utility maximization of some other commodity. A good is adorned with attributes beyond its purely physical properties. In other words, a good is able to possess different use values. As Jean Baudrillard might say, it can absorb different use values. A style of music can be consumed because one appreciates its physical properties, or because one appreciates the ideals it represents. How it comes to represent those ideals commonly lies in the realm of sociology, anthropology, semiotics, etc. What Becker and Stigler attempted was to explain this phenomenon wholly in the province of economics. It is suggested here that their approach should rather be seen as an interface between economic methodology and other areas of academic study. In accordance with the approach, the use values attached to a good can be seen to add to a consumer's consumption capital. These use values may be developed within society or by a producer. The extent to which this occurs in the music market will be analyzed in the next chapter.

Thus it appears that the gap between the various theories lies in the terrain of the environment, which as was contended in section 2.1, lies in the public domain. This terrain, then, seems to become a 'battle ground' that active producers (e.g. gatekeepers) and active consumers (subcultural elitists, for example) contest. Technological progress may empower either, or both, thus more important to preference formations than assessing what impact a technology has on a system generally, i.e. in terms of increased distribution etc., it is necessary to assess what effects technological advancements have on this 'battle'. This is the logic behind the 'signal theory' developed in chapter 3.

2.4.4 The Role of Economics in Consumption Analysis

The cost of computing has dropped exponentially, but the cost of thinking is what it has always been. That is why we see so many articles with so many regressions and so little thought. – Griliches[33]

Considering that the physical product of music in the world is finite, it can be said to be a scarce resource. Product differentiation implies that popular music is a multitude of yet more scarce resources. These resources must be allocated among the world population. From this truism, then, there is an undeniable and compulsory element of economy as regards the music market (any market): "We must not evade the consequences of the conclusion that all conduct coming under the influence of scarcity has its economic aspect." (Robbins, 1999: 134) Yet economics endures an onslaught of criticism for its inadequacy, particularly with regard to any good that is usually considered to be a cultural good. As can be extracted from above, it was the drive of key figures in the history of neoclassical thought to establish economics as a positive, predictable science, that gave rise to many simplifying assumptions of human behaviour for the sake of aiding mathematical proofs. It is not a personal opinion here that this endeavor should be frowned upon. Indeed, none could question the scope of development these figures have contributed to the science of economics, and few would question whether their works have ever borne fruit.

The fact remains, however, that however helpful these tactics have been, they have also been limiting. A consumer is faced with a situation in which she must choose among a finite number of goods subject to the constraint of her limited income (Taylor: 1986: 136). Her volition is greatly enhanced by what assumptions that are made concerning her. She will only make her decisions based on the prices of goods, and the income she possesses. Thus one may assume that her decisions are not affected by the decisions of others, producers' actions have no bearing on her decisions, her preference-ordering of goods *cannot* change if prices and income are unchanged, she knows *precisely* which goods she prefers to others (before she even

[33] Quoted in Gordon (1990: 62)

arrives at the market place!), the goods are *entirely* transitive and her preferences cannot change over time (Taylor, 1986: 136-139). As Taylor (1986: 139) quips sarcastically, “The dictum ‘to know thyself’ is taken seriously.” Any slight variations on these assumptions and their mathematical proofs would not hold. A consideration of these assumptions together with a consideration of one’s own daily practices should provoke some skepticism, particularly the assumption of unchanging preferences (which Becker and Stigler may or may not have put to rest). This assumption has caused inconsistency among neoclassical economists. As Becker and Stigler (1977: 78) note, even Alfred Marshall, the father of neoclassical economics, was inconsistent on the matter: quoting Marshall: “It is that we do not suppose time to be allowed for any alteration in the character or tastes of the man himself.” Ross (1999: 234) expresses similar inconsistency:

> It may be objected that all people change their preferences over time, and are thus bound to violate the consistency conditions. However, since an economic agent is *defined* by their preference-structure, ‘preference’ must be given a technical interpretation such that utility functions are held fixed for each agent. We might thus say that a typical person is, over the course of her life, a *series* of economic agents.

This is inconsistent in that we must now make a distinction between consumption in the short run and in the long run. Preferences may change in the long run. But in the theory of demand, deemed to be the aggregation of all private utility functions, there is inconsistency as to what determines aggregate demand in the long run. According to Crafts (1981: 131), writing about the industrial revolution,

> The long-run rate is made up of a large number of these short-run spells, and so the economy’s rate of growth will depend on levels of demand. The majority of recent English economic historians of the eighteenth century have (possibly unconsciously) written in this vein.

Using an economic line of argument, if preferences are allowed to vary in the long run, and growth and aggregate demand in the long run are determined by short run demand spells, then both long run aggregate demand and growth should be highly unstable. If one adopts Crafts' view, one can see how neoclassical economists cannot be inconsistent on their assumptions if they *wish* demand to be stable in the long run.[34] Yet these assumptions are what makes neoclassical economics so restrictive when applied to reality. The positivity of economic science, in accurately refining itself and its techniques to produce clarity within its scope of application, essentially limits its scope of application:

> The subject-matter of Economics is essentially a series of relationships – relationships between ends conceived as the possible objectives of conduct, on the one hand, and the technical and social environment on the other. Ends as such do not form part of this subject-matter. *Nor does the technical or social environment.* (Robbins, 1999: 139; emphasis added)

Stigler and Becker's approach, to whatever degree it may be disputed, provides economic justification for many of these assumptions by shifting the domain of income and prices to within the active utility maximizer. Apart from explaining unchanging preferences, as they set out to do, which they essentially did by explaining that preferences for market goods are different to 'true' preferences for commodities, with the same approach they can provide economic rationalization for how one's choice of market goods is influenced by other consumers, and by the actions of producers (and therefore not necessarily known to the consumer before she arrives at the market place). Their approach is suggested here to be an interface between the economic approach to consumption, and other approaches.
Robbins (1999: 132-133), on proposing the province of positive economics, says,

> presumably, we *can* so describe a satisfaction which is contingent on the availability of scarce means as distinct from a satisfaction which depends entirely on subjective factors – e.g., the satisfaction of having a summer holiday, as compared with the satisfaction of remembering it.

[34] The use of 'wish' is to illustrate how certain economic outcomes can vary greatly simply by choosing when to apply or when not to apply certain criteria. The fact that neoclassical microeconomics applies these heavy restrictions, as discussed, should almost in itself account the results that may be obtained, if one *wishes* them to be proved.

It is precisely this kind of satisfaction on which various other consumption theories are based (e.g. Campbell, McCracken), and this kind of satisfaction that Becker and Stigler's approach can accommodate in separating the concept of a market good from that of a commodity. Though the approach may not be applicable to economics in the positive sense, it is still seen to be illuminating when analyzing the consumption of music. Of course, this is not to say that a totalizing analysis of the music market, or even of why people consume what they do, can be assessed in this manner. This can merely form part of the analysis using the systems of provision approach, as will be done in the next chapter.

Whether economics is seen to have moral, utilitarian (or other) obligations or not, as asserted by Robbins etc, remains a moot point, and largely subjective. As asserted by Robbins as well, economics can provide the tools for analysis to judge what ends might come about under hypothetical alternative situations under which the market might function. Ultimately, the scope of Neoclassical Economics proper is seen to be too limiting, though not at all meaningless, in providing a complete understanding of the functioning of the music market, and will thus be incorporated into a system of provision approach. Fine and Leopold (1992: 83) say of their approach: "The analytical point of departure is the focus upon underlying historical and social forces that give rise to supply and demand but which are not reducible to them." Robbins, in distinguishing between the fields of Economic Theory and Economic History and "Descriptive Economics" (essentially current Economic History) assesses an almost preemptively similar relationship. A final word from him to illustrate the benefit, or necessity, of an approach like the systems of provision approach:

> The nature of Economic theory is clear. It is the study of the formal implications of these relationships of ends and means on various assumptions concerning the nature of the ultimate data. The nature of Economic History should be no less evident. It is the study of the substantial instances in which these relationships show themselves through time. It is the explanation of the historical manifestations of 'scarcity.' Economic Theory describes the forms, Economic History the substance. (Robbins, 1999: 139)

2.5 The Systems of Provision Approach

Ben Fine and Ellen Leopold (1993) propose a "systems of provision" approach to the study of consumption within specific industries. Their main point of departure begins by grouping prior studies of consumption as "horizontal" approaches (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 4). That is, these approaches generalize a theory and seek to apply it across all consumption goods, irrespective of specific goods' idiosyncrasies. Each approach is too blind-sided by the limits of its particular grand narrative (economics, sociology, psychology etc.): "in general, each theory lumps together great bundles of disparate goods which are bent collectively to follow the contours set out by that particular theory. Commodities that differ in important respects are typically subsumed under the catch-all term, 'consumer goods.'" (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 21) The contours set out by each general theory may be represented too rigidly by, for example, the bestowal of utility (economics), the explanatory role of status or social position (sociology), the conditioned response to gain a level of well-being (psychology), or the role of symbolism through rituals (anthropology) (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 3). The focus of each of these doctrines in following their "contours" means that none can embrace the "contours" of another doctrine, without eschewing adherence to its own "contours."

As such, they proclaim that "it is inconceivable that any one theory of consumption will suffice. There would simply be too much *ceteris paribus* to swallow." (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 4) Thus the "systems of provision" approach is deemed to be a "vertical" approach, in that "it does not search for common elements across all aspects of consumption but looks instead for differences in the way in which production and consumption are united together and the ways in which each is moderated by the connections between them." (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 4) Each commodity or group of commodities is seen to be "distinctly structured by the chain or system of provision that unites a particular pattern of production with a particular pattern of consumption… Equally important, production is connected to consumption by shifting systems of distribution, by retailing as well as by the cultural reconstruction of the meaning of what is consumed." (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 4) The approach aims to be "consciously sensitive to the difference between commodities, not so much as items of consumption alone, but in terms of the economic and social processes and structures by which they become such." (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 22)

"Whatever the period under investigation, whether at the time of the Industrial Revolution or in the late twentieth century, the typical 'basket' of consumer goods under review is taken as given." (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 23) This would imply that the consumption of a good, irrespective of what that good is, is subject to the same dynamics of tension between how/why the good is produced and how/why it is consumed, at any point in time. The life of a commodity in the market place can be traced forwards to its use by consumers, or backwards to its origin of production, but prevalence according to each horizontal theory is given to either, not both (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 20). Citing the work of Haug, Fine and Leopold do recognize common elements acting on all consumer goods at one time, in other words elements which have a horizontal effect across an economy or a society. For example, Haug cites sexually endowed attributes in objects as such a structure of provision (e.g. cars are masculine, chocolates are gendered as feminine). These are termed "structures" of provision for consumption.

> The term 'vertical' will be used to distinguish between specific structures of provision of consumption goods that result from the interaction of horizontal factors. Consequently, vertically there is potentially a different *system of provision* associated with each commodity… How change occurs and how extensive it is will be contingent upon the extent and relative strength of persisting elements along the chain of provision and, to some degree, on the internal or external mechanisms that trigger change. (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 33)

In the music market, the concept of 'authenticity' (generally, the attempted distinction of 'high' art from 'low' art) is seen to have an important effect on consumption patterns, but the manner in which 'authenticity' affects (or is affected by) the system of popular music provision is important. Central to this concept is the difference that exists between a commodity's physical properties, and how it is perceived, and how each affects the other at a point in time: "meaning of commodities derives both from the changing interpretation of given physical use values and from unchanging interpretation of potentially changing use value." (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 25) By way of example, Fine and Leopold note that restaurants create an impression of a personalized service, whereas packaged meals assume connotations of adulteration. The restaurant, however, realizing the gap between its product's physical and imputed use values, may rely increasingly on the self-same packaged foods. "There is thus a complex and changing relation between the two aspects of the use value of a commodity – its physical content and its interpretation. Too often this complex relationship has been treated too one-sidedly." (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 26) For example, neoclassical economics and Galbraithian theories tend to focus exclusively on the former, and sociology (e.g. Campbell and McKendrick) on the latter. The difference between a product's physical use value and imputed use value is termed, according to Haug, as "the aesthetic illusion," and the extent of this illusion acting on a commodity need be realized in terms of its entire system of provision.

The power of the approach, clearly, is that it does not ignore any occurrences that might impact a market at any time. At any point in time, it recognizes "the distinct combinations of socioeconomic forces (such as the class relations of production, competition, state power, ideology, etc.) that determine the level of output, demand, and the meaning of each element of the consumption bundle," (Saad-Filho, 2000) and it recognizes that the relationship between those factors might change over a period of time. Similarly, they note the importance of historical analysis in explaining current consumption patterns of certain goods (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 34).

In contrast to this thesis, Fine and Leopold's methodology in justifying a systems of provision approach is to provide a critique on the literature on such horizontal theories, focusing largely on the criticisms of each theory, and providing little account of its usefulness. The methodology of this thesis is similar (though its critique of consumer theories is not as broad-ranging or detailed as that of Fine and Leopold's), but it highlights the usefulness of each approach. Instead of viewing each approach as isolated, this thesis suggests that the approaches point towards each other. It essentially describes the same outcomes as those of Fine and Leopold, but whereas they eschew an entire theory if one of its assumptions does not hold, this thesis demonstrates that, by such theories incorporating elements from other theories, each can be enriched. Selected theories were chosen to demonstrate this, according to their apparent pertinence to the music market, or because of their prominence in academic studies, but it is realized that different theories could be utilized to the same effect. Examples are proposed in the concluding chapter. Essentially, this thesis asserts that utilizing a system of provision approach exposes which aspects of horizontal theories are relevant to a particular market at a certain point in time.

While Fine and Leopold's review of the literature on consumer theories is expansive, their critique of economics is strictly current-looking, whereas the approach taken in this thesis is to highlight areas in the history of economic thought that are applicable to the music market (any market). Specifically, Fine and Leopold take the concept of consumer sovereignty as given, whereas its origins are sought here, and the rigidity of the concept was found to be the result of it being *developed* more as a heuristic rule that could aid comparative-static analyses than an ontological position. The approach taken here is found to provide a useful analytical framework for approaching issues of political economy, as is discussed in the following chapter.

Finally, an attempt is made to distinguish the different kinds of consumers in the music market, by analyzing its systems of provision. Fine and Leopold do not lump consumers together as uniform beings; "just as one person's meat is another's poison, so consumption is variously interpreted. For some it is a ritual, for others a means of class distinction and status, a means of satisfying utility or broader psychological impulses, etc." But further than this recognition, they do not attempt to characterize different kinds of consumers in the market. A formal attempt is made in the next chapter to analyze different characteristics of types of consumers present in the music market. This is done by taking an ontological stance. The descriptions of different kinds of consumers are not rigid, they are more akin to outlined groupings of characteristics. Each consumer may inherently, or at any point in time, display characteristics from each grouping. This allows the avoidance of the sweeping generalization of a uniform consumer (e.g. with McKendrick, every person has an innate propensity to consume; with Galbraith, every person has an innate propensity to be manipulated), but it allows for more useful analysis than stating that every single person is different, and thereby foregoing analysis of commonalities.

Chapter 3: The Western Popular Music Market

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Goals of the Chapter

As stated already, this chapter seeks to analyze the popular music market using a *systems of provision* approach. In doing so, it highlights the fact that a thorough analysis of consumption practices within a particular market must *necessarily* incorporate various facets of that market, categorized generally by technological factors, corporate institutional factors, socio-cultural factors, and an ontological aspect. In as far as it is a test of the approach, historical analysis is a prerequisite. More (important) than simply being a test of the approach, it seeks to use this approach to make a comment on the workings of the market, which, by acknowledging these various perspectives (and hence the various perspectives present in the popular music literature), is generally more objective than existing comments on the market, which are usually biased towards one perspective. The informative commentary given in this chapter is testament to the SOP approach in itself.

The main theme developed in the chapter is the idea that there perpetually exists a 'signal' that is sent between agents in the market.[35] What is important in analyzing the market along its systems of provision is the location of this signal. For example, while technology is unarguably important *in itself* along a system of provision, in that it is able to change circulation methods (e.g. the invention of radio) or *technically* aid genre development (e.g. the invention of the electric guitar), what is more important to this thesis is the way that this technology is used by whom in terms of signal generation. Central to this idea of tracing the signal is the notion of 'gatekeepers' that exist in the market, as the term is used by Hirsch (1990) and Rothenbuhler and McCourt (1992). Essentially, a gatekeeper is an agent in the market that is able to filter what music the public is able to be exposed to. Hence, when a gatekeeper has a considerable amount of power, they are able both to signal 'forwards' to the public

[35] Again, while this term denotes information transfers (as used by Spence, 2001), it is essentially the terminology used in this thesis for power relations.

what should be perceived as popular, and signal 'backwards' to artists what music they should produce if they want exposure. If people require constraints drawn from their environment in order to make sense of music (Meyer, 1998), the *environment* in a capitalist music market (and many other markets) is effectively viewed to lie in the public domain. On its own, it does not produce very strong signals, thus it must be taken control of by one or more of the agents in the market to generate effective signals. The most cynical view of the market (and arguably the most common view) is that it is the corporate institutions that have complete control of this signal, and hence complete control over consumption practices. While this one-sided perspective is very powerful, signal generation in the market is argued here to be more complicated than that.

3.1.2 Structure of the Chapter

Coherently structuring this chapter is conceptually challenging. Intuitively, historical analysis suggests a timeline approach. Since year-by-year analysis is impractical over a long period, grouping the years into equal sub periods presents a logical solution, or alternatively, grouping them into unequal sub periods of significance. Applying this approach to the popular music market, however, proves to be problematic. The early market (until 1956, for reasons that will be justified momentarily) is characterized by three different media: sheet music, sound recordings, and broadcasting. Though the market developments along each medium are analogous, periods of significance do overlap. As such, to divide the period into equal sub periods, or into unequal periods of significance (and to further sub-divide each sub period into specific media analyses) would result in a fragmentation of the analytical-narrative of one or all of the media. The narrative was found to be far more articulate by analyzing developments along each of the media separately (though not exclusively, as corporate record companies and radio companies merged in the 1930s). Unfortunately, this does blur the historical quality slightly (in a strictly linear sense). Consequently, a timeline of significant occurrences is provided in Addendum A, so if the reader wishes to chronologically clarify historical events, she or he can do so by referring to this list.

The narrative structure changes at the year 1956 with the advent of rock'n'roll for the following reasons: In the years preceding rock'n'roll, the market was characterized, in terms of signal generation, by the maturing of gatekeepers in the different media. In the sub period immediately before rock'n'roll, the market had stabilized to a large extent, with a considerable amount of power being exercised by record companies and radio corporations. It therefore makes sense to analyze the pre-rock'n'roll period by observing how the gatekeepers had evolved to this level of maturity. Rock'n'roll provided the first (and arguably the only) genuine challenge to the way the signal had been controlled. While the distribution of different genres certainly did occur in the years preceding rock'n'roll, they were effectively 'pulled' by existing companies wrangling for market share. Rock'n'roll was a genre that essentially 'pushed' its way into the market, in that existing corporations initially attempted to suppress it, and it was brought to prominence through the aid of the formation of many new, smaller independent labels, leading to a sub period of the lowest record company concentration in the history of the market. As such, it was essentially the first counter-culture to popular music as it (popular music) was dictated by corporate institutions, and the first major change in the market in terms of signal generation. Thus, as concerns the objective of locating the signal, the analysis of the rock'n'roll (which subsequently became rock music) period is best analyzed according to periods of market concentration, as opposed to analyzing it according to specific media. In this way, one can determine how the gatekeepers evolved further in order to regain control of the signal, and ensure that they kept that control. The era also marks the beginning of subculture literature in the market, so that the signal generated by consumers can be accounted for.

The period from 1973 to the present day is grouped together because, it is argued here, no major changes have taken place in terms of signal generation since the gatekeepers re-consolidated in the early 1970s. Though new technologies have developed (with tremendous impact), enriching the system of popular music provision, they are shown here not to have effectively changed the general patterns according to which the market is run, and therefore not to have substantially changed the patterns of consumption in the market. Put differently, they have not changed the *nature* of the signal. Though in this era sub-cultures are present[36], and provide an additional signal in the market, because of the sophistication of the gatekeeping techniques, they were/are not able to embrace the duration or impact that rock enjoyed, before being assimilated by the *dominant signal*[37]. In other words, the gatekeepers had perfected what Locke (2004) refers to as the "institutionalization of rebellion."

Although it sounds as if this chapter seeks to reinforce the notion that the gatekeepers are all-powerful in the market (*a la* Adorno and Galbraith), this is not the case. A more sophisticated view is adopted, revealing a symbiosis between agents in the market. This is developed in section 3.5. In so doing, an ontological stance of consumers is developed that, it is suggested here, should not be completely unaccounted for in analyzing the popular music market and its consumptive practices.

And so while the structure of the argument in this chapter may seem strange at first, in terms of what each sub-section concentrates on materially, it is justified in terms of the signal analysis which it seeks to realize as the most important aspect along a system of provision in a cultural market. The most articulate way to this is to divide the remainder of the chapter into five sub-sections, as follows:

- 3.2) The Pre-rock Era
- 3.3) The Rock Era
- 3.4) The Post-rock Era
- 3.5) Overview and Final Assessment
- 3.6) Conclusion

[36] (possibly because people had been made aware of the possibility by the rock culture)
[37] While rock music certainly does still exist, it is not under the same 'rock culture' that prevailed in the latter 1950s and 1960s. For this reason, the era concerned may be referred to as the post-rock era. This is taken up in greater detail sections 3.3 and 3.4.

3.2 The Pre-rock Era – Tin Pan Alley

'Tin Pan Alley' refers originally to a street in Manhattan that attracted a high concentration of music publishers. They published popular music exclusively, and wielded considerable influence over the development of music styles and consumption practices. Though 'Tin Pan Alley' refers originally to a physical location, eventually it became the generic term for all publishers of popular sheet music (MCC, 2006)[38]. The entire period of popular music history from the early 1890s to the emergence of rock'n'roll may be classified as the Tin Pan Alley era because of the primacy of sheet music in the market. While radio and record companies grew in prominence as industries in their own right, they were utilized effectively by Tin Pan Alley as advertisements for the sheet music. Two key features then characterize the era that would change with the advent of rock'n'roll. Firstly, sheet music was the biggest-selling music commodity, and secondly, the market was aimed at adults (MCC, 2006). The market was typically characterized by the commercial proliferation of the popular music at the time, which was characterized by popular theatre and vaudeville. This is not to suggest that this was the only music produced, but as distinct from the rock era, this was the only music that was mass-commodified. It can be noted that the issue of popular music authenticity was seeded in this era, but would not have significant market impact until the advent of rock'n'roll culture in the 1950s, and especially rock culture in the 1960s (up until the present day). According to Keightley (2001: 11),

> As the big band era progressed, particular musical preferences and tastes began to take on a polemical dimension. This may be seen as the development of oppositions between big band and non-big-band musical styles, and especially in the distinctions made within big band culture between swing and sweet bands… between soloists and singers, between 'jazz' listeners and jitterbug dancers, and even between black and white bands. The first of each of these oppositions would usually serve to designate a valued, 'authentic' position, while the second would be

[38] The time at which this happened is uncertain. One can assume that it occurred gradually as the respective music industries matured and developed their symbiotic strategies, i.e. from the 1930s onwards.

> rejected by many critics and fans as standing for more commercial (and therefore suspect) tastes.

The second of each of these terms, then, represents the music that characterized mainstream Tin Pan Alley. Similarly, Riesman (1990) notes ‘hot jazz’ as being used by teens in 1950 as a form of social rebellion. As mentioned, these issues would only come to have a significant impact from the 1950s onward, and thus they are not dealt with in this section. When reference is made to ‘popular music’ in this section, it can be assumed to be one of non-big band style, sweet band style, or jitterbug style, it was singing-based, and almost exclusively white. Apart from this, reference is not made to differentiation of popular styles (which was minimal – this is a key characteristic of the era).

3.2.1 The Inception of the Music Market – The Printing Press

It was advancements in technology that allowed for the existence of a common market place for music. This came in the form of the printing press. “When Gutenberg invented the movable type around 1450, he laid the foundation for the modern music-publishing industry” (Garofalo, 1999: 320) Music was able to be printed and more easily dispersed in the new medium (as sheet music), allowing it to spread, flourish and become equipped with the mechanism of market prices. It was in Venice that Ottaviano dei Petrucci prepared the first publication of popular music, giving him the title of the Father of Music Publishing (Garofalo, 1999: 320). After the formalisation of the market, the music industry was dominated by publishing houses. The explosion of printed music, coupled with the occurrence of the piano as a cultural status symbol throughout Europe, allowed music to be consumed regularly within peoples’ houses (Garafalo, 1999: 320).

In the early stages of the music publishing industry, development was dominated primarily by law. The laws were initiated first in Britain, and the USA followed with a similar development of laws, but slightly lagged. Garofalo (1999: 320 – 321) provides an account of the history of copyright laws concerning the publication of music. In 1710, Britain enacted its first copyright law on the basis of legal protection for intellectual property. Though it favoured publishers more so than it did composers, this was the first account of supply side market regulation in the industry. However, composers did not benefit sufficiently from these laws to induce an increased supply of new music until the end of the eighteenth century (Finkelstein, 1976: 26).

Because sheet music was easily transported, 1842 saw Britain's enactment of the first international copyright law. This coincided roughly with increased popularity and supply of music in America, as is pointed out by Eliot (1993: 4):

> In 1823, Jonas Chickering manufactured the first American-made pianos in the back of his Boston wood-working shop. Pianos begun to appear in private homes, and the increasing demand for popular and religious tunes made the printing of sheet music a profitable business. Before long, composers from all over the new country were eager to sell their songs for publication.

1886 saw the occurrence of the Berne Convention, a treaty recognizing copyrights among nine sovereign nations. The convention has since been amended six times in accordance with emerging technologies. Of most relevance to this paper was the Berlin amendment of 1908, which incorporated copyrights for photography, film and sound recordings. By 1993 there were nearly a hundred signatories to the convention. The USA, however, did not sign the convention until 1988 (Garofalo, 1999: 321). In the USA, similar copyright progression had occurred, as noted by Eliot (1993: 19). The first legal protection for music in the country was enacted in 1789 in the form of a fourteen-year renewable copyright for a piece of music. The revolutionary system of royalties was introduced in 1889. Until that time, a composer had simply sold the copyright to publishers who could then disperse it at their own discretion. The 1889 amendment extended financial responsibilities to include performance payments, as well as purchase payments. Composers were entitled to a specified amount every time their song was performed publicly (Eliot, 1993: 20). In 1909, following the suit of the Berlin amendment to the Berne Convention, the 1889 system of royalties was extended to include royalty payments for each unit of sheet music that was distributed (Garofalo, 1999: 322). By making the industry more profitable for producers of music (composers), an increase in the supply of music followed. With it, however, came the beginnings of piracy and market failures (as is discussed momentarily), a concern central to the industry today.

The increase in supply of music was aided immensely by the rise in popularity of the piano. By 1887, an estimated 500 000 youths were studying piano (Reublin, 2000). It was this increased profitability and supply of music that could allow for the first significant seller concentration ratio in the music market. The result was "the most efficient music machine the world had yet seen – Tin Pan Alley." (Garofalo, 1999: 321) Many fledgling music publishers consolidated their efforts in one particular street in Manhattan in the 1890s[39], which adopted the nickname, 'Tin Pan Alley' after the "tinny output of its upright pianos." (Garofalo, 1999: 321) Tin Pan Alley can be viewed as the birth of the popular music industry. Prior to 1890, the primary output of music publishers was the printing of classical scores, as European art music was seen to be superior to popular music. One of the most significant features of Tin Pan Alley was that its incumbents only published popular music, which was just beginning to establish itself (Garofalo, 1999: 322). The dialectic of 'high' and 'low' culture is a central phenomenon of the popular music market. The importance of 'music that means something' in society (thesis – usually elitist) versus the place of 'mindless, commercial music' (antithesis – often populist or 'corporate-institutionalist') presents a relationship that is key to understanding the market, which attempts to provide a synthesis (exemplified by the ideology of rock music). The rise of popular music in the 1890s may be attributed both to a 'natural' increase in demand for the music (populism), and to the corporate practices of Tin Pan Alley (corporate institutionalism). Hamm (1983: 285) notes that Charles K. Harris's "After the Ball," published in 1892, was soon earning its publisher over $25000 a week, and sold over five million copies in several years, indicating the 'natural' demand for popular music. The eventual monopolistic practices exercised by Tin Pan Alley's incumbents allowed them to develop "an overwhelmingly successful formulaic pop mentality." (Garofalo, 1999: 322) The result was "a much more homogenous style than had ever before been the case in the history of song in America." (Hamm, 1983: 290) How the Tin Pan Alley publishers came exercise such power is a result of their attempts to

[39] The actual street was West 28th Street, between Broadway and 6th Avenue (MCC, 2006).

secure royalty payments. In order to understand this, a review of the workings of the industry is required.

The system of provision employed by Tin Pan Alley was initially a "publisher/showman/song system" (Frith, 1988: 19). The publishers would hire composers and lyricists to write songs for them on a permanent basis. The publishers would then print the music, which was sold as their chief source of revenue. Performers (showmen) would view a publisher's repertoire and choose a number of songs they would perform in their next show (MCC, 2006). For each performance, the publishers were owed royalty payments. It was soon realized that a large portion of the sales of sheet music came from individuals buying the music for their use at home. In order to target these people, publishers would get stars to perform their songs at the most popular theatre acts and in vaudeville. "The public was induced to purchase the music sheets when they saw and heard their favorite performers incorporate the songs into their acts." (MCC, 2006) The tactic used by publishers to give their songs exposure was called "plugging," and a very popular show or showman could be said to have been a good "plug" for a song (MCC, 2006) This illustrates for the first time the importance of the star system in popular music. The biggest problem encountered by the publishers (and hence their songwriters) was the collection of royalties.

Arrow (1962: 609) describes three classic reasons why markets might fail under perfect competition: indivisibility, inappropriability and uncertainty of intellectual property. In the early stages of Tin Pan Alley, the publishing market's structure was fairly competitive. Relatively small publishing companies were scattered throughout America, with no clear leader emerging. The second of Arrow's reasons for failure was likely to have played a major role in the inefficiencies in the market at the time. Music that was published was clearly inappropriable, in that someone who had purchased the music and played it was in a sense distributing the music further. Once they had publicly played the music, other talented performers could replicate it. The property rights of the music were difficult to enforce, and so performance of music occurred without purchase, resulting in a welfare loss to the composers. Composers were now entitled to far more royalties from publishers than before, but they soon discovered the difficulties in collecting them from the publishers (Eliot: 1993, 20). Romer (2002: 213) summarises the economics of copyright using the Nordhaus tradeoff, which hypothesizes that, for nonrival goods (i.e. goods that can be consumed simultaneously by more than one consumer), strong property rights lead to monopoly distortion, while weak property rights lead to an under-provision of the good. The eminent rise and homogenization of popular music was aided drastically by such monopoly distortion, and thus stronger property rights needed to be enforced in order for this to occur.

In an attempt to enforce the copyrights of musicians, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) was formed in 1914 (Eliot, 1993: 21). Their purpose was to issue licenses and to collect royalties for songwriters, recording artists and publishers involved in Tin Pan Alley. Garofalo (1997: 31) argues that, because most of the popular music at the time was in the form of show tunes, membership in ASCAP was skewed towards writers of these works, and therefore routinely excluded black artists (and therefore black styles of music) from the society:

> Until 1939, when a rival group was formed, ASCAP was a closed society with a virtual monopoly on all copyrighted music. As proprietors of the compositions of its members, ASCAP could and did regulate the use of any selection in its catalogue. Thus, the organization, and therefore Tin Pan Alley, exercised considerable power in shaping public taste.

Since ASCAP's members were exclusively songwriters and publishers who worked in Tin Pan Alley, these publishers became the most successful publishers in the country, and hence popular music was able to flourish. Tin Pan Alley asserted its dominance with ASCAP doing its 'police work.' One can speculate that at this time the practices within Tin Pan Alley (and its sole focus on popular music) were cartelized, though the literature does not formally state this. Formal consolidation within Tin Pan Alley occurred in 1925. Julius Witmark, who was in the printing business with his four brothers, managed to get a song published. Collecting his due royalties proved problematic, so he began publishing his own songs with the help of his brothers. By 1925 the Witmark Company controlled most of the popular music on Broadway, and in that year they "bought out their main competitors, the Tams, and founded the Tams-Witmark Publishing organization, the unchallenged leader in American publishing." (Eliot, 1993: 21). Thus the rise of Tin Pan Alley (and popular music), and the homogenizing effect it had on popular music, was aided first by the practices of ASCAP, and was aided further by consolidation within Tin Pan Alley.

3.2.2 Sound Recordings

Three great inventors of the late nineteenth/early twentieth century were primarily responsible for the music market revolution of sound recording. Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison and Emile Berliner were all working on inventions that could reproduce the human voice in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Though none of them had intentions of further developing the music industry, all of them, particularly Edison and Berliner, revolutionized the industry, not only through their technological developments, but also through the microeconomic effects of competition they produced in the market. The dual between Edison and Berliner in the early 1900s is one of innovation caused by monopolistic competition. The monopolistically competitive structure of the industry resulted in Edison and Berliner's firms trying to gain advantage through various means, resulting in the structure being generally unstable and contested, with power coalescing and dissolving at various stages.

According to Jones (1992: 16), Edison filed for the patent of the phonograph in July of 1877. In 1888, pianist Josef Hoffman recorded the first musical recording in Edison's laboratory, and the music recording industry was born. Due to the growing popularity of Edison's phonograph, an entrepreneur named Jesse Lippincott bought the patent from Edison, with the intention of marketing the device for its uses in diction. During this time, Alexander Graham Bell took next steps in development and produced a superior phonogram, the graphophone (Garafalo, 1997: 18). Lippincott's plan failed, and in 1890 he sold the patent back to Edison. Edison pursued the musical value of the phonograph and released them for public consumption at $150. Eliot (1993: 15) describes, however, that by this time, the Columbia Phonograph Company, a regional branch of the North American Phonograph Company, had already established itself as the leader in phonograph production, having further developed Bell's machine to produce a superior sound quality. Such was the competitive advantage of Columbia and the demand for the phonograph that the price of a single new phonograph was almost $200.

Schumpeter (1943) puts forward an argument that monopolistic competition can lead to innovation, more so than a competitive market can. This logic is based on the threat of entry by new firms, or smaller firms, attempting to dislodge existing large firms. This was clearly the case in the late nineteenth century when Columbia and Edison combined their efforts in an attempt to produce a cheaper, more practical phonograph in the hope that it would become the most popular household feature in the country (Eliot: 1993: 16). They also hoped to achieve through this consolidation a monopolistic control of the industry. In 1888, Emile Berliner designed the gramophone, which could reproduce music from a flat disk, and established the company, Victor, in America. Gramophones were cheaper than phonographs, and more practical, and Edison was forced to make advancements. He developed a new type of phonograph that could be sold for \$20 so as to compete with the gramophone's price of \$12. What followed was a bidding war, in which Columbia's phonograph company and Victor's gramophone company were paying exorbitant amounts of money to attain recording privileges from artists (Eliot, 1993: 16).

Due to Victor's wealth, Berliner was able to outbid Edison for the most popular artists. Edison, as a result, began signing noncommercial artists. "Appalachian mountain songs, Southern blues and New Orleans jazz formed the nucleus of Edison's cylinder catalog sold at the bargain price of thirty-five cents apiece, compared to the one dollar disks of other companies." (Eliot, 1993: 18) Edison did experience a degree of success with this strategy. The consumers' benefits were thus twofold: They could benefit from the competitively low prices, and from the product differentiation of music (some of the music released by Edison may not have been exposed at all). What was made prominent by Edison's practices was a distinct market segmentation. One can also see from these actions that it was commercial practices that made a 'new' genre of music available to the public; thus it was industrial practices that expanded the availability of consumer choices, and not the pure forces of demand and supply. Though Edison finally abandoned further development of the phonograph in 1911 and produced his own version of the gramophone, "out of a sense of obligation to those who'd purchased the cylinder machines, he continued distributing his cylinders for another ten years to a mostly Southern, and intensely loyal black audience" (Eliot, 1993: 18). Coupled with the trend in the publishing industry of the success of popular music as opposed to classical music around the same time, these instances highlight for the first time the true power that firms in the industry had (have) in their ability to gain competitive advantage through consumer tastes and niche markets. Not for the first time, however, one can observe that this wrangling for market power had a distinct influence on consumers' tastes. Had Victor maintained complete monopoly, they would have acted as the sole gatekeeper for what the record-buying public was exposed to, and would have been able to assert undue influence over the public's demand for the good. With the balance of power becoming more evenly distributed between Victor and Edison, signals were improved between the producers of music (composers and performers) and the consumers. The producers had more opportunity to get their music supplied, and consequently had more freedom over what they could produce. So composers who wrote non-commercial music were able to send accurate signals to the consumers, who in turn were free to decide what they would listen to, as opposed to being 'guided' by one suppliers' view of what they should listen to.

The market for the recording industry continued to grow throughout the 1910s, reaching an all time high of $106 million in 1921 (Garofalo, 1999: 328). The profitability of the industry attracted many smaller record companies focusing on specific genres of music, allowing for a slight decrease in seller concentration, and satisfying more diverse consumer demands. Collaborations also occurred between firms in the publishing industry and firms in the recording industry, after the former realized the potential power of the latter. During this period, however, sales of records still paled when compared with the sales of sheet music. Records were essentially just another "plug" for Tin Pan Alley to use in the promotion of its sheet music. In 1922 the growth of the record industry wavered, due to the occurrence of commercial radio from 1920 onwards. Sales in the record industry reached an all time low of $6 million in 1933, at the height of the great depression (Garofalo, 1999: 328).

3.2.3 Radio

Technologies for the development of radio had begun emerging in the 1890s with the discovery of electromagnetic waves. The first phonograph music was broadcast in 1908. Further development of radio for public consumption was halted by the Allies in the First World War so that research and development efforts could be concentrated on victory. But the war research and development acted as a catalyst for the progression of radio technology, so that commercial radio could be launched in 1920 (Garofalo, 1999: 329). Malm and Wallis (1984: 233) propose three models for the uses of radio: public service radio (with the function of educating the public), government-controlled radio (used for government propaganda) and purely commercial radio (with a primary entertainment role). Public service radio thus initially focused on 'high' culture in terms of its music content. However, it was even through public service radio, whose format was intended purely to educate people, that popular music received airtime: "Gradually the role of radio as an entertainment medium was developed, and with it the content of 'light music' expanded" (Malm and Wallis, 1984: 233). This is again indicative of the demand-driven properties of the music industry. Though music was clearly destined to play a dominant role in radio, public opinion was undecided as to whether broadcast music should be dominated by cultural music or by popular music, giving rise to new social divisions between "classical" and "pop audiences" (Frith, 1988: 13).

The advent of commercial radio impacted the music industry in a number of ways. As was noted above, it initially had a negative impact on the record industry. Its social function during the great depression was pivotal. Barnouw (1968: 6) describes how it won a loyalty that was seemingly irrational. Families, in the face of losing household goods clung to it as if it was their "last link with humanity." Music was initially broadcast over the radio by live musicians, thus producing a superior quality. Consumers, having miniscule disposable incomes, could attain music for free, giving rise to the record industry's slump in 1933. "Sales of records in the USA had dropped from 104 million in 1927 to 6 million; the number of phonograph machines manufactured had fallen from 987,000 to 40,000." (Frith, 1988: 16)

This slump caused a series of mergers in the recording business. British Gramophone, in the face of bankruptcy, was forced to merge with the Columbia Gramophone Company, giving rise to the transnational company, Electronic and Musical Industries (EMI). So powerful had radio become by 1929 that the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) merged with Victor, and the Columbia Broadcast Station (CBS) acquired Columbia Records in the 1930s (Garofalo, 1999: 329). The intention of the radio corporations was to only play music that it produced so as to further increase their profits.

Frith (1988: 17) notes that "as radios replaced record players in people's homes, so the source of music profits shifted from record sales to performing rights and royalties." The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) was faced with new problems. Though radio did have a promotional role in the sale of records, radio companies refused to pay any performance royalties. Eliot (1993: 21 – 25) gives an account of ASCAP's struggle with the radio corporations. Significant instances include an influential radio lobby in 1932 that convinced seven states to outlaw ASCAP on the basis of monopolistic practices. In retaliation to ASCAP's challenges, a rival performing rights group was formed by radio broadcasters and publishers, Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI) with the intention of forming their own play list. Since ASCAP held contracts with most of the popular music acts, BMI was forced to employ tactics similar to those used by Edison in the early 1900s. They signed any artists who wanted to be signed, giving it a catalogue of non-commercial music. When, in 1940, ASCAP threatened to press charges against any radio station playing ASCAP-licensed products, many radio stations switched to play lists of purely BMI products. BMI found success with their non-commercial music in the same fashion as Edison had. This is again indicative of the hypothesis that 'new' music genres are often a function of changes in the industry, rather than of cultural movements, or notable musical talent, influencing the commercial demand. Subsequently, artists whose contracts expired with ASCAP signed with BMI, shifting the balance of power completely away from ASCAP. ASCAP's survival was a fortuitous one. In 1943 the production of records was stunted in the USA because shellac, a major physical component of records, was needed by the military for the production of weapons. ASCAP was then able to sell many of its records that it held in backlog. In this dual between ASCAP and BMI, one can see the power that radio wielded over consumer demands.

By the early 1930s, two broadcasting giants had emerged in America: the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) and the National Broadcasting Company (NBC – a subsidiary of the RCA), who collectively occupied fifty of the fifty-two clear channels available for broadcast (Garofalo, 1999: 331). It was the NBC who finally exposed true public opinions about high culture and popular culture. In 1945 they introduced a radio show called *Your Hit Parade* in which they instructed musician B. A. Rolfe to play only popular music. “In focusing solely on musical selections that were popular among the listening audience, *Your Hit Parade* was the first show to confer power in determining public taste on the consumer.” (Garofalo, 1999: 333) Advertisers were able to capitalize on this, and radio stations could benefit from increased profits. However, this conference of power to consumers had distinct limitations. Rolfe was instructed to play only popular music on the air, with “no extravagant, bizarre, involved arrangements.” (Sanjek, quoted in Garofalo, 1999: 333)

Your Hit Parade was inspired by the American trade publication, *Billboard*, which had published its first music “hit parade” in 1936. In 1940, the first “music popularity chart” was calculated, based on unit sales (Wikipedia, 2006). *Billboard* thus marked the beginning of the chart system in the popular music market, a phenomenon central to the market since its inception. The logic of the chart system can be described as fuzzy, following a ‘one needs to have money to make money’ type of argument. Information is as much an output of the chart as it is an input. A song (artist, album, film) needs to reach a kind of minimum level of popularity to enter the chart (through sales etc.). Once they enter a chart, interest is peaked, they gain more exposure, and subsequently become more popular[40]. Thus the chart, and *Billboard* in particular, has a major signalling function in the market and is utilized both by consumers and radio stations to signal popularity and meritocracy of artists and songs.

With a large portion of power, and a greater control of the signal, in the music industry having been transferred to radio, this opened the possibility of the phenomenon that was to be termed ‘payola’. Malm and Wallis (1984: 243) describe payola as radio stations accepting monetary bribes from record companies to give certain songs airtime. The result was the presence of asymmetries of information within the market, where record companies and radio stations could use their knowledge to shape public tastes, obviously weakening the idea that the consumers

[40] To illustrate this logic, one can consider the following recent (2004) account. A Grahamstown student band sent a song to the South African rock site, www.Powerzone.co.za, which makes South African songs available for downloading. The most downloaded songs are displayed conspicuously in chart format. The band downloaded the song enough times themselves for their song to make the chart, where it then remained for some weeks on the strengths of further downloading from across the country (Bowles, 2005).

were truly empowered. Says Frith of the relationship between records and radio: “Two media which had seemed to be in deadly competition, had become inseparable.” (1988: 19) Apparent at this point in the history of the market is the radical shift that had taken place in the industry’s entire system of provision. In the transfer of dominance from Tin Pan Alley to record companies and radio, the market had simultaneously developed new modes of production, circulation, distribution, and consumption. As stated by Frith (1988: 19):

> The 1930s marked, in short, a shift in cultural and material music power – from Tin Pan Alley to broadcasting networks and Hollywood studios, from the publisher/showman/song system to a record/radio/film star system – and the judgement of what was a good song or performance shifted accordingly – from suitability for a live audience to suitability for a radio show or jukebox.

Another major advancement in radio came in the form of the transistor radio in 1948. Again, the technology used was not intended to further the development of the music industry, but the development of communication (the telephone). The transistor was far more practical than the old radio system of vacuum tubes used for amplification. As a result, radios could be made smaller, became more portable, cheaper, and cheaper to transport. The benefit to record companies came in the form of this portability: “Teenagers, who were soon to become an identifiable consumer group, could now explore their developing musical tastes in complete privacy.” (Garofalo, 1999: 334). The initial result of this was that record companies, radio companies and publishing companies could more easily assert their influence over demand, solidifying the “formulaic pop mentality” to which Garofalo (1999: 322) refers. But ultimately, the invention of the transistor radio, and the advent of teenagers as a recognized consumer group, set the stage for the explosion of rock’n’roll in the later 1950s[41].

[41] For earlier evidence of the gradual emergence of a teen market, see Keightley (2001). It is sufficient for this thesis to note that teen tastes were effectively marginalized because of Tin Pan Alley’s focus on adult audiences, and unexplored because household popular music was essentially social.

3.2.4 Overview – Tracing the Signal

From the above, it is apparent that the consolidation of publishing corporations in Tin Pan Alley provides the first clear account of corporate control of the signal in the popular music market. Because of the national domination of publishing companies in Tin Pan Alley, the fact that they only produced popular music had much to do with what the public was exposed to in the early 1900s, both in retail and in live performances (predominantly theatre and vaudeville). The formation of ASCAP further empowered the companies of Tin Pan Alley. ASCAP held a monopoly on copyrights for sheet music, and their members belonged exclusively to Tin Pan Alley. Tin Pan Alley thus had an overwhelming market share of published sheet music, and a complete monopoly on copyrights. This would further induce composers and publishers to produce popular music so that they might be included in ASCAP. The result was the rise of popular music over art music. The promotional staff ("pluggers") in Tin Pan Alley were active in ensuring their songs would be performed in the most popular shows and by the biggest stars.

The development of the recording industry ran independently of Tin Pan Alley until the early 1920s, but one can note similar patterns of signal generation in the industry prior to that point. The power dual between Edison and Berliner initially resulted in each contending for popular performers (reading the signal controlled by Tin Pan Alley). When Berliner succeeded in outbidding Edison for the most popular performers, Edison was forced to look elsewhere for recording artists. The fact that he experienced success from genres not traditionally viewed as popular is indicative firstly of the power that these two companies had over what the record-buying public could be exposed to, and secondly of the power of the signal generated by Tin Pan Alley. Its signal to the record companies (of the profitability of popular music) resulted initially in their being blinded to the possibility of a market for other styles of music. In the 1920s, record sales had reached figures that demanded the attention of Tin Pan Alley, and records became "plugs" for publishers which could increase sheet music sales, and thus Tin Pan Alley maintained control of the signal. A symbiosis occurred in which recording artists could benefit from playing popular sings, and similarly, songs could be aided in their popularity by being recorded by star singers. What is important is that ASCAP (and hence Tin Pan Alley), although they could benefit from record sales, exercised control over record companies, as they held the copyrights of the recorded songs.

Radio's impact *on the signal* was not felt until the 1930s, when it grew in popularity during the great depression, which coincided with the merger of major radio stations with record companies. In fact, it would have appeared as though ASCAP still dominated the signal until 1939, using radio as an additional "plug," much as they did with record companies. Radio companies were dissatisfied with ASCAP's monopoly, and formed rival performing rights group, BMI. When, in 1940, radio companies refused to pay ASCAP performers for using their music on air, they effectively boycotted ASCAP and the popular music of the time, and found success with BMI artists. Since the popular artists were contracted by ASCAP, BMI was forced to use genres not traditionally viewed as popular. The fact that the tactic was successful is indicative of the fact that radio in fact exercised more control over what the public would listen to. This had probably been the case for a number of years prior, but since radio and ASCAP's goals had been aligned, this may not have been apparent.

The advent of *Your Hit Parade* in 1945 was a further indicator that radio captured the signalling function in the market. Though *Your Hit Parade* gave the appearance of conferring power to the consumer, in which the consumer could send signals to the record companies and publishers, a question remains of how much influence the major companies, and radio itself, still had over consumers' demands. "The broadcast industry claims to play the songs people want to hear. In reality, however, airplay actually precedes, rather than follows, popularity for specific songs." (Rothenbuhler and McCourt, 1992: 102) Rothenbuhler and McCourt (1992) describe the process of what is selected for radio airplay as a series distorted signals between the record companies and the radio stations. Firstly, what they refer to as 'preselection' occurs among radio executives (1992: 103). This is an intense filtering process whereby the executives receive an over-abundant amount of products, and continue or discard each product at various stages of selection. This highly subjective process is shaped by the executives' motives: "Predictability increases the efficiency of the station's operation because an audience that is attracted by one song will remain tuned in for the next one, *if it is familiar*" (Rothenbuhler and McCourt, 1992: 105). The radio station then develops a format, referring to the types of songs it will play. The record companies' aims are to get their products exposed. Thus they will have their own 'preselections' of what to present to the radio stations. The result is a play list that is far more homogenous than it is reflective of 'natural' consumer demands.

Radio stations will play what they perceive to be popular, which does not mean that they truly account for the consumers' opinions. The majority of consumers will accept as popular what they continually hear. Thus the radio stations dictate to the consumer what is popular, and as a result they can justify their actions of playing popular music. They have effectively created a self-fulfilling prophecy. How radio stations determine their idea of popular music depends on various other media. In fact, a song is determined to be popular if it is played on other radio stations, and thus will be selected for a play list (Rothenbuhler and McCourt, 1992: 102). Additionally, *Billboard* has been a major indicator of popularity that has determined radio play listing. Thus the rise of the chart system, coupled with radio's eminent rise in popularity, have determined the logic around which the signal operates. Citing Philip Ennis, Straw (2001: 59) suggests that "the modern music industries were born at that point, after the Second World War, when the various ways of measuring a song's popularity began to be aligned with each other – when radio airplay, the sale of records and sheet music, and jukebox play all became calibrated, in a sense, as part of a single process."

In sum, one can observe in the early history of the popular music market a definite development and evolution of a signal in the market that effectively had much control over what music the public could be exposed to. Since exposure to the public is usually correlated with profitability, the signal was able to operate 'backwards' as well, in signalling to composers what they should perform in order to achieve success. The signalling role of Tin Pan Alley was essentially *active* in determining what would gain public exposure, with their tactic of "plugging." A similar position would be taken by record companies from the 1950s onwards as records replaced sheet music as the dominant music commodity, as is discussed in the rest of this chapter. The signalling role of radio and *Billboard* is essentially *passive*, in that radio corporations rely on their environment in determining popularity, and at the same time they determine popularity themselves. This is the *nature* of the signal as it has been developed in the market. The rest of this chapter illustrates how this signal changed occupancy for a brief period with the surprise success of rock'n'roll, how the signal became more complicated during rock'n'roll's evolution into rock and its associated ideology, and finally how the signal in the post-rock era largely imitates that of the pre-rock era, though it has become more complex due to an increased sophistication of gatekeeping techniques.

3.3 The Rock Era

As noted, the rock era accounts for a fairly unique period of the popular music market's history in terms of location and development of the market signal. The first major changes occurred with the advent of rock'n'roll in the 1950s, and the period extends past rock'n'roll's decline and the subsequent emergence of rock in the 1960s. A number of factors allowed for these changes to occur. As noted above, the advent of the transistor radio allowed for the recognition of a teen market (Garofalo, 1999: 334). Linked to this was the emergence of large base of white, affluent, post Second World War youths (Keightley, 2001: 113). Additional technological advancements characterized records in 1948. Two scientists, Bachman and Goldman, developed the long-playing thirty-three rpm record (the LP). In what became known as the "battle of the speeds", RCA responded with a more advanced, forty-five rpm record in 1949, continuing the familiar trend in the music market of invention leading to innovation. Records were now lighter and more durable, giving them popular preference over the older shellac-based records (Garofalo, 1999: 334). This helped to further separate teen and adult audiences. Keightley (2001: 113) notes that the LP came to represent adults' tastes, while the cheaper, 45 rpm records were the carriers of popular teen hits. As such, the rock'n'roll era is characterized by singles rather than albums, a trend which would continue until the establishment of a rock culture in the 1960s.

3.3.1 The Ideology of Rock

In 1950, David Riesman made a distinction between majority and minority consumers. The former were unconcerned with how they came to listen to music, and accepted "the adult picture of youth somewhat uncritically," while the latter portrayed certain "socially rebellious themes." (Riesman, 1990: 8) The minority group used popular music to "polarize itself from the majority group, and thereby from American culture generally." They felt that "music … [was] too important to serve as a backdrop for dancing, small talk, studying, and the like," and had a "diffuse resentment for the image of the teenager provided by the mass media." (Riesman, 1990: 10)

> The rebelliousness of this minority group might be indicated in some of the following attitudes toward popular music: an insistence on rigorous standards of judgement and taste in a relativist culture; a preference for the uncommercialized, unadvertised small bands rather than name bands; the development of a private language and then a flight from it when the private language (the same is true of other aspects of private style) is taken over by the majority group; a profound resentment of the commercialization of radio and musicians. (Riesman, 1990: 9-10)

Thus there is evidence in the pre-rock era of a demand for the (Becker-type) commodity, social distinction; a desire for individuality. This analysis characterizes much of music consumption throughout the history of the market, but it was not a major concern of the pre-rock era because it was fundamentally a minority issue, and thus did not much concern capitalism. It is interesting to note that Riesman points to a contradiction inherent in the attitude of minority consumers:

> The hot jazz lovers are protestors. They are individualists who reject contemporary majority conformities. In the very process, however, do they not in many, perhaps most, cases simply move into another peer group, which holds them fast, and adopt a new conformity under the banner of nonconformity? (Riesman, 1990: 12)

This attitude was adopted on a mass scale with the advent of rock'n'roll, and institutionalized in the culture of rock. The paradox is striking: there was a mass demand to be distinguished from the mass. This section explains how this came to pass, and it is asserted that it is this fundamental paradox that led to the demise of a perceived authentic rock culture, and it is this paradox that has come to determine the functioning of signals in the market, in a more or less stabilized manner, since that time.

The dominant view of rock culture is of a highly romanticized counter-culture.

> Rock mythology asserts a creation story whose primal scene is beyond the mainstream: the illicit coupling of marginalized blues and country traditions spawns a bastard child, who, after a fleeting, authentic childhood, is captured, co-opted, and corrupted by the music industry. (Keightley, 2001: 125)

Similarly, Straw (2001: 60) asserts that "one of rock culture's most cherished (and self-important) founding myths was that of the post-war American teenager lying in bed, late at night, listening to black music of the American south from a small, bedside radio." Though this mythology is not entirely false, the ideology of rock culture, to reiterate, is contradictory. It celebrates 'anti-commercialism,' and hence 'anti-mass,' yet it was certainly adopted by a mass market (Keightley, 2001; Frith, 1988). The significance of the *rock'n'roll* culture was that it celebrated a previously (mostly) marginalized youth with vigour: "It was mainly theirs because it was so clearly not their parents." (Willis, 1990: 46) The significance of *rock* culture was that the youth gave themselves the 'authority' to define what that music was supposed to mean. Both styles were essentially eclectic. Keightley (2001: 13) notes that "music that sounded quite like uptempo rock'n'roll could be found in the 1940s and earlier, but this music was not generally considered rock'n'roll, since it did not involve a specifically white, mainstream and teen audience." Similarly, rock music drew its influences from many African-American styles such as Chicago electric blues and various gospel-influenced soul sounds, various forms of jazz, skiffle, and also from many folk cultures in America. But more important than its adopting of these music styles, "rock adopted and adapted aspects of their worldviews, their aesthetic and political sensibilities, and their varied approaches to relations between music, musicians and listeners in a mass-mediated, commodity-driven, corporate society." (Keightley, 2001: 119) Most significantly, rock adopted rock'n'roll's celebration of youth, folk's romantic critique of mass society, and gave a degree of sovereignty to youth consumers.

Key to rock's ideology was the concept of authenticity. Keightley (2001: 134) notes that the word, 'authentic' in ancient Greece referred to the 'self-made.' Etymologically linked, are the words 'author' and 'autonomy'.[42] Thus the authenticity in rock typically entails a break between the divisions of labour in music (particularly between singer and songwriter), characteristic of Tin Pan Alley. Also, as per the Romantic ethic of folk, authenticity embraces the importance of the artist as self-governing, so that the authentic artist, and consequently the consumer, is not persuaded or controlled in Galbraith-like fashion by corporate institutions.[43] Since Romanticism involves the celebration of high art, rock attempted to create meaning (high art) out of popular culture. Grana recognizes a key feature of high art to be "the hostility of modern society to talent and sensitivity," (Grana, quoted in Stratton, 1983: 149) and so by embracing rock and its ideology, youth could see them selves as misunderstood.

It is asserted in this section that it is the culture's paradoxical *polemic on 'anti-mass'* being born *within the mass* that allowed the gatekeepers (record companies in particular) to regain control of the signal. What is significant is that when this occurred, the existence of various signals was recognized, but the gatekeepers had developed more sophisticated techniques that would ultimately allow them to keep control of the *dominant* signal. Thus the romantic, and false, aspect of a 'rock revolution' was that it might be seen as anti-capitalist, or anti-'the machine.' This contradiction came because the youth had previously been marginalized (and had constituted a smaller demographic), and came to associate the concept of 'mass' with adults. In this way "'youth' could understand itself as inherently 'anti-mass', regardless of how many million rock records were sold." (Keightley, 2001: 124) The 'rock revolution' then, from the perspective of this thesis, came from two aspects.

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[42] While the concept of 'authenticity' is prominent in the popular music market, it lacks concise definition. While it embodies the accordant denotations of the word (referring to something that is 'genuine' or 'original'), it exhibits additional connotations so that it might refer to something that is seen as 'special,' 'novel,' or 'different'. As such, 'authenticity' refers in this thesis to any instance where consumers endow a certain music with qualities that separate it from the commercial, or mainstream, music of a specific period. While popular music is traditionally seen as 'low art', certain artists or consumers (or marketers) often attempt to establish certain genres of music as 'high art'. In such cases (in the terminology employed in this thesis), those consumers or artists could be said to endow those genres with 'authenticity'.

[43] Keightley (2001: 121) observes that the folk ideology was a response to the writings of many influential academics at the time, for example Galbraith's *Affluent Society* was published in 1958; Adorno was a prominent cultural critic at the time.

Firstly, it warranted major structural changes, and hence a change in the way the signal was generated. Secondly, it recognized a kind of 'activated' consumer, one who would consistently attach various meanings to various popular works. It was this recognition that forced the gatekeepers to evolve, and forced the market to reconsider issues of consumer sovereignty. According to Frith (1981: 159),

> The rock-folk argument, indeed, is not about how music is made, but about how it works: rock is taken to express (or reflect) a way of life; rock is *used* by its listeners as folk music – it articulates communal values, comments on shared social problems… the question of *how* music comes to represent its listeners is begged.

It is asserted here that it is the sophistication of techniques learned by the gatekeepers during the rock era that allows them in large part to determine how music comes to represent its listeners.

In keeping with rock's revolutionary property of forcing major structural change, the period is divided into significant sub periods of concentration levels, as they were identified by Peterson and Berger (1990). In doing so, this allows for a clearer account of how the signal adapted during the era along the popular music system of provision. Peterson and Berger's study seeks to analyze the level market concentration over the period corresponding to the levels of product homogeneity, and to analyze the reasons why these changes in concentration took place. The exact quantitative details of their study are of secondary importance here and as such are not rehashed; of more importance to this thesis is the conditions they cite for changes in the levels of concentration in the industry. Their period of analysis is subdivided into five unequal periods based on their significant differences in the four- and eight-firm concentration ratios. The number of different firms to have top ten singles in a year is also used as an indicator of firm concentration.

3.3.2 1948 – 1955

Peterson and Berger's (1990) analysis of this period is that it was characterized by a remarkably high industry concentration dominated by RCA Victor, Columbia, Decca, and Capitol. Correspondingly, they found the level of product differentiation to be especially low. This was done by analyzing the turnover of number one hits / new records, the number of cover versions entering the charts, and the extent of song lyric differentiation. It is noted, however, that each of these methods may be contested – "one judge's homogeneity may be another's diversity" (Peterson and Berger, 1990: 144), thus their findings may be seen as an indicator more than an absolute. They argue that the top four firms were able to gain such a command of the industry through vertical integration: "oligopolistic concentration of the record industry was maintained by control of the total production flow from raw materials to wholesale sales… The four leading companies controlled the media of merchandising music and the channels for distributing records." (Peterson and Berger, 1990: 143) They cite corporate affiliations of each of the firms with corresponding radio and movie firms, so that they were easily able to gain airplay for their products through these channels. Additionally, Peterson and Berger highlight payola as a major tactic employed by the firms as it was only made explicitly illegal in the late 1950s when smaller independent firms began to imitate this strategy. The second strategy used to enforce vertical integration was through control of the channels of record distribution: "Each of the majors maintained a system of wholesale dealerships, warehouses, and record jobbers. While they did not own many retail record outlets, they could discourage individual retail outlets from handling the records of independent companies by threatening to delay shipments of their own fast-moving records." (Peterson and Berger, 1990: 144) As such, the era was characterized by a high level of homogeneity among products, and a typically unsated demand. They justify this unsated demand by indicating a reduction in the market of absolute sales figures, and the proliferation of "musics not merchandised through the mass media, but disseminated primarily through live performance," (Peterson and Berger, 1990: 147) citing jazz, rhythm and blues, country and western, gospel, and urban folk music as examples. In short, the gatekeepers in the market had stabilized to a large extent. They were so focused on a retrospective formula of success that they had come to ignore large segments of the market. To emphasize this retrospective technique, Keightley (2001: 113) notes that the term given to a typical adult popular song was termed a "standard." "Symbolically, Tin Pan Alley died on April 12, 1954, when Bill Haley and his Comets recorded Max Freedman and Jimmy De Knight's 'Rock Around the Clock.' It had been published a year earlier and would become significant a year later, but

Haley’s recording for Decca would become the first international rock’n’roll bestseller.” (MCC, 2006)

3.3.3 1956 – 1959

The music market exploded with the advent of rock’n’roll. Originally, the gatekeepers in the market tried to extinguish this genre, viewing it as a grotesque form of music, as expressed by Willis (1990: 46):

> Early rock ‘n’ roll was seized upon by the young in the mid 1950s in America and England as their very own music. It was mainly theirs because it was so clearly not their parents’. Early rock ‘n’ roll films were associated with rioting, fighting, and seat slashing in the movie theaters. The new dancing was violently active compared to any of its predecessors, and the live performance of the stars (particularly Elvis Presley) was openly sexual in a way that only American Negroes had been held to be capable of before. Parents and established society could not condone such open subversions of traditional values. The dissociation of one group is the association of another. A large-scale distinctive musical genre became, perhaps for the first time, truly available to the young.

Garofalo (1992: 94) notes that their motives were also prejudiced; that because many of the original rock and roll artists were black (e.g. Little Richard, Chuck Berry), executives did not want to bring this music into the mainstream. According to Peterson and Berger (1990: 151), “the majors made no concerted effort to buy the contracts of successful ‘rockers’ or develop their own. They thought that rock’n’roll was a fad that would soon pass, and they were convinced that the industry would soon return to pre-1955 ‘normalcy.’” To a large extent, they were correct. As is seen momentarily, rock was saved by a revivalist movement of the British invasion in the 1960s which led to the formation of rock culture. But rock’n’roll was powerful enough, and lasted long enough, under the gatekeepers’ rigidity, to attract a number of successful competitors. Independent record labels, sighting this gap in the market, seized the opportunity in a similar fashion to what Edison had done to compete with Berliner. These labels increased their share in the market of pop music from 21.6

percent in 1955 to 61.3 percent in 1959 (Peterson and Berger, 1990: 148). Again, one can see that it was primarily due to changes in the industry that a new genre was allowed to gain exposure. Rock'n'roll acted as a catalyst for the direction that the music industry had been heading towards for the preceding years, making use of the newly decentralized market, the tilt in radio tactics toward popular music, the identification of teenagers as a consumer group, and the new, more efficient record technologies. The market, in all its facets, grew at an unprecedented rate. Garofalo (1999: 336) notes the expansion as nearly tripling in the 1950s.

Thus the period was characterized by a surge of competition, aided by, or allowing for, the explosion of rock'n'roll. Cultural factors and unsated demand aside, Peterson and Berger note the loss of control by the majors of merchandising new records via radio. In 1948 the U.S. Supreme Court declared that movie production companies had to "divest themselves of their theatre chains." (Peterson and Berger, 1990: 148). This resulted in many of these companies entering the record market, signaling a move for other independents into the market. Additionally, the pervasiveness of television in the home in the 1950s was a severe threat to radio, and its income from broadcasting dropped severely. The result was a distinct change in radio's programming[44]. "The most spectacular development was the advent of the Top 40 format, which featured a limited playlist of only the latest and most popular hits and was directed at teen audiences." (Keightley, 2001: 113) Amazingly, it took radio this long to segregate the mass populace into distinct consumer groups: "Thus, by 1960, rather than four networks duplicating each other's programming hour by hour… each of the local stations in a city had evolved a distinct format, which it broadcast with little change throughout the day." (Peterson and Berger, 1990: 149) At the same time, radio disc jockeys gained satisfaction and recognition by discovering new kinds of music. In addition to rock and roll, soul, country, gospel, Latin, classical, and jazz received unprecedented radio coverage. The advent of the Top 40 format, and the diversification of radio playlists, Keightley refers to as the "institutionalization of teen radio," and meant a reconsideration of what a 'hit' sounded like. Corresponding to the low level of industry concentration, Peterson and Berger note a noticeably higher product differentiation, as per their methods (a high number of turnovers of number

[44] Radio was saved additionally by the advent of the transistor radio, as noted above.

one hits, less cover versions entering the charts, and a high degree of lyric differentiation). Similarly, Keightley (2001: 113) notes that "the entry into the popular music mainstream of rhythm and blues songs and styles and, later, of African-American performers, comes with rock'n'roll and marks a crucial moment of 'crossover.'"

"Elvis Presley still stands best for rock'n'roll itself, a glorious, flawed, youthful hybrid of American sounds." (Frith, Straw, and Street, 2001: 74) This statement contains another dimension of truth, considering that Elvis was white. Keightley (2001: 114) notes that the biggest rock'n'roll hits were "white appropriations and hybridisations of 'black' musical styles," and consequently it was white performers of those styles that had the longest careers. Nonetheless, while Elvis was not the first pop idol (he was noteably preceded by Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra), he was the first to "embody the appeal of youthfulness for its own sake." (Frith et al., 2001: 75) Elvis was also the first major pop idol to celebrate sexuality. Wise (1990: 391) refers to "Elvis the butch god" as a "macho folk hero." But Elvis was pre-empted different kinds of sexuality. Frith and McRobbie (1990: 374) make the distinction between "teenybop" and "cock rock." The former refers typically to ballad rock, while the latter generates an aggressive, arrogant, controlling sexual attitude, connoting men's rightful possession of women. Each kind attracts different listeners and creates different ways for consumers to use the music. While these characteristics of rock music were expanded in later years, they are both evident in Elvis's alternating between his fast-paced, gyrating stage performances and his sentimental ballads.

3.3.4 1959 – 1963

During this period, many independent labels cemented their position as primary competitors. The period is seen as one of the consolidation of low industry concentration, with the year of the lowest concentration in 1962. As noted above, this was made possible by the majors refusing to sign rock artists and attempting to regain domination by pushing their pre-rock artists. Keightley (2001: 117) notes that "the desegregation of the charts accelerated, as Sam Cooke and Chubby Checker became mainstream superstars." It is a common conception that rock'n'roll nearly died around 1959, after Elvis was drafted into the army, Chuck Berry faced prison charges, Little

Richard had retired, and Buddy Holly, the Big Bopper, and Ritchie Valens had died in a plane crash. To a large extent then, the rock'n'roll era had come to an end. But Keightley (2001: 116) suggests that by ignoring musical developments in this period, historians can romanticize rock as an evolutionary rupture, or a saviour of youth culture. Of significant contribution to the foundation of rock were the rise of instrumental and surf groups who made advances in electric guitar styles, and the rise in popularity of folk music, with its ideology that would parent rock's ideology. It is suggested here that these styles were nurtured by the low concentration (and therefore weak signal) of record companies, and the current-looking (or forward-looking) trend in radio to source their playlists. The trend of record companies pushing their pre-rock artists came to an end near the end of this period as the majors began to sign rock musicians. Capitol struck gold with the Beach Boys, as did Columbia with Bob Dylan (Peterson and Berger, 1990: 151).

3.3.5 1964 – 1969

This period saw renewed growth. The period brought "innovation and transition on all fronts. Fueled by 'Beatlemania' in 1964, and recharged by California psychedelic sounds in 1967, a second generation of rock innovators reached the market. Diversity in lyrics peaked and sales soared. At the same time, however, a trend toward reconcentration began." (Peterson and Berger, 1990: 152) During this time, the ideology of rock was born, evolved, and cemented. If "the history of pop music is a history of pop stars," as suggested by Frith et al. (2001: 74), it is worth giving an overview of the key figures of the period that came to develop or embody this rock ideology, either in its heroic forms or its contradictions.

One of the most significant artists in crossing the ideology of authenticity over from folk to rock was Bob Dylan. Dylan's transformation from traditional ('pure', 'incorruptible') acoustic instruments to electric instruments was seen as a sell-out by folk fans, but was celebrated vehemently by rock fans (Keightley, 2001: 122). Dylan inspired amongst his peers new sorts of song writing, and "a new sort of pop fan, the pursuer of meaning rather than pin ups." (Frith et al., 2001: 80) The Beatles are obviously highly significant because of the scale of their commercial success. However, Frith et al. (2001: 77) note two additional attributes of the Beatles that were uncharacteristic of other popular stars (e.g. Cliff Richard): autonomy and ambition. The former appealed to the rock ideology of authenticity, and was a backlash against the music divisions of labour (i.e. composer, lyricist, performer) of the 'machinist' Tin Pan Alley days, which was seen to corrupt 'the self'. The latter challenged "the clear distinction between high and low cultural spaces, to treat pop music as an art world." (Frith et al., 2001: 77) The Rolling Stones were (are) the embodiment of the contradictions of rock culture because of the "seemingly effortless way they've absorbed the contradictions of rock stardom: art vs commerce, rebellion vs conformity, artifice vs authenticity, etc." (Frith et al., 2001: 83) "Of all the post-early rock music, the Stones have kept closest to the elemental function of pop - providing music to dance to." (Willis, 1990: 47) Jimmy Hendrix, on the other hand, allowed further opportunity for the possibility of rock into art, since his improvisational and exploratory guitar techniques had a distinctly 'jazz' approach, and he was the first rock star to attract the attention of such jazz performers as Miles Davis and Herbie Hancock. Also, "following Hendrix, the electric guitar (rather than the voice) became the key rock instrument… and live performance… became the key rock ritual." (Frith et al., 2001: 83). In the longer term, this led to the development of heavy metal and "mainstream hard white rock." (Frith et al., 2001: 82) Hendrix was also a key figure in psychedelic rock.

> Crudely speaking, the history of black American music since 1950s rhythm and blues can be divided between two strands – soul (as developed by Ray Charles) and funk (as developed by James Brown). The same musical elements (jazz, blues, gospel) were developed to different social ends. Soul music is a form of seduction, music as a language of personal persuasion, performance as ingratiation. Funk is in your face, the sound of musicians strutting, challenging you to resist the power of their desires not yours. By and large (because it better suits commercial sales processes) soul is now the dominant mode of contemporary pop; funk remains unsettling. No James Brown track could be classified as easy listening. (Frith et al., 2001: 86)

Significantly, James Brown was a precursor to rap – in his vocal tone – and to drum and bass – in his music's rhythmic form (Frith et al., 2001: 87). The above reference is significant in that it shows potential parallel developments of artifice vs authenticity at this early stage outside of rock. Rap's ideology is predominantly concerned with 'power of the self.'[45] Hardt and Negri (2000: 408) note that rap culture has even adopted the Latin word for power, *posse*, to refer to peoples' groups of friends, or gangs. Since Motown records was founded as a label that could market black music to white audiences, "it was Motown records that were most often dismissed as 'commercial rubbish' [by rock fans]" (Frith et al., 2001: 89) Much as rock (folk) was a reaction to the commercialization of 'the mass', so rap might be seen as a reaction to the similar, 'machinist' stereotype of 'commercial rubbish' pioneered by Motown. Similarly, as rock's ideology could be institutionalized by capitalism, so could rap's, as is discussed in the next section. It is interesting to note rap's genealogy starting from this period.

Nonetheless, the period was marked by a wide variety of performers and genres entering the charts. Peterson and Berger note the turnover of performers and of the number of hits as peaking around 1966. Though the lowest firm concentration ratio was in 1962, they suggest a lag in product diversity partially due to an initial apprehensiveness of firms to be *too* radical, until 1966 when desperation allowed them to give artists unprecedented artistic freedom, and perhaps partially due to the raised social awareness of the Vietnam war in the USA (which would have been represented by rock's focus on politics, as it was adopted from folk ideology). 1967 is a milestone in rock music in that sales of 'teen' albums (LPs) overtook sales of adult albums, a mark of the album's representation of 'seriousness' (Keightley, 2001: 118). By the end of this period, however, the seeds for reconcentration were firmly in place.

Significantly, Willis (1990) notes that one particular social group, the motor bike boys, were active in using earlier rock'n'roll styles and artists to represent their subculture. One can speculate that they recognized the inherent contradictions of rock, and attempted to define themselves outside of the mainstream, while still utilizing notions of rebellion associated with early rock'n'roll. Straw (2001: 58) defines this property of records as "'extra-somatic memory' (memory stored outside the body), preserving music in material artifacts which outlast the moments in which that music

[45] Consider the title of Public Enemy's significant album, "It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold us Back."

was performed." It is interesting to consider, then, that by not using mainstream rock music, the biker boys were consuming rock'n'roll in the same way (for the same reasons) that rock fans were consuming rock music.

3.3.6 1969 – 1973

From 1969 – 1973 the four-firm concentration ratio increased by 36 percent (Peterson and Berger, 1999: 153). The mergers were not purely between record companies, but included record companies merging with electronic corporations, sparking the beginning of an era of transnational entertainment corporations (Garofalo, 1999: 338). At the end of this merger mania, the market had become highly centralized again, being dominated by what Malm and Wallis (1984: 49) term the "Big Five", all transnational companies: CBS, EMI, Polygram, WEA and RCA. [46] Rock'n'roll had presented itself as a thorn in the major corporations' sides. When they couldn't extinguish it, they simply moulded it into one of their largest revenue sources to date. Interestingly, at the time of the original publication of their study in 1973, Peterson and Berger had not detected a major decrease in product differentiation according to their methods. They expressed qualitatively:

> While the stage performance of groups like Alice Cooper and the various bisexuals seemed to become ever more bizarre, audiences and commentators of the 1970s were less shocked than their counterparts had been with the less extreme behaviour of earlier rock 'n' roll groups. Everyone seemed to understand these as staged performances. As Melly asserts, what began as a revolt against bourgeois society had degenerated into a self-conscious posed style. (Peterson and Berger, 1999: 154)

Similar sentiments are expressed by Eliot (1993: 187)

> By the mid-seventies, rock and roll had become the voice of the commercial mainstream. All that it had originally represented – social

[46] Though the "Big Five" have changed identities since that time, there was the presence of a "Big Five" in the market until 2005, when they were constituted by Universal Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment, EMI Group, Warner Brothers Music, and BMG Entertainment. In 2005 the "Big Five" became the "Big Four" when Sony merged with BMG.

> integration, teenage rebellion, the voice of the working class – had been transmogrified by the calculated manipulation of the corporate machine. Rock stars no longer symbolized the rock culture. They were, instead, the very icons of extravagance; their self-indulgent music, dress and style of living in marked contrast to the working class audience they apparently no longer cared to represent. Lyrics preached passivity and conformity rather than assertive individuality.

What was fundamentally different about this era of high concentration, as compared with the 1950s, was that the majors had been blind-sided by rock'n'roll, and they would not allow the possibility of such a recurrence. It was essentially a wake up call. They now had mechanisms in place to capitalize on every "changing nuance of consumer taste." (Peterson and Berger, 1990: 155) Warner and Columbia employed the strategy of acquiring established artists and buying independent labels. The result was a more acute awareness of what was happening 'on the street.' More than simply assess what was happening (in cultural terms), the rock ideology had provided record companies with marketing tactics to maintain control of the dominant signal. Rock (and rock'n'roll) had created an awareness that indeed the signal was capable of being governed by consumers, and that even radio may be required to adapt accordingly. The gatekeepers (particularly record companies) thus evolved to a level of sophistication that would allow them to maintain the *dominant* signal. It was rock's paradoxical ideology that allowed for this. Rock fans were required to effectively con themselves if their ideology was to be upheld. What they learned to consume in music was ideals. If ever the opportunity arises, record companies can incorporate the notion of authenticity into their strategy, thus institutionalizing it, and rendering the possibility of sustained counter-culture impossible.

Another important element of this period of reconcentration noted by Peterson and Berger (1990: 156) is the higher barriers to entry that were erected by the majors. The costs of promotion sunk into artists in this period was considerably higher than previously. Whether this is argued to be a tactic to ensure oligopolistic control or a result of oligopilistic competition is inconsequential. The market has not seen a period of such low industry concentration to date. Straw (1990: 98) notes the replacement of mid-sized performance circuit with large arena concerts, linking to the 1970s' "domination by rock elites, by people already established in creative capacities within the industry." (Straw, 1990: 99)

Another important aspect to note along popular music's system of provision was the simultaneous reformulation of the signaling practices of radio and the rock press, in which both were effectively *pacified*. "The end of the sixties meant the end of free-form radio, a large number of independent record labels… the underground press, all of which had contributed, at least in part, to a high degree of regionalization within psychedelia and associated rock movements." (Straw, 1990: 98) Additionally, local, subculturally based publications gave way to magazines (Straw, 1990: 100). Straw (2001: 62) notes elsewhere that most radio stations in North America "had eliminated listener request lines, on the grounds that those likely to call were probably not representative of their desired audiences."

3.4 The Post-rock Era

I don't feel the least bit guilty for commercially exploiting a completely exhausted Rock youth Culture because, at this point in rock history, Punk Rock (while still sacred to some) is, to me, dead and gone. We just wanted to pay tribute to something that helped us feel as though we had crawled out of the dung heap of conformity. To pay tribute like an Elvis or a Jimi Hendrix impersonator in the tradition of a bar band. I'll be the first to admit that we're the 90's version of Cheap Trick or The Knack but the last to admit that it hasn't been rewarding. – Kurt Cobain (Nirvana)[47]

This section primarily highlights social instances (3.4.2) and incidences of technological developments (3.4.3) that have occurred since the record industry's reconcentration in the early 1970s. The purpose of each is to illustrate that the nature of the signal in the music market has not changed significantly since this time. In other words, the issues of how consumers use popular music, and how this music comes to represent its consumers, has been institutionalized. This allows for the development of a definition of pop music as it is defined (or, it is suggested here, as it should be defined) in the contemporary music market, presented in section 3.4.4. Before specific instances are analyzed, an explanation of this institutionalization is given in section 3.4.1.

[47] Quoted inside the sleeve of the Nirvana album, 'Incesticide.'

An important institutional development during the era is that of Music Television (MTV), coinciding with an increased pervasiveness of music on television generally, both in the form of product advertisements and televised mega-concerts (e.g. Band Aid, and more recently, Live 8): "Mega-concerts may be capable of generating mega-sums of money, but they are equally capable of opening new markets, constructing new audiences, and delivering new consumers." (Garafalo, 1992: 27) MTV was launched in the 1980s so that successful superstars could receive regular airtime of their music videos. The music video had added a new dimension within which the major companies could homogenize music tastes. By creating and truly exploiting different images for stars, different artists could play almost the same music, and be perceived to be different. Thus MTV added a new dimension to the control of the signal. While it provides opportunity to support the manufacture of difference, and thus the maintenance of the nature of the dominant signal, it also presents itself as a major gatekeeper, thus occupying a position of power in the system of provision next to radio. Like radio, it is more of a passive mediator in its signal generation, and record companies need to actively utilize it as a "plug."

3.4.1 The Evolution of Rock Ideology and the Configuration of the Dominant Signal

Keightley (2001: 135) notes that while authenticity is an integral part of rock ideology, not all rock fans have come to have the same perceptions of what constitutes authenticity. Broadly speaking, two different conceptions of authenticity have emerged, guided roughly by the complementary ethics of Romanticism and Modernism (which emerged out of Romanticism). Both embody the ideology of imagination, individualism, and escapism as described in chapter 2. The difference is that "while Romanticism valued nature and the country as genteel escapes from urban blight, Modernism embraced the chaos of the city and the aesthetic possibilities of the machine." (Keightley, 2001: 135) In the simplest terms, Romantic rock fans celebrate an adherence to the original form of a genre as authentic, while Modern fans celebrate experimentation and progress as authentic. Romantic fans scorn the use of new technology in music, while Modern fans delight in it. To illustrate, Keightley (2001: 137) points to the hyped antagonism between Blur and Oasis fans in the 1990s. Oasis were admired by Romantic fans for expertly adhering to the seeds of rock music as set forth by the Beatles, but were mocked by Blur fans for being to boring. Conversely, Blur was scorned by Romantic fans for their inclusion of electronic sounds, but Modern fans saw this as a vital element of their creativity. Modern originality, it appears, denotes creative originality, while romantic originality denotes an adherence to early genealogy. Both bands were categorized as 'Britpop'. Keightley (2001: 139) asserts that most successful rock artists are able to embrace Romantic and Modern ideologies, such as Bob Dylan with his Romantic guitar styles and the Modern artistry of his lyrics.[48]

In attempting to establish meaning in popular culture, a key feature of authenticity became the propensity to consume 'more than just music.' Keightley (2001: 140) suggests that the ideology of rock has been inferred onto many other genres:

> Authenticity, rebellion, oppositionality, artistic legitimacy and seriousness now feature prominently in music cultures that hitherto lacked or down-played these features. World beat, dance music, 'new country,' and a seemingly infinite variety of other forms now seek and *create* their own legitimacy by wielding these terms, challenging their historical trivialization and deploying rock-derived ideas to claim their own value. [Emphasis added]

In other words, in most styles of music today, there is some politics of authenticity, or a politics of difference. This means that for those consumers who attempt to establish their authenticity, there is a "creative labour inherent in any act of consumption," (Straw, 2001: 68) which can allow those consumers to feel self-important, or anti-conformist. Thus, in order for a style of music to appeal to those consumers, there is a need for a quality of difference between 'authentic' and 'fake' to exist in respective genres. Since corporations aim to attract as many consumers as possible, that element of difference is beneficial to them. Thus, if it is not prominent, they have an incentive to bring it into prominence. In order to do this, they must necessarily create the 'fake' elements of a genre, to signal to those who gain utility from being 'authentic' that

[48] Examples are numerous. Tom Morello of Rage Against the Machine continually tries to stretch the boundaries of sounds that can be made with an electric guitar (a la Hendrix), but he is quick to publicize that no extra synthesizers are used on the albums. His style of riffs are distinctly retrospective, but this is so for a band that pioneered music trends in fusing metal with rock.

there is now a difference. Much as the ideology of rock is dependent on the existence of 'non-rock' (e.g. pop, adult easy-listening), so by creating 'inauthenticity,' or 'fakeness,' corporations can sell to 'authentic' consumers.

One way that they can create 'fakeness' is by glamorizing a genre, which typically involves stereotyping. Frith et al. (2001: 205) observe that rap act, Public Enemy, suggest in their name a politics of black youth as an enemy of the public, and that this conception was "both simplified and glamorized by MTV's *Yo, MTV Raps!* And gangsta rap." The benefits of this to the record corporations are twofold. Firstly, as noted already, by creating glamorized stereotypes and hence an element of difference, record companies are able to sell their 'authentic' artists to elitists. Secondly, and more obviously, they are able to sell the stereotypical, 'manufactured' version to those who are unconcerned with authenticity (i.e. the populace). This is aided by more typical advertising practices, such that youth can "imagine affinities with the cultures of disempowered minorities. Thus millions of white, middle class [youths can]… appropriate a range of forms of difference, whether these be racial, sexual, class-based or other." (Keightley, 2001: 125). This process is encapsulated by McCracken's theory of consumption described in chapter 2, in that youths can displace their ideals onto commodities. Thus the 'manufactured' version of a genre must contain fragments of ideals from the ideology of the 'authentic' version. By 'manufacturing' a genre, companies 'manufacture' a politics of difference which enables them to sell 'authentic' and 'manufactured' artists.

It is useful at this stage to expand the 'signal terminology'. As noted, rock created an awareness (both among consumers and record companies) that the signal was capable of being governed by consumers. Signals, then, do emanate from 'below' (i.e. from consumers). In the post-rock era, when this happens, such signals typically emanate from subcultures (or at least, the origin of the signal is described as a subculture by popular opinion, or by academics). Subcultures, then, can be said to provide *subordinate* signals emanating from consumers (while the dominant signal determines the major consumption trends), and as that signal grows in significance, so it is incorporated into the *dominant* signal. In maintaining control of the dominant signal, gatekeepers may use subordinate signals as inputs into the dominant signal. The 'dominant signal,' then, in the post-rock era, describes an institutionalization of all signaling mechanisms. It is a configuration of signal patterns as dictated from 'above'. This is not to say that corporations have ultimate control over what people consume, but that they are able to use, or have institutionalized, subordinate signals as part of their operations. While ideals may be *de*fined by those wishing to challenge the dominant signal, they are *re*fined by corporations, and consequently incorporated into the dominant signal. The manufacture of difference, it transpires, embodies as much the manufacture of 'fakeness' as it does the manufacture of 'authenticity', since authenticity is created at that moment that inauthenticity is realized. Specific illustrations of this process are provided in section 3.4.2.

The maintenance of the dominant signal requires from record companies a sensitivity to the entire system of popular music provision. "Record companies have rarely constructed a new music market themselves; their sales activities have meant, rather, responding… from musical taste patterns emerging from the market itself, and given meaning by music media." (Frith, 2001a: 39) Generally, the media's objectives will aid record companies. Media corporations are aimed at target markets and try to reach as wide an audience as possible. Those aimed at 'the mass' are partial to glamorizing artists/ideologies, thereby manufacturing difference and aiding record companies. Those aimed at 'alternative' or niche markets (which are typically supported by those who wish not to conform) reinforce those consumers' sense of authenticity. Frith in 1988 noted the importance to the British 'indie' seen of public broadcasting, citing the continuance of the John Peel show as an illustration. (Frith, 1988: 3) Such personalities as Peel provide an 'educated' voice to label certain artists as authentic.

Hirsch proposed three proactive strategies employed by record companies in dealing with their dependence on the mass media for product promotion. The strategies identified are "(1) the allocation of numerous personnel to boundary-spanning roles; (2) overproduction and differential promotion of new items; and (3) co-optation of mass media gatekeepers." (Hirsch, 1990: 133) The observation of these strategies is indicative of the *active* role of record companies, and the *passive* role of the media.
In other words, the mass media play an important role in defining the public's perception of an artist, or even a genre (not least MTV). While the record companies do not control the media, they have developed techniques to influence them. As an example of personnel allocated to a boundary spanning role, Rothenbuhler and

McCourt (1992: 112) refer to the record company promoter. He/she has a vast influence over what radio executives perceive to be popular. In a practice known as a 'consensus cut,' promoters persuade as many trades as possible to indicate a certain song as being popular at the same time. The idea is that if all the radio stations start to play the song at the same time, they will all continue to do so, as is dictated by their criterion for popular music.

More generally, the practice between smaller, independent record companies and the majors typically benefits the majors. Independent labels are usually credited with the discovery of genres. As an artist signed to an independent label, the pioneer of a genre, grows in popularity, so the independent label (the discoverer of the talent) is co-opted by one of the majors. "Independent producers and record labels have become, in effect, the major labels' research and development departments, developing new acts and markets until they and/or their artists have had enough sales impact to justify a major company getting involved." (Frith, 2001a: 49)

It should be noted as well that *subordinate* signals typically run along a different system of provision that can be considered non-mainstream, or an independent ('indie') system of provision. They have full institutional support (i.e. records, radio, live music), but all on a smaller scale than music in the mainstream, and thus have less financial overheads.[49] Thus, more than using independent labels to regulate the subordinate signal for them, they allow the independent labels to utilize an entire system of provision for subordinate signal regulation.

The activeness of record companies and the passiveness of radio stations as gatekeepers are evidenced in the payola scandals in the USA in recent years. "New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer has been prosecuting payola-related crimes in his jurisdiction. His office settled out of court with Sony BMG Music Entertainment in July 2005, and Warner Music Group in November 2005. Two other major record companies remain under investigation." (Wikipedia, 2006)

[49] Smaller scale artists have less funding in terms of management, concerts and advertising.

3.4.2 Subculture and the Dominant Signal

This section and section 3.4.3 provide accounts of how the dominant signal has been challenged (or 'challenged') and maintained. Social instances that appear to challenge the dominant signal arrangement typically present themselves as subcultures (epitomized by punk). "'Subculture' was a useful shorthand for the worlds of style in which young people lived, the coherent clusters of dress, drugs, meeting-places and linguistic idioms which had come together around distinct kinds of music." (Straw, 2001: 67) The term is increasingly used to define the ways people consume particular cultural goods which challenge or support the existing economic order, to the point that they may "create micro-economies of a sort." (Straw, 2001: 68). Thus subcultures may challenge the economic order, i.e. they are "extrapolated *from*… [the community]… defining themselves *against* the parent culture," typically referred to here as 'counter-cultures', or they may be "integrated *into* the community, continuous with the values of that community." (Hebdige, 1990: 65) It is argued here that counter-cultures are (in most instances, at least) microcosms of rock ideology, and therefore suffer from the same intrinsic paradox, which may be summarized for the purpose of brevity, as the simultaneous, conflicting desire for individual expression and for shared experience. As a result, a counter-culture may be considered a failure if it does not attract any attention, as it is not able to 'publicly counter any culture.' At the same time, if they are to 'successfully' counter a culture, they require a certain amount of support. As expressed by Brake (quoted in Clarke, 1990: 91):

> The death knell of a style in youth culture is its appropriation by younger age groups, 'bubble gum' groups, or its mass production by chain stores. This popularization means that the style has been robbed of its message. Another complication is separating the part-time and full-time adherents, separating the righteous from the *poseurs*. In a subculture with literary and artistic affiliations, these are core members at the center of the culture, often creative artists, but followers and peripheral members who may adopt the lifestyle or appearance and who may or may not be perceived as 'real members.'

The second part of this reference explains the first. Subculture ideologies, like rock's, emphasize authenticity. The difficulty in determining this authenticity results in its appropriation to less authentic groups, as the subculture gains support. The less authentic members will consume the ideals encapsulated in the subculture's authenticity. For this reason, the subculture becomes easily institutionalized into the prevalent signal patterns.[50] At this point, the culture can no longer be considered 'counter,' and the concept of 'sub-culture' is better described as a stratification of the parent culture (connoting equality with the parent culture).

It should be noted that this argument is extreme, so as to aid in the explanation of the dominant signal. Authenticity is difficult to define, and this thesis does not claim so much to provide a working definition, as to highlight the nature of its complexity, and to show how this complexity itself defines many aspects and idiosyncrasies of the music market. Because authenticity is so difficult to define, many consumers/performers may consider themselves authentic for many years, despite their chosen genre's proliferation (as was the case with rock from the outset). This issue is dealt with in section 4.5.1.1. For the purposes of explanation, however, it is useful to view authenticity in the following sections as an extreme, and easily corruptible. As a guideline, it is useful to assert that if a subcultural music style is adopted in its original form by the populace, the whole subculture then becomes 'corrupted', and is no longer 'sub' or 'counter.' If the musical style is changed as it is adopted by the populace,[51] then there exists the possibility of sustained authenticity attachable to the original music style. This demonstrates the concept of the "aesthetic illusion" identified by Haug, and developed by Fine and Leopold (1993: 26), in that it demonstrates the tension of the relationship between a commodity's imputed use value, and its physical properties. Without the physical properties of the genre changing, with its adoption by the mass, its imputed use values can change for elitist consumers. As with Jameson, "an indifferentiation of levels [i.e. between the physical and ideological market place] gradually takes the place of an older separation between thing and concept (or indeed, economics and culture, base and superstructure). For one thing, the products sold on the market become the very content of the media

[50] This is true to the point that one can purchase a 'fashionable' Che Guevara T-shirt in his or her local department store.

[51] (or 'adulterated' by pop music. This is expanded in section 3.4.3)

message." So by an 'authentic' song/genre entering the mainstream system of provision, it becomes those media's images (e.g. commercialism).

Sections 3.4.1.1 – 3.4.1.3 provide three separate instances of commonly conceived subcultures in the post-rock era, each being idiosyncratic to a degree. Heavy metal provides an example of how a subculture can be artificially created by the dominant signal (and then authentically used by consumers); the case of punk is an account of the quintessential neo-rock counter-culture, and embodies its impossibility of sustainability; and rap represents a slightly different counter-culture to that of punk. Each is indicative of the effectiveness of the dominant signal as it is controlled primarily by record companies (and perpetuated by the media).

3.4.2.1 Heavy Metal

The case of heavy metal is significant. While it may be defined broadly as a subculture (sub-rock), it cannot be thought of as a counter-culture. More accurately, it can be thought of as the first formal stratification of the rock genre since the industry's early 1970s institutionalization.

> Heavy metal music came to prominence at a time when institutions associated with the psychedelics period were either disappearing or being assimilated within larger structures as part of widespread changes within the music-related industries. The overriding tendency in these changes was the diminishing role of entrepreneurs in the processes by which music was developed and disseminated (Straw, 1990: 98)

While other styles of rock had been observed in the 1960s (folk rock, e.g. Dylan; psychedelic rock, e.g. Hendrix), what separates the case of heavy metal is that it was not developed first in local scenes, and then assimilated into the mainstream by a growth in popularity. Straw (1990: 97-98) notes that metal's "coherence into a genre was reinforced, through the 1970s, by the sedimentation of other stylistic attributes (those associated with stage shows, album-cover design, and audience dress and life-style) and by the relatively stable sites of institutional support (radio formats, touring circuits, record industry structures)." In other words, metal was born into the second wave of standardized radio formatting (the first wave being during the pre-rock era), and the newly developed standard of arena rock (these features make the case of metal different to that of punk as well). That it was accepted from its inception *en mass* means that its subcultural qualities are as questionable as that of rock's. As a result, "most of the leading heavy metal groups (such as Humble Pie) were formed by remnants of groups popular in the 1960s." (Straw, 1990: 99)

Consequently, heavy metal has been able to develop alongside rock (as various forms of 'metal'), not as a reaction to a realized populism of rock ideology, but as an offspring of rock. "By the mid-1980s, as the term "heavy metal" became the subject of much contestation, heavy metal had branched out in so many different directions that new sub-classifications were created by fans, record companies, and fanzines, although sometimes the differences between various sub-genres were unclear, even to the artists purportedly belonging to a given style." (Wikipedia, 2006) It has supported various subcultural ideologies along its genealogy, including hedonism, humanism, deconstructionism, and universalism; in accordance with various styles of metal, including (in chronological order) heavy metal, speed metal, death metal, black metal, and presently, retro-cumulative metal (Unkown, 2004). Its fans commonly cite Nietzsche's teachings as its inspiration, but the fact that it was initially conceived with full institutional support suggests that it was in fact originally conceived as the first case of a genre used as an institutionalized marketing tactic. The fact that consumers then *used* it to represent various philosophies throughout the last three decades is testament to the success of that marketing strategy[52]. Metal has thus developed its own notions of authenticity, apart from its element of hardcore, not least of which involves an elitist academic proficiency. Metal can be seen as *emanating* from the dominant signal, and in so doing, allowing for the *development* of subordinate signals (which are subsequently subsumed by the dominant signal). Though not all of its subordinate signals were necessarily rebellious in nature in its thirty year existence, the 1980s saw metal being marketed as a major pop genre (led by, for example, Def Leppard and Guns'n'Roses, and even Bon Jovi was marketed as 'heavy metal'),

[52] The way consumers have come to use metal at each stage may of course be aided by the marketing tactic of 'the manufacture of authenticity.' For example, Nuclear Assault's record label (and the critical press at the time) may have been pro-active (in consultation with the group) in marketing the band according to a philosophy of humanism in terms of album cover art work etc.

which spawned authentic metal underground scenes supporting, for example, Slayer and Anthrax (Wikipedia, 2006).

3.4.2.2 Punk

Punk epitomizes counter-cultural practices in the post-rock era. It was commonly perceived to be the death of rock (Frith, 1988: 1), and consequently has spawned debates concerning the possibility of 'rock after punk.' Simply put, "punk was seen as the antithesis of rock, a mortal enemy intent on destroying rock culture. But punk was simply fulfilling rock's traditional investment in differentiation and authenticity, distinguishing itself from the rock mainstream." (Keightley, 2001: 138) As distinct from the case of metal, punk began in local contexts, and then grew (Straw, 1990: 99). One of the effects of its counter-cultural practice was the re-establishment of mid-sized performance circuit. Thus, one can see here the slight effect it had on the dominant signal (initially, at least). Contrary to punk's anarchic connotations, Hebdige (1990: 57) notes that punk "was nothing if not consistent. There was a homological relation between the trashy, cut-up clothes and spiky hair, the pogo and amphetamines, the spitting, the vomiting, the format of the fanzines, the insurrectionary poses, and the 'soul-less', frantically driven music." Thus punk, from the outset, appears to inherit a quality of contradiction – that of organized anarchy. Another contradiction was that punk "was constituted in a series of spectacular transformations in a whole range of commodities." (Hebdige, 1990: 58) This point is contrary to punk's anti-commercialism stance. Again, as in the case of rock, if authenticity is difficult to locate in the first instance, i.e. it is inappropriable, it can be appropriated by the major corporate institutions in their marketing tactics to other consumers who are confused about what this authenticity entails[53].

To illustrate, Hebdige's assertion is that punk was essentially a reaction to the mainstream glam rock of the time, which "tended to alienate the working class youth." Clarke (1990: 88) emphasizes that instead, punk used many elements of glam rock, particularly in its use of make up. This confusion resulted in artists like Marc

[53] By viewing authenticity as a commodity, having a market, it is interesting to note that the Arrowian analysis of market failure applies. Similarly, the Nordhaus trade-off is equally applicable, in that weak property rights of authenticity result in an under-provision of that commodity.

Bolan and Lou Reed competing for the title of 'the Godfather of punk.' Elsewhere, Hebdige states that it was glam rock's "extreme foppishness, incipient elitism, and morbid pretensions to art and intellect [that] effectively precluded its growth of a larger mass audience." (Hebdige, quoted in Clarke, 1990: 88) The inappropriability of authenticity, in punk's case, meant that it endowed the same preclusions. Punk, in many ways then, represents a microcosm for rock culture. Just as rock culture 'died' in the early 1970s, so punk 'died' in the early 1980s when it developed mass market potential.[54] Just as the anti-mass spirit of rock ideology has survived today (however possible it is to live that ideology), so has the allied anarchic spirit of punk survived. Both of these ideals enable consumers to utilize fragments of the ideals in a utopian fashion (as per McCracken's analysis of displaced meanings in chapter 2), and consequently are easily marketable (as per the corporate-institutionalist perspective).

From the above, it is apparent that, while punk was conceived as a challenge to the dominant signal, emanating from a subordinate signal, it was fundamentally unable to do this for a sustained period, before being assimilated into that signal.

3.4.2.3 Rap

The culture of rap runs counter to hegemonic marginalizing practices over minority groups. As such, it did not attempt to counter capitalism[55], and hence the dominant signal of the music market. If anything, it aspired to infiltrate the dominant signal, content as it stands. For this reason, it is different as a counter-culture to punk. From the perspective of the music market, it may then be viewed as a subculture (as opposed to a counter-culture). Frith et al. (2001: 205) note that rap (like blues) was initially dismissed as culturally inferior to dominant popular musics in the early 1980s, then "exploited as a cheap-to-make novelty," and finally found to be essential by the popular music establishments as a genre which is "endlessly flexible… and mobile." By the 1990s, many minority groups the world over were using rap to voice their identities (in their own languages). Within a decade, rap had moved "from clubs and streets and meeting rooms to radio, television and cinema" (Frith et al., 2001).

[54] The use of the quotation marks around 'died' is to acknowledge that either culture may very well have never existed in the first place, as opposed to having been simply imagined.
[55] The concept of 'bling' (encapsulating a fixation with material possessions) in modern hip hop videos is testament to this to an extent, although it is just as easily a product of glamorization.

The case of rap, then, represents the success of the sophistication of gatekeeping techniques adopted by the market institutions in the early 1970s – i.e. to capitalize on every "changing nuance of consumer taste." (Peterson and Berger, 1990: 155) Since the marketing of genres necessarily involves stereotyping, rap has adopted its own politics of authenticity. Also,

> Rap foregrounds words but its art is in the background, in the organization of the sounds against which the rappers have to make themselves heard, in the insistence of the pulse which drives the rappers on, riding the moment, nervy like graffiti artists, wild style (Frith et al., 2001: 205).

While rock embodies a male sexual domination (see Dyer, 1990; Frith and McRobbie, 1990), rap embodies the self as dominator (as per its anti-minority-marginalization ideology). This ideal is easily assimilated into the dominant signal, so that rap becomes marketable outside of minority groups, in that people can "imagine affinities with cultures of disempowered minorities." (Keightley, 2001: 125) Rap then exemplifies how any subordinate signal may be incorporated into the dominant signal.

3.4.3 The Essence of 'Pop'

Analysis up to this point has been concerned primarily with genres not considered to be 'pop' (or their evolution into 'pop'). It has even been suggested that 'non-pop' is created by the advent of 'pop'. Since 'pop' is so central to the music market and the dominant signal, it is important to clarify what is meant by it. Before considering in detail the nature and connotations of pop, and its role in the dominant signal, it should be noted that the term 'pop' has come under far more scrutiny in America than it has in England (Keightley, 2001: 139). Thus the analysis of the dominant signal, as it is developed here, is largely applicable to the American market, and still applicable to the English market, but perhaps to a lesser extent. The success of 'art' rock bands like Radiohead is evidence of the mass consumption of 'authenticity' by British rock fans.

The definition of pop suggested here has important implications for the issues of product diversity dealt with in section 3.5. For Adorno (1990, 301), "popular music is usually characterized by its difference from serious music." Most people have their own interpretation of what pop music is, without being able to define it in rigid terms. Most people can say with certainty that ABBA produced pop music, but that J.S. Bach, for example, did not. Almost everyone would agree that Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera, Justin Timberlake, Michael Jackson, and the Backstreet Boys are pop artists. People have had differences of opinion, though, about artists such as David Bowie, Bob Marley, the Smashing Pumpkins, the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Radiohead, Fat Boy Slim, Pearl Jam, Dr Dre, Vanessa Mae, The Sex Pistols, Nirvana, Public Enemy, etc. These differences of opinion are a result on the inappropriability of 'authenticity.' According to Frith (2001b: 94),

> Pop music is a slippery concept, perhaps because it is so familiar, so easily used. Pop can be differentiated from classical or art music, on the one side, from folk music, on the other, but may otherwise include every sort of style. It is music accessible to a general public (rather than aimed at elites or dependent on any kind of knowledge or listening skill). It is music produced commercially, for profit, as a matter of enterprise not art. Defined in these terms, 'pop music' includes all contemporary popular forms – rock, country, reggae, rap, and so on.

Pop, then, includes almost all genres of music. But not all artists in each genre might be considered 'pop', i.e. not all rock stars, or all rap artists, are pop artists. Pop is for mass appeal, but what determines what will have mass appeal? Intuition suggests that there are some common elements between which artists will, and which will not fall under the category of pop. For Willis (1990: 47), the "elemental function of pop music" is "providing music to dance to." Adorno (1990: 302) suggests that the "fundamental characteristic of popular music" is standardization. Nick Grubb, the programme manager for South African national commercial radio station, 5fm, notes the station's criteria for playlisting songs: "generally it's up-beat music with a strong chorus (and/or 'hook')." (Grubb, 2005) Similarly, Hennion (1990) observes that where the lyrics become repetitive, so the musical elements become stronger (not more complicated, but more prominent), which explains the strong chorus criterion, or why so many pop songs modulate the final chorus of the song (raise it in pitch by one tone, e.g. from a C to a D). Hebdige says of the evolution of a subcultural style into pop "subcultural deviance is simultaneously rendered 'explicable' and meaningless in the classroom, courts and the media at the same time as the 'secret' objects of subcultural style are put on display in every high street, record shop and chain store boutique. Stripped of its unwholesome connotations, the style becomes fit for public consumption." (Hebdige, quoted in Clarke, 1990: 91)

The common strands can best be defined as *themes* rather than absolutes: simplicity, inoffensiveness, presentation in the media (e.g. glamorization), conspicuous commercialization. Yet certain distinctions need to be made. Firstly, there appears to be a difference between 'pop' and 'popular', at least in their connotations.[56] At face value, 'popular music' should include any music that is 'popular', defined by its enjoyment by an unspecified number of people. 'Pop' music, it is suggested, is music that is enjoyed by the 'mass', a concept defined by an equally unspecified number of people. All *pop music*, however, is necessarily *popular music*, but the converse is not true. The number of people required to constitute the unspecified number encompassed in *popularity* need not be is large as the number of people required to constitute the *mass*. Because of the indistinctiveness of each, analysis can benefit greatly from an indicator. It is suggested here that future analysis should define pop music as anything that is reflected on *commercial* media, taken to be media specifically aimed at the general public as opposed to niche markets. [57]

The songs played on these media will generally encompass the themes expressed above (i.e. simplicity, 'dance-ability,' glamorization, etc.). This is a result of the pervasiveness of these media. Frith (2001b: 105) refers to the concept of "the soundtrack of our daily lives." Music pervades our lives in our cars, in shopping centres, at fairs, at waiting rooms, while we are on telephone hold etc. (Washburne and Derno, 2004: 1). During all these activities, whoever is providing the soundtrack wishes not to offend anyone, and so it is easy to utilize *commercial* media. These media are aware that they are utilized in this manner, and react accordingly by providing inoffensive music (the requirement of inoffensiveness accounts for many of

[56] This of course is a result of the mass adoption of rock, hence Adorno's use of "popular" (as opposed to "pop") in his paper which was written in 1941.
[57] The concept of 'commercial' presents similar difficulties to those of 'mass', 'popular,' and 'pop'. At face value, 'commercial' should be any media engaged in commerce, which is practically all media to some extent. The term *commercial media*, then, is used to encompass media aimed at the 'mass'. This can account for the synonymy of pop music with commercial music.

the properties of pop music). It is thus suggested that music reflected in these media should be defined as pop. For argument's sake the example of MTV will be used to represent commercial media. By this definition, any music featured on MTV's playlist (which constitutes regular airplay during prime time, as opposed to during specialized shows) can be considered pop music. Thus Weinstein (2004: 295) refers to "pop metal" as "MTV metal."

At this point one might object that she or he has observed many artists featured on MTV's playlist that she or he would consider distinctly non-pop (the example of Modernist 'underground' UK dance-rock band, Massive Attack, comes to mind; most people would not consider Marylin Manson to be a pop band). The solution to this apparent non sequitur is that most artists, pop or not, do release pop songs. This is the definition suggested here of a *single*. The motivation for this is clear, to reach as wide an audience as possible. In this way, 'serious' artists may sell the single to pop fans, and the album to their 'authentic' fans. A band becomes fundamentally a pop band when the rest of the songs on their albums are aimed at pop fans too. Thus System of a Down, for example, can be considered a metal band, with their authentic followers, but can still release some pop songs. This allows for the specification of distinct genres such as pop-rock, pop-punk, pop-rap, pop-metal, and so on.[58] Of course, in selling the single to the mass, so elitist consumers will, wishing to assert their difference from this mass, be induced to prefer other, less well-known songs on the album.

Thus, because pop songs are developed for commercial media, they will be intrinsically simple in nature, or what Adorno calls "pre-digested." For Adorno (1990: 305-306), "Listening to popular music is manipulated not only by its promoters but, as it were, by the inherent nature of this music itself, into a system of response mechanisms wholly antagonistic to the ideal of individuality in a free, liberal society… composition hears for the listener. This is how popular music divests the listener of his spontaneity and promotes conditioned reflexes." The reason for this can be explained by the function of pop music, that it is essentially an advertisement (for

[58] Frith (2001b: 95) notes that the illusiveness of definition in these genres is an issue of concern for many 'serious' fans, who might scorn Will Smith (essentially a pop artist), for example, for receiving awards for 'Best Rap Artist'.

the song itself; for the performer). Booth (1990: 323), quoting a jingles writer, notes the similarity between pop music and advertising: “The point of jingles is the same as the point of popular music; finding a hook that is repeated and that the listener can't get away from.”

If pop music is so simplistic in nature, the question of why it is avidly consumed is begged. “Such density of schemes and repetitions is not uncommon in traditional ballads and modern popular songs. But perhaps a more fitting analogy, bringing out the ritualistic aspect of jingles [and hence pop songs], is with children's games and nursery rhymes.” (Leech, 1966: 193) Similarly, Frith (2001b: 105) and Straw (2001: 63) point to the expansion of the pop market into even younger markets (children as opposed to teens), noting the Spice Girls as arbiters. Their tongue-in-cheek, child-like playfulness is easily appealing to children, but this is surely reinforced by the simplicity of their music.[59] The average teen or adult consumer might simply accept the music because they are accustomed to simplicity in songs, as suggested above by Leech. Another reason one might consume simplistic pop music is more akin to the analysis of ‘authentic’ consumers developed in this section: that people consume ideals. Reublin (2000) says of the proliferation of pop music in Tin Pan Alley, “they were simply trying to create and sell music that people bought. Their chosen method during that time was to provide musical entertainment that allowed people to escape the realities of the hardships of life and their own life’s troubles.” [60]

Thus pop music sells ideals just as much as non-pop sells the ideals of authenticity and social distinction. One can make the distinction here between the ideals evident in the lyrical content, and those evident in the simplistic structure of pop songs. As concerns the latter, it suggests (particularly for adults) that one welcomes the simplicity of pop music outside the complexities of the work place. As concerns the former, the lyrical content of Tin Pan Alley’s songs was less diverse than it is today (see Hamm, 1994). Today’s pop songs deal with a range of issues, often depending on the image of the artist (i.e. their brand), and on the type of song. On this point, Booth

[59] This, of course, further fuels the production of authenticity. Instead, now, of Willis’s description of rock’n’roll, where “it was mainly theirs because it was so clearly not their parents’”, teenaged boys’ music becomes mainly theirs because it is so clearly not their baby sister’s.
[60] Though MTV did not exist, almost all mass media stations were commercial in the MTV sense, save for a brief period when radio boycotted ASCAP.

(1990: 323) notes a similarity in contradictory messages of proverbs: "'Look before you leap'; but 'He who hesitates is lost.' When both are available to consciousness, which will guide choice? Surely neither guides choice very often. What either can do is to confirm choice. Proverbs are solicited, like solicited advice, to confirm and support choice of what one is otherwise inclined to do." Another distinction of pop music is that it is typically sentimental (Frith, 2001b).[61]

One can draw distinctions here between the aesthetic of pop and that of Sensibility discussed by Colin Campbell (1987). Campbell's study illustrated the ease with which the populace can respond to emotions presented to them, however authentic those emotions may be.[62] Garrat (1990) points to the importance of 'teenybop' artists (whether they display talent or not – the image is important) in the development of young girls' sexuality and sociality. This range of ideals gains fertility from pop's adoption of every musical genre. So long as the (pop) song/artist retains an echo of what the subculture represents (represented), e.g. the most basic music style in terms of instrumentation; Blink 182 dressed in spiky hair which is 'fairly punkish'; Will Smith is African-American and raps, thus he comes to represent the power of the self in the face of oppression, etc.; then the record companies and media are able to market this artist under that specific genre, viz. punk and hip hop. This does two very important things. Firstly, it allows people, through fantasizing and daydreaming (as per Campbell and McCracken's analyses in chapter 2) to believe that they are part of that subculture and its ideology (however vague this may be to the consumer), without belonging to that culture (and dealing with the extremes of that culture, e.g. ghetto life hardships), and without actually going out and finding the original, "authentic" music of that culture (See Willis, 1990). This again is indicative of the concept of the "aesthetic illusion" (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 26). As the imputed use value of a genre is developed, (e.g. to assert one's discontent with political affairs), so its physical properties can change so as to incorporate it into the mainstream system of provision (i.e. by simplifying it, or giving it more "hooks").

[61] This is likely true of many non-pop musics as well, as they too sell similar ideals, though they are usually more rebellious (less fit for commercial consumption). Also, the messages may often be more obscure, enabling an increase in the serious listener's production of authenticity.
[62] Consider a Backstreet Boys' performance in which they 'pour their hearts out' while executing admiral hat tricks.

Secondly, it allows people to believe that they are consuming a large enough variety of music, i.e. enough different genres of music, so that they will not feel the need to search for other genres. A person watching MTV can enjoy Will Smith, followed directly by Blink 182, and say of their preferences, 'I like all genres of music,' whereas they are in fact only exposed to pop. Thus it narrows the choices available to consumers on a specific channel, and simultaneously creates the impression that choices are plentiful, i.e. giving the consumer the illusion that she is sovereign, and circumventing the desire to search for alternatives. This is essentially Adorno's concept of "pseudo-individualization." This can be viewed as the essence of pop, and it is central to the maintenance of the dominant signal. While it appears to have pessimistic connotations, it is explained in the following section how this essence of pop as it figures in the signal arrangements does lead to product diversity.

3.4.4 Technology and the Dominant Signal

The system of popular music provision has certainly been enriched and extended by certain technological developments, but in each case this has not fundamentally changed what the majority of consumers are likely to consume.

3.4.4.1 Cassette Tapes

As noted earlier, one of the tactics record companies used to ensure their sustained control of the signal was vertical integration, in the merger with other electronic companies (see Garofalo, 1999: 338) The development of these transnational, cross product firms had interesting consequences when cassette tapes became a popular medium in the late 1970s/early 1980s. Piracy in the form of home taping became a major threat to record industries: "The invention of the sound cassette with its 'read-on/read-off' function has provided the basis of profit for the pirate, access to more music for the consumer, and headaches for the phonogram producers." (Malm and Wallis, 1984: 315) This was the first time since sheet music was the most common medium that piracy was so easily committed. The same electronic companies that produced blank tapes also owned or part-owned the record corporations that claimed to be losing money through pirating: "Thus the managing director of Polygram Kenya in his office in Nairobi bemoans the fact that home-taping is undermining his attempts to sell records and pre-recorded cassettes. But in another wing of the same building a conveyor belt is churning out Philips radio cassette recorders, i.e. the very hardware that makes home-taping possible" (Malm and Wallis, 1984: 77). In this fashion, by integrating vertically, many of the record companies may have managed to circumvent the losses to the record industry caused by pirating.

Malm and Wallis note that the spread through piracy of cheap music did have consequences for music development. Their argument embraces the idea that because music became re-recordable, and therefore more accessible, many more people were exposed to music than would otherwise not have been, particularly in smaller cultures. This allowed music culture to spread more easily. Music enthusiasts in these smaller cultures were then able to produce a hybrid of their traditional music with popular music, resulting in completely new genres of music. This trend, of course, was aided by the transnational structure of record companies. They termed the phrase "transculturation", referring to music types that have no specific ethnic origin, citing disco music as an example (1984: 300 - 301).

In terms of the dominant signal arrangement in the western market, however, such transcultured musics would merely have served as an input into existing marketing strategies, much the same as in the above example of rap.

3.4.4.2 SoundScan

As noted earlier, *Billboard* magazine has always (since the 1940s, at least) had a pivotal role in providing information to agents in the market, and in shaping the structure of the industry. As mentioned previously, *Billboard* had a major influence over radio airplay, and therefore what was perceived to be popular. The magazine developed a popular music ranking system, or chart, that included what was being sold most in the record stores, what was being played most on the radio, and what was being played most in Juke Boxes (Anand and Peterson, 2000: 273). At this point in this thesis, however, *Billboard's* methodology has not been considered. In holding the position of the primary generator of information, the informational interface between *Billboard* (as passive gatekeeper) and record companies (active gatekeepers) is open to corruption, particularly in the form of payola. Similarly, holding the said primary informational position, *Billboard* and its biases, while often questioned, could seldom be disputed. Those who criticized it did so at their convenience, when albums weren't performing as they would have liked, and recognized its performance value when certain albums were performing (Anand and Peterson, 2000: 275). The result was that the balance of power in the industry was heavily weighted on one organization. *Billboard* could (and did, as it was later shown) use their excessive power to shape the industry as they saw fit: "Charts not only occasionally reflect sales – they also generate expectations, and sales." (Malm and Wallis, 1984: 252) The chart was viewed as an indicator for the success (profitability) of performers, and in analyzing trends for marketing purposes.

It was technology that eventually tipped this balance of power. When scanners were introduced to stores in the mid 1980's, their purpose was ultimately for efficiency of stock records. "Noting these developments, two entrepreneurs, Mike Fine and Mike Shallet, started a company called SoundScan Inc. in 1987 to exploit the information available because of point-of-sale technology" (Anand and Peterson, 2000: 275). Against many protests from agents in the industry, who were worried about the expected volatility of the charts, *Billboard* had little choice but to adopt this improved methodology, which it did in 1991. The result was major structural changes in the market that *Billboard* had been controlling (to a certain extent) for many years. Charts were shown to be more volatile, with the average time taken to reach top slots in the charts, and the average time spent at a number one slot, decreasing markedly (Anand and Peterson, 2000: 278). Accordingly, record companies concentrated most of their expenses on pre-album release, and if albums didn't perform well initially, efforts were dropped. The superstar phenomenon and the use of hype by record companies were escalated. Thus Soundscan was a less corruptible signal, but the record companies could still shape public demand through the use of media hype. Another important impact of Soundscan was the shift in actual popularity of music genres. Country music was shown to be markedly more popular than previously, and this occurred at the expense of pop music (Anand and Peterson, 2000: 277).

The most marked change in market structure, however, was that *Billboard* was no longer the center information point around which the market could function, as record companies could now gain access to the many calculations performed by SoundScan.

To some degree then, SoundScan had helped iron out some of the asymmetries of information in the signals between record companies, radios, and consumers, but these asymmetries were certainly not extinguished. The gatekeepers still existed (exist) and could still use tools such as payola, consensus cuts, and 'hype' to shape public preferences in the maintenance of the dominant signal. SoundScan thus provided a genuine challenge to the signal arrangement, but did not alter it significantly.

3.4.4.3 MP3s and the Internet

The digital dissemination of music is the most topical aspect of the popular music market today. A simplified dissection of the issues concerning the technology can divide it into 1) the fact that piracy is destroying the industry, and 2) the idea that consumers will be able to better discover their 'true' preferences, i.e. preferences not mediated by the dominant signal. The first of these aspects, while it does concern the system of popular music provision, is of secondary importance to this thesis, and complete coverage of the issue would entail both a divergence from the argument of the chapter, and a repetition of some issues, as piracy has been a central concern before (notably in the cases of sheet music and magnetic tapes). Suffice it to say that the Arrowian analysis of appropriability and market failure, and the application of the Nordhaus tradeoff (Romer, 2002: 213) are again of primary importance to the discussion.[63] It can be noted further that the market institutions are likely to curb piracy enough to avoid a complete market failure.[64] The second aspect of the duality concerns the nature of the dominant market signal.

2001 Nobel Laureate, Michael Spence (2002: 454), hypothesizes that the Internet can act as a medium where buyers and sellers can easily find each other. In an extreme scenario, the occurrence of music on the Internet could act as a self-regulating, highly decentralized market, with its own separate buyers and sellers. More practically, Spence suggests that the Internet has had a decentralizing effect on the market, in that it acts as a major information source. Considering the analysis of the market provided in this chapter, this is highly unlikely. Firstly, Like Galbraith and Adorno, Spence

[63] For further reading see Romer (2002), Hui and Png (2002), and Klein *et al.* (2002).
[64] For an account of how the industry has managed to curb piracy to a large extent, see Vance (2004).

does not sufficiently credit the information-sorting role of corporate institutions, as is required to some degree by consumers to make sense of music (Meyer, 1998). While gatekeepers control what is able to gain exposure, so they limit the number of decisions consumers are required to make, thus making their decision process more efficient. Thus some kind of information regulation is required. If this occupancy is claimed by a consumer (e.g. a non-profit motivated consumer develops an 'objective' website to serve fellow consumers), this consumer is given a gatekeeping role. If she were concerned to give every song on her website equal opportunity for exposure (in avoiding a gatekeeping role), other consumers would be unable to make sense of what to consume, and their music consumption would certainly not be a 'true' reflection of their tastes. Thus she would have to adopt an elitist stance to filter out 'commercial rubbish' (for example).[65] This elitism, it transpires, would in fact be serving the dominant signal in its 'creation of difference.' Additionally, if this site became genuinely popular and threatened the majors, it would likely be co-opted by them, or at least the artists featured on the site would get signed to them, and so this 'independent' website would perform much the same function as an independent record label.

Secondly, the Internet represents another contestable market place, and it is safe to assume that existing corporations would be more resource-abundant (in terms of skills and money) in their methods of contestation than would other non-profit consumers or fledgling corporations. For example, the opportunity exists for payola to occur between record companies and major search engines (google). Also, it is reasonable to assume that as more established market places on the Internet are developed (like Napster), they will be co-opted or even developed by the major corporations of old, and that the Internet is just another form of entertainment for these transnational entertainment corporations to dominate. In this case, many dynamics of the market would change, but the structure would remain the same. The same windows still exist for information distortions between agents; the same potential still exists to exploit 'hype', or glamorization, as a marketing tool before the consumer even reaches the virtual market place.

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[65] This is representative of a hypothetical nihilistic situation in the physical market place, in which it would be yet more difficult for consumers to make decisions, and most would thus increasingly rely on other aspects of their environment (not determined by corporations) for information sense-making.

One aspect that could further enhance the nature of the signal concerns the ease of dissemination of digital data across countries and cultures. A consumer, wishing to define herself against the 'corruption' of popular tastes by the media or record companies in her own country (say, South Africa), can research and consume a genre of music not perceived as mass in her country (say, metal), but which has its own popular market (i.e. with institutional support) in another country (say, the USA). While this does increase the availability of choice for that consumer, it brings the politics of difference and authenticity, characteristic of the dominant signal, into the transnational sphere.

3.5 Theoretical Concerns

It is easy to link the argument developed in section 4.3 to the corporate-institutional argument of Galbraith and the Frankfurt school, in its emphasis on the inescapability from corporations in the execution of the dominant signal. But this thesis does not intend to advance a moral polemic on corporate institutionalism. Instead, it recognizes from the outset the necessity of major corporations in 1) providing an efficient functioning of the market, and 2) providing consumers with a means to more efficient decision making in the regulation of information. People require cultural constraints to enable them to make sense of music (Meyer, 1998). That these constraints are provided by corporations need not imply that they have an immoral disposition, as Galbraith suggests. In fact, a suitable definition of 'The Consumer Society' which we inhabit might be one in which the majority of our *cultural* constraints are provided by *capitalism*. The dissatisfaction with corporate control of people connotes a dehumanization of people. People complain that their individuality is robbed. As Hutt asserted years ago, without corporations, our tastes would more accurately reflect our sociality than our individuality. This would typically manifest social distinctions (class, ethnicity), in which case preferences would be institutionalized anyway. The argument in section 3.4 suggests more fittingly a symbiosis between consumers and corporations that is guided by corporations.

3.5.1 Product Diversification and the Dominant Signal

Record companies are conventionally attacked in the realm of popular opinion for severely limiting available choice: "The media offers free programs in whose content and assortment the consumer has no choice whatsoever but whose selection is then rebaptized 'free choice.'" (Jameson, 1991: 275) It is easy to connote oligopoly with low product differentiation.[66] Thus the rock era of low concentration, in which there was a public awareness of product differentiation is cited as evidence of this. But one cannot assert with authority that all music today is the same as it was in the 1970s. The rate at which styles have changed *appears* to be (though might not necessarily be) less radical than it was in the 1960s, but there is certainly change. The preceding analysis suggests two ways in which product differentiation/diversification is facilitated by the institutionalization of the music market, both of which are concerned with fundamentally humanistic ideas. What the dominant signal argument suggests is that there are human aspects of music consumption that cannot be ignored (not least of which is the availability of choice). When they were ignored, i.e. in the pre-rock era, the system ruptured. The system then reconfigured with a sensitivity to these human aspects. Record companies, in fact, are concerned with the over-production of choice. This was recognized by Hirsch (1990: 133) in 1972, when he cited "overproduction and differential promotion of new items" as a risk-reducing tactic of record companies.[67] That people complain of a lack of availability is a result of an under provision of searching. They view *commercial* (i.e. Top 40, MTV in the earlier analysis) media stations as a reflection of all that is released. That they do not invest the effort in looking past the commercial media suggests that they are not fundamentally discontent with the choices available.

[66] This view has much theoretical support. See for example Arrow (1962), who argues that low concentration leads to innovation within the corporations, and hence product diversity. For an application of this concept to the music market, see Alexander (1994).

[67] Hirsch's explanation for this, however, was a more typical suggestion of demand uncertainty. The argument developed here is that record companies have an incentive to deliberately cheaply release artists who are expected to fail, so as to maintain the structure of the dominant signal.

3.5.1.1 Diversification through the Practice of Record Companies

The first way in which the dominant signal ensures diversification is through the rational actions of record companies, in that they invest in the maintenance of the dominant signal through diversification. Record companies experience a high degree of failed releases. Stratton (1983: 146) notes that only approximately one in nine singles and one in nine albums makes a profit. It may be seen as a result of their realized inability to ignore these human aspects, and of the nature of the dominant signal, that this occurs. From the companies' capitalist (and hence unconcerned with utility) perspective they might release less artists and invest more funds in those artists they do release (the manufacture of superstars). By deliberately releasing artists that will fail (i.e. artists that are released with low funding – and consequently are released along an 'indie' system of provision), they are investing in the maintenance of the dominant signal.[68] The populace is content that the choice is available, but is unconcerned that it might have to invest more effort into searching for these artists (lower funding for these artists usually results in lower exposure). Similarly, those who are genuinely discontent with the artists that are gaining regular exposure at the time will be prepared to invest extra effort into searching for deliberately failed releases, thereby benefiting from the dominant signal.

This is to assert, then, that 'the mass', as passive consumers, are content with the availability of choice (they are aware that they have a right to choice), but are mostly unconcerned with the effort of choosing. To some extent, Adorno's "pseudo-individualization" (resulting from pop's adoption of different genres), discussed above, does play a part in keeping the mass content. To reiterate, in Adorno's (1990: 308) words:

> The necessary correlate of musical standardization is *pseudo-individualization*. By pseudo-individualization we mean endowing cultural mass production with the halo of free choice or open market on the basis of standardization itself. Standardization of song hits keeps the customers in line by doing their listening for them, as it were. Pseudo-

[68] For an analysis of other reasons why a company might deliberately fail a release, see Frith (2001a: 46-48).

> individualization, for its part, keeps them in line by making them forget that what they listen to is already listened to for them, or 'pre-digested.'

But the era in which this was written (1941) needs to be considered. The end of the pre-rock corporate-institutionalization is testament to the fact that pseudo-individualization was not sufficient to satisfy consumers' ('manufactured') tastes. One might argue that, because pop has diversified internally since that time (by incorporating a number of genres and fragments of ideals), that the notion of pseudo-individualization has become more sophisticated. In this respect, the individualization has become slightly 'less pseudo', in which case, from a moral perspective, it constitutes an 'improvement'. But this still does not account for the production of many genuinely non-pop genres (by major record companies), particularly those that do not make a profit. The rational, risk-reducing action taken by record companies would *appear* to be a replication past successes, or to invest even more money into their superstars, who can guarantee them profits.[69] Thus more important to the maintenance of the dominant signal than the sophistication of pseudo-individualization is the awareness of choices available to consumers that they do not consume.[70]

3.5.1.2 Diversification and Authenticity

There are a number of aspects to this concept. The first and most obvious is that pop itself is diversified by adopting genres. Pop might incorporate a genre, say grunge (Nirvana, Pearl Jam), and proliferate it as pop-rock (Collective Soul, Creed), and to many consumers, the genre of pop is improved, and thus they gain utility.

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[69] A superstar is described as the phenomenon "wherein small differences in ability are magnified into disproportional levels of success" (Hamlen, 1991: 729). This may be attributed to the idea of "testimony" (Booth, 1990: 322). Music is so readily accepted, because fans trust blindly in the pop star's testimony, not in their ability. In other words, the fact that Robbie Williams is performing a song, and it has been judged by him to be good, means that it must be good.

[70] Stratton (1983) argues similarly that the ethos of capitalism is enriched by that of Romanticism, in that capitalism is 'inspired' to create diversity because of the Romantic tendencies of consumers. But this logic could be accounted for, in this analysis, by the 'pseudo-differentiation' of "pseudo-individualization." The argument here goes further to say that people need to be aware of differentiation, without actually having to be exposed to it.

Secondly, the modernistic aspect of authenticity described by Keightley (2001: 135) dictates that authenticity requires a break from the past, which necessitates diversification. This means that by being proliferated (whether via the influence of pop or not), or simply by existing for an amount of time, a genre becomes part of the past, and those modern fans/performers (modern hedonists in Campbell's terms) need to adopt/develop a new genre. An example of a modernistic artist might be Nine Inch Nails.[71]

The third aspect of authenticity and diversification is linked to a synthesis of romantic and modern authenticity. As genre is adopted by the mass, and consequently loses its authenticity, new consumers entering the market who wish to express their distinction from the mass, but who are drawn to the musical aesthetics of that genre, must do so by consuming another genre (often a new genre), but adapting it slightly. This is typically so as those consumers become composers themselves. A typical example would be the case of grunge in the late 1980s/ early 1990s. Grunge was generally inspired by punk (musically, and ideologically to an extent), and so by adapting the musical style of punk, grunge artists and fans were still able to consume its ideology (Wikipedia, 2006). Thus grunge was essentially romantic in its formation, but had less extreme elements of modernism than in the above example.

Another aspect concerns the longevity of styles, and is fundamentally romantic. The discussion in section 3.4, concerning the impossibility of sustained counter-culture, suggested that all 'authentic' consumers (those who view themselves to be such) might readily abandon the ideology and musical aspects of a counter-culture, though it was mentioned that authenticity was taken to be extreme in the argument. But many commentators might be able to distinguish today between punk (say, NOFX) and pop-punk (say, Blink 182). This might be especially so the more 'adulterated', or 'watered-own', a genre is by pop. In such a case, it becomes easier to attach authenticity to the original style again. In these instances, the longevity of styles is

[71] It should be clear that, since all music is either hybrid or developmental in nature, that all music has some romantic (i.e. affiliation with the past) aspect to it. Modern artist are those who try as much as possible to break with the past.

promoted.[72] In these cases pop serves an important role. It is useful to think of pop as a macrocosm of a single, using case of punk as an example. Just as a single is an advert for 'serious' listeners to consume the rest of an album, so pop-punk may act as an advert for new consumers entering the market to consume the 'parent' genre, i.e. 'punk proper.' They may be attracted to the basic style inherent in the music, be told that it is 'punk', research 'punk,' and so be exposed to the genre in its 'unadulterated' form. If she is a consumer who seeks distinction from the mass, so she will gain utility from punk. Whereas a common conception of pop is that it is parasitic on other genres of music, this analysis suggests that the relationship between pop and other genres is symbiotic.

3.5.2 False Consciousness, Consumer Sovereignty, and the Dominant Signal: An Interdisciplinary Analysis

America touts itself as the land of the free, but the number one freedom that you and I have is the freedom to enter into a subservient role in the workplace. Once you exercise this freedom you've lost all control over what you do, what is produced, and how it is produced. And in the end, the product doesn't belong to you. The only way you can avoid bosses and jobs is if you don't care about making a living. Which leads to the second freedom: the freedom to starve. – Tom Morello (Rage Against the Machine)[73]

From the analysis presented in this chapter, it is clear that there exist different kinds of consumers in the popular music market. David Riesman (1990), as early as 1950, conducted a study confirming the presence of active and passive consumers in the market. Key to Riesman's findings, however, was that the former were constituted by the absolute minority. When rock culture fused the boundaries of active and passive with those of majority and minority, the market was fundamentally changed. The tendency in popular music literature, however, has been to continue using Riesman's distinction of active and passive. Literature on the active consumer was typically expanded in subcultural analysis, for example by Hebdige (1990) and Clarke (1990), whereas the passive consumers continued to be analyzed by Adorno-type analyses.

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[72] Of course, it might be argued that a subculture is fundamentally changed/'corrupted' when it is removed from its origins (see Straw, 2001: 68). This is complicating the argument more than is necessary for this thesis.

[73] Interview with Guitar World, February 1997. Quoted in Wikipedia [Online] Available: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rage_Against_The_Machine. Accessed: 12 January, 2006

An important contribution to the field was the recognition that "depending on age, 75-90 per cent of all music listening occurs in connection with some other parallel activity." (Feilitzen and Roe, quoted in Negus, 1996: 28) All people then, to some extent, exercise passive consumption. Focus then shifted to how music was consumed privately, and another important development was the recognition that people who consume pop music can be as active in their decision-making process as those who do not, and that they can use music in many of the same ways as subculturalists do (though not to gain distinction from the mass; see Negus, 1996: 20). Activeness, then, is not purely a process of defining one's self against the mass, as has been the focus in this thesis.

The development of these analyses bares resemblance to Hutt's contribution to the term, "consumer sovereignty," or more accurately, to the critique on Hutt's work provided in chapter 2. Integral to Hutt's conception was that *producers* are primarily passive in nature. The analysis of the music market presented in this chapter suggests that they are not, but that they do not exercise final control over consumers. It is suggested then, that producers are active over some consumers in the music market. This can be illustrated using a Becker-type analysis. By repeatedly exposing a certain song/genre (i.e. a market good, say pop music) to consumers, they equip consumers with the human capital for listening to that kind of music (or "pre-digesting it"), so that the shadow price of consuming that genre is decreased. In other words, consuming another genre that they are not regularly exposed to (and hence they have not invested the human capital into consuming that good) becomes more costly, in shadow terms. These consumers are described by the Adorno-type passive consumers. From this perspective (in shadow terms), it is interesting to note that the gatekeepers have executed a price discrimination policy against those who wish to consume those goods, i.e. non-pop.

As concerns Adorno's "pseudo-individualization," that standardization must be hidden from these consumers so that they will not rebel, the ("pseudo") differentiation of pop (the good) decreases its shadow price, in these passive consumers' consumption and production of the commodity, variety. At an even more micro level, because of pop's retention of fragments of the 'authentic' genre's ideals, say the fragment of 'rebellion' as provided by rock and glamorized by pop (e.g. the 'bad-ass' image of Guns'n'Roses in the 1980s), the shadow price of a Guns'n'Roses song decreases in the consumers' production and consumption of the commodity, rebellion. This is the blue-print of what Locke (2004) calls the "institutionalization of rebellion". This is essentially a direct execution by producers of the Marxian notion of false consciousness.

Additionally, there are those consumers over whom the industry does not exert *direct* control. They actively seek out other genres, so as to produce and consume the Beckerian commodity, social distinction (or 'distinction from the mass', or 'power over the "machine"'). The shadow-price of the non-pop music (the market good), then, decreases for that consumer, hence they are prepared to pay the higher shadow price (in search costs) set by the industry. The stability of the dominant signal, however, lies in that the industry is in fact exerting *indirect* control over those consumers, since the production of pop executes the manufacture of authenticity. To demonstrate the stability of the dominant signal: "In the aftermath of the destruction of the twin towers… the largest radio chain in the United States circulated a list of some 150 songs that executives considered 'insensitive.'" (Cloonan and Garofalo, 2003: 1) These songs were consequently banned from airplay on those stations. "The list included… 'all Rage Against the Machine songs.'" Those consumers wishing, themselves, to 'rage against the machine' would no doubt have been more determined to support the band, Rage Against the Machine. Thus the production of difference is executed, the demand for power (the commodity) is increased, and people consume the band (to produce the commodity, power), supporting Sony Music in the process. This is a sophistication of Locke's (2004) "institutionalization of rebellion". To illustrate the degree to which people are accustomed to this idea, Frith (2001a: 45) notes that rock concerts are really "a gathering of fans and musicians hoping for the unexpected, and the proximate threat of drugs and drinks and anarchy, but all, in fact, tightly controlled."

The positive aspect of this process, is that it provides consumers with the consumption capital to attain utility from consuming the commodity, 'power over "the machine."' The negative aspect is that it represents a weakened (indirect) form of false consciousness. That rock still carries any ideals, however fragmented, of rebellion today is proof of this weak-form false consciousness. A benefit-cost analysis of the dominant signal argument, then, would entail an analysis of the benefits of efficiency against the social cost of false consciousness. It might also entail, however, a consideration of issues of sovereignty: To reiterate, "it [consumers' sovereignty] simply refers to the controlling power exercised by free individuals, in choosing between ends, over the custodians of the community's resources, when the resources by which those ends can be served are scarce." (Hutt, quoted in Persky, 1993: 184) The point is somewhat moot. The dominant signal and the institutionalization of tastes (the false consciousness and weak-form false consciousness identified) is at odds with the idea of "free individuals." Yet *within* this system, as determined in section 3.5.1, consumers certainly are presented with choice. This is a prerequisite for the maintenance of the dominant signal. This at least disputes the conventional argument against the presence of consumer sovereignty. Similar to the concept of a weak-form false consciousness, this suggests a weak form of consumer sovereignty. This analysis allows for different types of consumers in the market.

These different types of consumers, determined ontologically, will be defined by their genetic difference, and by their environment. As suggested from Hutt's work in chapter 2, a credible holistic analysis of consumption in a market should assume that there exist some consumers in the market who are sovereign in that they are governed by their existing habits, and that producers will cater for these people; there are some consumers in the market who are sovereign in that they will actively seek out new commodities while actively assessing their welfare situations, and producers will cater for these people too; and there are some consumers in the market who are not sovereign over their decisions in that their tastes are formed by producers. A Beckerian analysis suggests that even those consumers in the last category are in fact sovereign, that they actively (that is not to say, consciously) choose to consume what they are 'given', in that it saves them the effort of investing the human capital required to consume what they are 'not given.' This, however, seems to capture the essence of Becker's *apologetic*. What determines which category a consumer will fall under, as stated, is both a product of their genes (nature) and their environment (nurture).

Thus it was that increased social consciousness (led by the likes of Galbraith, Adorno, McCarthyism, etc.) and the complementary rise of the Romantic ethic in the 1950s and 1960s increased the demand for the Beckerian commodity, social distinction – power over 'the machine.' In producing that commodity, consumers produced and consumed the element of human capital, authenticity (a quixotic non-market good), which they consumed in conjunction with music (market goods). The paradox of a 'mass anti-mass' resulted in authenticity having weak property rights, and thus the good was under-produced by consumers (as with the Nordhaus trade off, see Romer, 2002: 213). It may even be suggested that the length of time for which the paradoxical consumption was sustained was a result of the glamorization of rebellion, thus marking the beginning of the formation of the dominant signal (i.e. before record companies gained control). In the 1970s, many consumers instead then chose to consume other ideals (commodities), such as those provided by the media (co-opted by record companies by this stage), for example androgyny, which was produced by an investment in 'sexual identity play' in conjunction with the market good, glam rock. But the demand for power (over corporations or the government) appears always to be present, and is increased during times of increased social awareness (and consequently the ideology of Romanticism, which encapsulates a group of ideals, including distinction from the mass)[74].

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that a credible analysis of consumption (and hence production) in the music market requires a holistic approach. Historical analysis is illuminating in observing the evolution of the market, both in what has been produced and how it has come to be consumed. It must be conceded that, even in utilizing a holistic approach, not every possible aspect that might affect music consumption was analysed. Most notably, it has focused on the qualities of consumption "which musicians cannot help (social background, historical position, gender, ethnicity) rather than the ones which they can (their technical ability, musical judgements, sense of their own creative control)." (Frith, 1988: 4) Even in acknowledging those factors over which musicians do have control (such as creative control), it has incorporated them into issues over which they do not have control (the dominant signal). As such, an analysis of the relationship between musicology, psychology, and popular music

[74] (such as the above example given concerning Rage Against the Machine and 911)

would need to be applied. McClary and Walser (1990: 279) note the excitement of "an effect so powerful that it can make an arena full of nonmusicians jump to their feet and scream with ecstasy – can be the result of an E-natural rather than an E-flat." Similarly, Roland Barthes (1990) famously made reference to "the grain of the voice." It is not realistic to assert that *all* of our utility from consuming popular music comes from subconscious ideological fantasies (particularly outside of youth culture). Certainly one does feel the desire to listen to a piece of music because of its pleasing neuro-cognitive or neuro-somatic effects. But it is useful to focus on these quixotic aspects to learn what cannot be deduced from purely physical aspects.

Another concession that should be noted is that the development of the dominant signal argument has been susceptible at times to reifying such quixotic notions as 'authenticity' and 'rebellion.' While it acknowledged that authenticity is fundamentally inappropriable, it implied at times that certain or all active consumers would instantly know when something is not authentic. It is realized that this is unlikely to be the case for most. The degree to which - and rate at which – a commodity is divested of its authenticity would likely be different for each consumer, or social group. As such, each consumer in the market is not likely to fit neatly into one of the categories defined in section 3.5.2, but rather might display elements of a number of categories. The distinction, however, is useful, so that one can say generally, an active consumer who has 'weak-form' sovereignty would like not consume pop, though she might not divest a commodity of its authenticity the instant it is viewed on MTV. Thus the functioning of the dominant signal is naturally more complex than was presented here, but reifying such spectral concepts as authenticity has allowed for key insights into the functioning of the market.

While this chapter has attempted not to take a moral standpoint, rather than highlighting political-economic issues concerned, as an academic presentation, it naturally appears elitist at times. It is conceded that people who consume pop music can be as active in their decision-making process as those who do not, and that they can use music in many of the same ways as subculturalists do (see Negus, 1996: 20). In other words, from their ontological position (i.e. culturally and genetically), they have a preference for pop music. This further blurs notions of authenticity. The result is that the dominant signal functions with all the issues discussed constantly shifting and interacting with each other, but trends can be observed.

Utilizing the systems of provision approach has proved advantageous. Isolating popular music as distinct from one of a bundle of homogenous goods allows for a far more credible analysis of music consumption (and production) than would be the case otherwise. In particular, the romantic and modern ethics are surely far more characteristic of the music market than of a great many other markets. Yet more specifically, the blurring of authenticity and 'falsity' that is so characteristic of the market is unlikely to play such a central role even in other markets for cultural goods (e.g. literature). The application of the "aesthetic illusion" (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 26) has allowed for credible explanations of why a product's physical constitution might change, and why its imputed use values might change. As one can observe, historical analysis is crucial in this respect. The music market has undergone three distinct periods in which the many factors affecting it have changed dramatically. To analyze these periods in terms of any one of these characteristics alone (e.g. market concentration, *or* private/social use values of music, *or* technological effects) would portray only a portion of the picture.

As with the methodology of the thesis, utilizing the systems of provision approach has allowed for contextual placement of the consumption theories analyzed in chapter 2. The same methodology could be applied using different consumption theories. Examples are suggested in the concluding chapter. That this is so is testament to the richness of the approach. The contention that the systems of provision approach allows for the placement of horizontal theories in specific contexts, and that they can benefit from acknowledging each other's strengths, still holds.

Finally, this chapter sought to attain a holistic picture of the music market, using the systems of provision approach, and in so doing, to provide a more objective comment on the market than is commonly the case in the literature. The development of the signal terminology was found to be greatly advantageous to analysis, as was the advancement of a more sophisticated formal ontological stance than the traditional active/passive dichotomy.

Chapter 4: The South African Popular Music Market

A diamond is forever if not the apartheid system that produced it. – Ben Fine and Ellen Leopold[75]

4.1. Introduction

4.1.1. Goals of the Chapter

The case of South African popular music is testament to the necessity of historical knowledge in the understanding of present consumption practices in certain markets. The function of this chapter is to use the *systems of provision* approach to analyze the South African popular music market, both as a second test of the approach's usefulness (and hence a test of its versatility), and as a tool to gain insight into the market, thus aiding the analysis of consumption practices. Additionally, it seeks to test the applicability of the hypothesis developed in chapter 3 (that the practices of gatekeepers are imperative to consumption analysis, but that they must be viewed in relation to an ontological construct of consumers – determined by nature and nurture) to another market. Following directly after an analysis of the western popular music market, it is able to expose differences and similarities between the two markets.

Modern South African history is overshadowed by the apartheid system of governance. The role of the apartheid government as a gatekeeper of popular music allows for a more acute examination of the significance of gatekeeper analysis in the market, and consequently a further test of the fact that an ontological construct of consumers is important for a totalizing analysis of consumption practices. This chapter asserts that the patterns of music consumption developed during the apartheid era perpetuate current consumption patterns to a certain extent. The ideology of separate development imposed by the apartheid government initiated a deep market segmentation (a more apt term, historically, would be 'segregation'). This segmentation is apparent today, both at an inter-racial level, and at an intra-racial level (according to more specific ethnicities). While race has replaced class in many ways, musical preferences still seem to be closely correlated with race, which is

[75] Fine and Leopold (1993: 34)

suggestive of a continuing cultural stratification. The market model for white English consumers closely resembles that of the western pop music market. The popularity of Afrikaans music can be attributed to many Afrikaans people clinging to their heritage (historical analysis reveals that Afrikaans people have felt that their culture was threatened in the past) and to different marketing tactics used in this market segment. To develop any kind of market model for black consumers of whatever specific ethnicity unquestionably requires historical analysis of the forced and unforced influence of western culture on black South Africans. While this assertion is evidence to a large extent of the passivity of most consumers, it is also explained by the practices of market gatekeepers. While the gatekeeper of the apartheid era (and the gatekeepers in the western pop music market) was active in its role of music filtering, the gatekeepers in the present South African market are found to be more passive, but still largely important. Essentially, one could argue that instead of assuming the role of active "generators of culture" (Hayman and Tomaselli, 1989: 33), the present gatekeepers are more passive 'reinforcers' of culture (or passive reflectors of culture, as Stuart Hall might argue from a Marxist perspective).

4.1.2 Structure of the Chapter

This chapter is divided into four parts. Section 4.2 provides a historical analysis of the South African popular music market. The historical literature on the topic varies slightly to that of its western counterpart. Most of the studies done on the market are encompassed by the doctrines of ethnomusicology and anthropology (both of which are imperative to a current understanding of the market), as opposed to literature on the western market, which focuses largely on corporate practices. More important than corporate practices in the South African market was the role of the Nationalist apartheid government, which had direct control over all broadcasting in the country during its period of sovereignty. As such, there is not much literature concentrated on the practices of record companies. The focus of the section, then, is on the role of radio in controlling the signal in the market, and analyzing, as best as possible, the different genres that emerged at different times. Problems with definitions abound, however, but the chapter seeks to make sense of them as much as possible. The section is particularly useful to this thesis, as it provides a heightened version of the corporate (monopolistic) gatekeepers analyzed in chapter 3. Similarly, it is found that the gatekeeper could not maintain *absolute* control over what people would listen to, giving support to the ontological construct developed in chapter 3, that there exist fundamentally human aspects of music consumption which need to be accounted for.

Literature on the current workings of the industry is scarce. What current literature there is concerning the market typically focuses exclusively on the cultural aspect of the market[76]. In order to get an up to date perspective of the industry side of the market, interviews were conducted with various market agents, including record company executives, radio personnel, staff at the Recording Industry of South Africa (RISA), and local musicians. Section 4.3 presents the outcomes of the interviews. Questions were directed at gaining insight into the role of gatekeepers in the market; the relationships between the majors, independents, and radio; marketing strategies employed by companies; the degree of market segmentation present in South African popular music; and the effects of new media on piracy and signal generation. Broadly, it was found that radio is the primary gatekeeper (followed by retail, which generally looks to radio for what to stock), but that both radio and record companies are passive in their gatekeeping roles. The majors are aimed purely at mass markets, and the strategies of independents vary, as in the western market. Piracy is an important concern, but has not had as large an impact as in the western market because of the digital divide. New media plays an important part in the market, and will become increasingly important, but whether or not it will change the dominant signal is moot. It is acknowledged that there is a deep market segmentation for various reasons. It is noted that each interview represents a particular agent's opinion, and so to gain a *full* understanding of the market would require an interview with every agent in it, in order to make completely accurate assessments. Given the impossibility of this, elaborate quotes from the interviewees are used extensively so as to accurately reflect each person's opinion. This perspective is important and is rarely reflected in the literature, particularly in the South African literature. The result is a rich description of the workings of the market, from which theoretical links are analyzed.

In order to gain insight into consumers' perspectives of the market, a survey was conducted, as is discussed in section 4.4. Unfortunately, due to a low response rate on

[76] See for example Coplan (2001) and Barber (2001).

the part of consumers, and a restriction placed by a lack of resources, the sample is too small and idiosyncratic to draw conclusive empirical results. Its value, however, lies in its seminal quality (very little research has been done on South African music consumers, according to Stella, 2005; and ICASA, 2005), and in that it provides insight into the usefulness of the theoretical aspects highlighted in this thesis for future research. While most research would be aimed primarily at what people consume, this survey sought to assess what people consume, where they sourced new music, whether they preferred international music to South African music, what aspects of music consumption they found to be important, whether their preferences change if their setting changes, and how active/passive they are as consumers. Despite the flaws of the sample, the results could be argued to provide a starting point for understanding the middle class segment of the market (the vast majority of survey candidates were middle class or higher). And even in the face of its incompleteness, the deep segmentation of the market established in the preceding two sections was affirmed. Due to the idiosyncrasies of the survey, the results are not used as primary data in this chapter, but are used in support where applicable. They are presented in Addendum C.

Section 4.5 provides the discussion and final assessment of the consumption of South African music, highlighting the benefits of the systems of provision approach to the market, and focusing particularly on the necessity of historical analysis, the segmentation of the market and the role of gatekeepers. A final critique is given of South African market as it compares to that of the UK or the USA, highlighting the importance of market size, and suggesting that South African consumers can benefit from the large markets in those countries. Additionally, it is suggested that South Africa has less of a ‘culture of rebellion’ than is the case in the western market, and this is likely because of historical reasons. The ontological construct developed in chapter 3 is reinforced in the South African case, and shown to be more complex because of the multifarious audiences in the market.

4.2 History of the South African Music Market

The history of the South African popular music industry provides a heightened example of the complexities that exist between the role of gatekeepers, the imposition of ideology, the search for identity by consumers, and the consumption of popular music. The country's history of oppression and segregation has perpetually thrown its countrymen into states of alienation so that degrees of community and identity have constantly been actively sought out, and this is reflected abundantly in the progression of the music market. What makes this market exceptional, and makes it an ideal case study for this thesis, is the extent to which radio broadcasting was actively used to convey the South African Nationalist government's political ideology of separate development[77], through their monopoly on control (over broadcasting and technology) and censorship over content (Hayman and Tomaselli, 1989), and more specifically, through the use of popular music to attempt to create ideals of localism among the segregated non-whites (Hamm, 1991). While the focus of the literature surveyed highlights the primacy of broadcasting and cultural aspects in the development of preference formation, other important constituents of the system of provision were films, record companies, most notably Gallo Records, and the black press of South Africa, notably *Drum* magazine.

Hayman and Tomaselli (1989: 24) recognize four significant periods in South Africa's early broadcasting history:

1924-1936: The establishment of the first independent local commercial radio stations,

1936-1948: The establishment of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) under the Smuts government, which sought to give equality to English and Afrikaans broadcasting,

1948-1959: The coming to power of the Nationalist government, and the establishment of a national network that "linked all transmitters across the country with one or other urban production studio,"

[77] A more sophisticated version of (euphemistic term for) Apartheid.

1960-1971: The period in which Broederbond[78] chairman, J.P. Meyer, chaired the Board of Control of the SABC. The SABC grew enormously with the introduction of VHF/FM technology.

These periods are used here in outlining the history of the South African music market.

Technological innovations in South Africa roughly mirrored those of the UK and the USA, with two notable exceptions. The introduction of FM radio had a much different impact to that of other countries (Hayman and Tomaselli, 1989: 65), and television (not to be mistaken for film) was only introduced to South Africa in 1971 (Hayman and Tomaselli, 1989: 24). The former is indicative of the importance of analyzing how a technology is used by market gatekeepers, since the Nationalist government used it effectively to aid in the promotion of the ideology of separate development, resulting in a fragmented market.

As concerns choices in music consumption over these periods, the English white population followed that of Britain very closely, and is given little attention here. The Afrikaans white population clung strongly to its heritage, as the Afrikaans nationalists "regarded Afrikaans as a threatened culture," (Hayman and Tomaselli, 1989: 29) as a result of an inferiority complex the Nationalists had concerning the English population. Largely due to the economic and political power possessed by the English South Africans prior to 1948, the Nationalists were bent on Afrikaans culture achieving parity with that of English South African culture (Hayman and Tomaselli, 1989: 29). They used broadcasting abundantly in promoting Afrikaans culture.

4.2.1 Pre-1924

Black South Africans, possessing little (or no) economic and political power, have always been subject to western influence in their music styles, beginning primarily with the establishment of mission schools in the nineteenth century (Hamm, 1991: 162). The development of their popular music styles has been almost invariably hybrid in nature, fusing traditional, or local, elements with western elements to some

[78] A society of the Afrikaans political and intellectual elite.

degree. Erlmann (1998: 14) notes that prior to 1900, minstrel shows had been the most popular form of stage entertainment. Despite its grossly racist overtones, Erlmann suggests that the image of the 'coon' had an air of urban sophistication to local non-whites. Additionally, since the 'coon' was invariably mischievous, the idea became a form of intra-racial mockery and banter. One of the first forms of popular music to originate out of non-white culture was *isicathamiya*, known later as *mbube*, in the early 1900s. *Isicathamiya* was an accapella style of zulu music with an emphasis on dance performance (the word translates to "on tip-toes" indicating the dance style) and was traditionally soft-spoken. Its transition into *mbube*, meaning "lion," marked a change in the style as vocals became more forceful. (Wikipedia, 2006). "*Isicathamiya* was born out of the encounter between… two worlds: the world of rural homesteads, warfare, ancestor spirits and wedding ceremonials on the one hand, and the realm of factories and urban popular culture on the other." (Erlmann, 1998: 14) Thus colonialism had its effect on native popular music since its inception. Many of the tropes dealt with in these songs were a direct result of urban migration, such as the ideas of "unhomeliness,"[79] crowds and machines, and their respective unfamiliarity. As pointed out by Erlmann (1998: 14),

> …one of the most striking historical lessons to be learned from the rise of a performance tradition like isicathamiya is just how intermeshed different social worlds and forms of imagination already were in the early history of modern South Africa, and how the expressive genres that emerged from this intermixture were anything but primordial, undiluted, or ancient.

A further observation by Hamm (1991: 167) is that, since before the Nationalists came to power, non-white South Africans had extremely limited access to broadcasting, their popular music styles originated in performances, i.e. social gatherings were their primary means of dissemination. Among these was *marabi* in the 1920s and 1930s[80]. *Marabi* is described generally as a "South African style originating as piano based music played in World War I era slums. Later incorporated by emerging South African jazz bands from the '30s on. Used loosely by various

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[79] This refers to a state of alienation caused by constant migration. It also captures the effect of workers constantly moving between traditional and western worlds (Erlmann, 1998: 14).

[80] Hamm (1991: 163) cites *Marabi* as a predecessor to *Isicamathiya*, but Erlmann's (1998: 14) dating of *Isicamathiya* implies that it existed first.

musicians in South Africa to mean everything from original piano style to South African jazz in general." (Afropop, 2005) Quoting Coplan, Hamm (1991: 163) describes *marabi* as a genre

> Strongly influenced by the social and economic conditions of working-class life. Growing out of shebeen society, *marabi* was much more than just a musical style. As music it had a distinctive rhythm and blend of African polyphonic principles, restructured within the framework of the Western 'three-chord' harmonic system. As a dance it placed few limits on variation and interpretation by individuals or couples, though the emphasis was definitely on sexuality. As a social occasion it was a convivial, neighbourhood gathering for drinking, dancing, coupling, friendship and other forms of interaction.

Around the same era, contemporary popular jazz styles were imported from America on phonograph records and films. Hamm (1991: 164) notes that black South African musicians had little or no contact with African-Americans at this stage, many of the most authentic jazz styles, such as New Orleans jazz or urban blues, were not made available to them. Eventually these popular jazz styles developed into a more characteristically African Jazz style.

4.2.2 1924 – 1936

In 1924, three independent agencies were licensed to broadcast over radii of 100-200 miles. In 1927 the African Broadcasting Company (ABC), a private monopoly, took control of all three. Since the broadcasting radius extended to urban areas, which were populated predominantly by the English elite, programming was first in English, and then half-hour Afrikaans programmes were introduced in 1931. News was provided by Reuters and reflected the English press (Hayman and Tomaselli, 1989: 24-29). As in America, classical music was initially the 'obvious' genre for airplay, so as to promote British high culture. Hayman and Tomaselli (1989: 29) point out the difference between the American and South African models of broadcasting:

> The American commercial model of broadcasting demanded a maximization of audience through concentration on the most popular programmes. This

> militated against the hierarchical and elite notions of culture, adopted from British cultural heritage, which proposed idealist and intrinsic values as the basis for programming policy.

This quote indicates that popular music was less diffuse in the early South African popular music market than in its American counterpart, primarily because of the capitalist sophistication of the latter.

4.2.3 1936 – 1948

It was the Broadcasting Act of 1936 that saw the establishment of a single body corporate, the SABC, which utilized most of ABC's resources. Cultural production was transferred from capitalism to parliament (Hamm, 1991: 148). Its programming content was modeled after that of the BBC, "with emphasis on informational, educational, and cultural programming designed to reinforce the class structures of British society," (Hamm, 1991: 148). 1937 saw the emergence of two separate stations, one English and one Afrikaans, marking an early signification of the intra-racial cultural separateness of the two ethnic groups. The first radio programmes aimed at black listeners were introduced in 1945, resulting in half hour programmes broadcast in Sotho (from Johannesburg), Xhosa (from Cape Town) and Zulu (from Durban), on both the English and Afrikaans stations, playing music sung by choirs, and traditional African music (Hamm, 1991: 149)[81].

Hayman and Tomaselli (1989: 39) note that as early as 1938, "The activities of the Afrikaans programme department reveal the extent to which the SABC was already becoming a generator of culture. The SABC formed a *boereorkes* (Afrikaans music orchestra) … which served to copy and reconstruct Afrikaans traditional music."

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[81] It is interesting to note the motivation for these services in contrast to later years. The SABC *Annual Report* in 1945 read: "It is common cause among all sections of our European community that the Bantu peoples, who constitute four-fifths of the population, are our gravest responsibility. In these critical times it is becoming more urgently necessary every day for European and non-European to understand each other and to remove the difficulties in the way of co-operation." (quoted in Hamm, 1991: 148)

4.2.4 1948 – 1959

In 1948 the Afrikaner Nationalist Party came to power. Hamm (1991: 149) describes how the policy changes for the SABC under this government were already formulated before the elections, and included the introduction of Radio Springbok, a bilingual (English and Afrikaans) commercial station, and the expansion of radio services for the black population. Drawing on technological knowledge gained during the war, the SABC could transmit via telephone line to the township of Orlando, near Johannesburg. The guidelines for choosing the musical content for the station are by now familiar, yet more exaggerated in this case: "there are four genres of music, in ascending levels of artistic and moral content (traditional, popular, light classical and classical); the government bears the responsibility of leading at least some of its citizens up this ladder of musical taste." (Hamm, 1991: 150) The language used by the SABC to justify the inclusion of traditional music initially came across as paternalistic, but read now, was obviously the beginning of overt separate development ideology. According to the SABC *Annual Report* of 1953, they aimed to "heighten the listener's pride in his own culture," and of 1956, to "bring the voices and music of [various] areas into the homes of the urban Bantu." (quoted in Hamm, 1991: 150). Ironically, at this time, while the SABC was trying to expand into urban townships, the government was executing its relocation policies of forcibly moving those blacks in townships close to white urban areas (e.g. Orlando) to new townships further away (e.g. Soweto).

While the government had the monopoly on broadcasting, this did not equal complete power of the media. One of the most important phenomena of 1950s and 1960s South Africa was the occurrence of *Drum*, a monthly periodical started in 1951 by Jim Bailey (Sampson, 2005: 1). *Drum* employed almost entirely black staff (the editor was usually white), and is viewed largely as the voice of black South Africa during those years. While it was not the only "Negro periodical" (Hamm [1985: 165] cites *Zonk* and *Hi-Note!* as well), it was by far the most influential element of the black press and had the widest circulation (eventually being distributed to Nairobi). It concerned itself with affairs faced by the non-white urban population, but it was not without its censorship problems. Hamm (1985: 165) notes that certain issues of *Drum* that were banned soon after publication are completely unattainable to this day. As a result of this imposed self-censorship, much of its content of the black press was devoted to the U.S.A., "particularly anything involving American blacks. Virtually every issue had an article on a famous jazz musician or some other black entertainer." (Hamm, 1985: 165) Thus *Drum* played an important signaling role to black South Africans and would have a major influence over what music could be used successfully by the government in the pursuit of their ideological 'persuasions'.

During this time, *kwela* was gaining major popularity amongst the black population. It originated literally from the street, where often young black musicians could be observed busking with a small metal cylinder with six finger-holes and a mouth-piece. From this origin, the instruments became known as 'pennywhistles.' (Hamm, 1991: 165) In 1950, pennywhistler, Willard Cele, was used in a film, *The Magic Garden*, and Gallo records released a disc with two of these pieces. This was followed by a rush on the part of record companies to find other pennywhistlers. Because many of the subsequent releases contained the word, '*kwela,*' in the title, ethnomusicologists commonly (though not correctly) use this term synonymously with all pennywhistle pieces (Hamm, 1991: 165). The popularity of the genre did not, at this stage, affect its lack of airplay on the radio, indicating an unwillingness of the SABC to proliferate elements of black culture. Quite obviously then, *kwela's* popularity was developed along a system of provision that excluded radio.

In the late 1950s rock 'n' roll was beginning to filter into South Africa. Among the white English population, the reaction paralleled the UK and USA, for the same reasons. Adults viewed it as senseless noise with corrupting ideals, and for that reason the youth were attracted to it. Despite the English SABC channel taking its cue from the BBC and abstaining from giving it airplay, Elvis Presley became the largest selling artist in South African history by 1959 (largely due to the release of his films) selling over two million copies (Hamm, 1985: 159). As noted by Hamm (1985: 161), a major difference between this consumer sector and that of its overseas counterpart was its geographical and cultural isolation from the UK and the USA (bearing in mind that television was only introduced in 1971): "Popular culture is shaped, perhaps more than that of any other country, by those overseas entertainers who come to the country." In 1957 Tommy Steele announced a scheduled tour to Southern Africa. The press reacted with severe disapproval, slurring the genre wherever possible. When he came and played to capacity crowds, this attitude turned to a grudging acceptance (Hamm, 1985: 162). A number of artists then saw the tour as a profitable exercise, including Cliff Richard, Pat Boone, and Dusty Springfield:

> This roster both reflected and helped to shape the musical taste of white South African youth: middle of the road rock; often more pop than rock; several stages removed from the rhythm and blues and country and western roots of the first wave of American rock 'n' roll of the 1950s; more often British than American. (Hamm, 1985: 162)

The reaction of the Afrikaans community was more vehement than the initial English reaction, and Steele's scheduled performance in Pretoria (the symbolic centre of the Nationalist Party) was cancelled (Hamm, 1985: 163). The SABC's reaction was to start funding more *boereorkeste*, and to hold competitions for traditional Afrikaans composers (Hayman and Tomaselli, 1989: 45). Additionally, the Afrikaans press used rock'n'roll to secure their role of political dominance. By continually reporting on and sensationalizing incidences where British and American rock stars could be seen in a negative light, they were down-playing the "cultural heroes of the white English youth of South Africa, the future strength of the United Party." (Hamm, 1985: 164)

Rock'n'roll was initially fairly well received by the non-white population of South Africa, aided particularly by the black press, especially *Drum*. Local recording companies decided that this market segment might be profitable, and issued samples of rock'n'roll music to the press, who (in contrast to the white press) had review sections in their issues (Hamm, 1985: 164). Enthusiastic reviews (pioneered by reviews of Bill Haley in 1956) were complemented by positive and expressive reviews of live rock'n'roll shows, such as this account of a non-whites teenagers' dance in a club in Johannesburg in *Drum* in 1959: "The music was loud, a lot of it rock'n'roll. Some of the fellows had side-whiskers, fancy haircuts, trying to look tough, casual, just like those Beat Generation heroes over in the States."[82] (quoted in Hamm, 1985: 167) This led to the formation of various non-white rock bands and a

[82] The reference to the Beat Generation is fitting to illustrate the extent to which non-white South Africa was influenced by American culture. An interesting exercise would be to compare the similarities of the journalistic techniques used by many of the black journalists at the time with the literary techniques used by Jack Kerouac himself, particularly as regards slang, tempo and rhythm.

show entitled 'Township Rock' played at Johannesburg's City Hall in 1958 (Hamm, 1985: 167). Hamm (1985: 169-174) suggests five reasons why non-white interest in rock declined:

1) South Africa was for years not exposed to any black rock'n'roll artists, and thus South Africans were probably not aware of its black roots in America.
2) At the end of this period, rock'n'roll was peaking and solidifying as white English music, and thus gained connotations of oppression.
3) Many jazz musicians (e.g. Hugh Masekela and Miriam Makeba), by contrast, were outspoken critics of the government, which gained them favourable support among black people.
4) Some critics of rock'n'roll (e.g. Gideon Jay of *Zonk*) were able to point out similarities between rock and jazz, of which rock was simply seen as a more raucous form, in which case rock was nothing new at all.
5) Jive music was beginning to forge itself as mainstream of non-white pop music.

Added to this list could be the fact that the Afrikaans Control Board of what was to become Radio Bantu (see below) would not allow rock'n'roll to be played on non-white radio stations because of its potential for the promotion of mixed race ideology.

4.2.5 1960 – 1971

1960 saw the ideological coercion of the SABC come into full being, when under Piet Meyer, it "shed all pretence of objectivity and autonomy and devoted itself to supporting the 'rightness' of the 'South African way of life.'" (Hamm, 1991: 153). Under separate development, 80 percent of the population, which was non-white, was forced to live in 17 percent of the (poorest) land, and "the state-controlled media were given the task of bringing about general acceptance of this ideologically based mythology, by persuading the entire population that this was 'the way things were', according to nature, history and common sense." (Hamm, 1991: 153). Hamm's essential argument is that, in addition to having the monopoly on broadcasting power, since music constituted the majority of broadcasting time, the SABC carefully had to choose what genres of music to play to whom, so as to draw the listeners in, and thus convey their ideology. According to Hamm (1991), as important as the censorship of content (specifically news) and the number of listeners the stations attracted, was the idea that all music played to non-white listeners was to give the listener a sense of pride in their culture and a happy sense of community among members of what were to become separate national states (i.e. so as to act as an opiate against tendencies to rebel against 'developing separately' from whites)[83]. Essentially, the SABC was deliberately a "generator of culture rather than a simple transmitter of it." (Hayman and Tomaselli, 1989: 33).

"From the inception of the SABC, there had been a perceived need to disseminate the dominant ideology of selective 'discourses' through separate channels for various groups. A system was required which could segregate the audience according to categorizations of race, ethnic group and language which characterized the apartheid ideology." (Hayman and Tomaselli, 1989: 65) South Africa, however, did not have enough medium-wave and short-wave (AM) frequencies to carry out such a system. By the mid 1950s, the FM system was considered technically feasible, but not economically feasible. In 1960 the FM system was installed, costing an estimated twelve million pounds (twenty-five million rand) at the time, and was financed by the government (Hayman and Tomaselli, 1989: 61). The benefits of this system to the government were enormous. A number of frequencies could be opened up to non-white communities, while keeping the existing white channels. Since these transmitters could be installed so as to have a limited range, they could *isolate* areas of *ethnicity*, both aiding separate development, and allowing for more direct, localized advertising. Having anticipated the development of transistor radios, the government had begun manufacturing these so as to receive FM frequencies only. This shielded the listeners from the various attacks from outside South Africa that could be picked up on the AM frequencies, as well as from international news. The transistor radios themselves were wireless, portable, and affordable, and the government knew that they would appeal to the non-white market, particularly those urban-township commuters (Hayman and Tomaselli, 1989: 65-66).

[83] In 1975, when the film, *eLollipop,* was released, there were scores of outcries by whites South Africans for the film to be banned (which it was in Bloemfontein), as the story depicted a friendship between a young black boy and a white boy. It could be argued that the reason it was allowed to be screened in South Africa was that it depicted a similar happy sense of community among the inhabitants of Lesotho (a black national state), and thus helped to promote the ideology of separate development.

These separate channels to individual non-white communities were collectively known as Radio Bantu, which came into effect in 1962 (Hamm, 1991: 158). The Bantu Programme Control Board was proposed in 1960 (and would naturally consist of Nationalists). While of course a great many were not sold to the derogatory idea that black people could not choose and arrange for themselves what to listen to, the onslaught of positivity in the media kept on throughout the decades, often to the point of parody, such as this example from *News/Check* in 1968: “The wonderment, enthusiasm, admiration and generally gee-by-golly feeling of Africans for Radio Bantu (is) compressed into their expressive Hau…[sic]” (quoted in Tomaselli and Tomaselli, 1989: 97). Concerning the issue of the government’s stake in Radio Bantu, the minister of Posts and Telegraphs said in a parliamentary debate in 1960: “The broadcasting service is something which you cannot force on anybody; you cannot force him to listen. What you can do, though, is to attract listeners to listen to you…” (quoted in Hamm, 1991: 159) In this quest for appeal to non-whites, the SABC had to choose carefully which music would be played to its respective listeners, so that the music would, according to Hamm (1991: 160), reflect a “positive and healthy way of life,” and should “relate in some way to the culture of the ‘tribal’ group at which a given service was aimed.” Hamm (1991: 159) reports that the listenership of Radio Bantu grew from 332302 people in 1962 to about 6,5 million in 1967.

The music selected for Radio Bantu could be categorized according to three generalized genres: traditional music, choral music, and popular music. (Hamm, 1991: 160) While traditional music seemed ideal for preserving cultural heritage, the effects of colonialism were irreversible. Many blacks were already taken with the pull of western lifestyles, aided dramatically by the contents of *Drum*, as illustrated by a particularly influential writer, a jazz musician named Todd Matshikiza: “Give us girls, man … Tell us about Gangsters … Cut out this tribal stuff. Show us things that *matter* …” (Sampson, 2005: 15) Andersson points out that Tribal symbols no longer carried the same meaning, as they were now being used by the state to “mystify the structures of oppression.” (Andersson, 1981: 18) Though the government, in a genuine attempt to forge tastes, made efforts to record and broadcast many traditional songs, this music was proving to lack influence.

As a result, the SABC greatly utilized western style choral music, which had been taught in missions since the previous century. Hamm (1991: 162) argues that this music was deeply rooted in South African societies (more so than other colonized countries) because many of the traditional musics of South Africa were largely choral based to begin with. The SABC amassed many of these recordings for airplay on Radio Bantu: "In 1963 alone… SABC mobile units visited 435 Bantu schools, recording 7,374 items." (Hamm, 1991: 162).

African popular music, with whatever degree of western influence it contained, was by far the most effective music used by the SABC on Radio Bantu. Hamm (1991: 167) notes that "Marabi, mbube, African jazz, and kwela had all originated in and been shaped by live performance situations and only afterwards appropriated by the media." Thus it is reasonable to contend that these styles perpetually bore connotations of socializing and allowed listeners an escapism route out of the struggles of apartheid life. This is akin to Reublin's (2000) analysis of the music of Tin Pan Alley.[84] Though they were given more airtime than other genres, the SABC still had control over the content of the music. Erlmann's (1998) definition of *Isicamathiya* (by now known as *mbube*) states that it is dependent on its lyrical content for classification (see also Hamm, 1994). By this token, the SABC effectively had control over what constituted a genre. Joseph Shabalala, the leader of Ladysmith Black Mambazo, the most successful *mbube* band, quoted in Andersson (1981: 87), said "We keep the radio in mind when we compose. If something is contentious they don't play it, and then it wouldn't be known anyway." The most distinctive genre of African popular music was jive, which

> gradually replaced 'jazz' as the generic term for a large repertoire of black South African social dance music descended from *marabi* and characterized by a succession of brief melodic fragments, repeated and varied but never developed in the Western sense, unfolding over a constantly reiterated harmanic cycle of four-eight, or sometimes twelve chords. (Hamm, 1991: 166)

[84] I.e. that is was music which "allowed people to escape the realities of the hardships of life and their own life's troubles." (Reublin, 2000)

This simple style of music developed its offspring accordingly: pennywhistle jive, sax jive, and vocal jive. What makes this style so distinctive is that, in contrast to its predecessors, it was appropriated by radio and record companies first, and then adapted for live performances afterwards. "As the most dynamic black popular style of the 1960s, jive was embraced by Radio Bantu with such enthusiasm and success, and came to be identified so closely with radio performance, that it was sometimes called *msakazo* ('radio music')." (Hamm, 1991: 166) The major appeal of jive for Radio Bantu is that it was, from the outset, an apolitical genre of music (Hamm, 1985: 173). The utilization of jive before it was fully developed in live music culture is indicative of the mindfulness of the SABC with respect to their audiences, as contrasted with record companies in the later 1950s in America.

4.2.6 1971 – 1994

The SABC's utilization of broadcasting was dependent of limiting listeners' choices. From the 1960s, their only competition had been LM radio, a commercial station broadcast from Lourenco Marques (now Maputo) in Mozambique. This problem was solved when they bought the station (which became Radio 5, now 5fm) in 1972 (Tomaselli and Tomaselli, 1989: 138). The SABC's monopoly ended when, under separate development, several of the National States within South Africa opted for independence, and were allowed to establish their own radio services. These were initially carefully overseen by the SABC, but eventually their programming ran counter to the SABC's policies as they began to play music from varying ethnic backgrounds (Hamm, 1991: 170). The first independent radio station in South Africa was Capital Radio in 1979, broadcast from the Transkei, and modeling itself after its UK counterpart of the same name, as a commercial radio station (Tomaselli and Tomaselli, 1989: 139). This was followed by Radio 702 in 1980 broadcasting from Bophutatswana. These stations had powerful enough signals to reach great portions of South Africa, giving listeners a choice of what to consume.

Despite the effective end of the SABC's monopoly, which allowed the independent stations to broadcast different genres, Drewett (2003: 155) notes that both Capital and 702 generally adhered to the legislation set by the South African government, despite not being legally bound to do so. During this period, anti-apartheid sentiments grew among black and white South Africans, and censorship was still a major characteristic of the South African popular music market. While counter-hegemonic struggle through music did present itself, it was to subdued effect because of the censorship practices of the South African government. "Although very little was banned by the directorate, the SABC's relentless attack on musicians' freedom obscured the degree to which the government was censoring music, since the general public was unaware of the extent to which radio play was controlled." (Drewett, 2003: 155) As has been indicated already by Joseph Shabalala's comment, the practice of self-censorship was effected by the Bantu Program Control Board, in that they could prevent songs from receiving any airplay. This was aided by the pressure exerted on record companies by the South African government, as 'offensive' albums and songs were legally banned. "The record companies in no way took it upon themselves to reinforce whatever machinations the state had in mind as far as directing culture, but the bottom line for them was, and always is, and probably always will be, that they want to make money." (Allingham, quoted in Drewett, 2003: 156). Additionally, the South African police were active in censoring 'offensive' live music performances, usually through brute force, either by arresting people, or by confiscating property (Drewett, 2003: 157).

Beginning in 1968, when the United Nations General Assembly accepted Resolution 2396, a cultural boycott was imposed on South Africa. With fewer international artists touring to South Africa, white South Africans receded further into the "cultural isolation" described by Hamm (1985: 162). The boycott would have some paradoxical effects when protest artists from South Africa were not allowed to perform overseas, for example Johnny Clegg and Savuka were barred from playing at Nelson Mandela's seventieth birthday tribute (Drewett, 2003: 160). The South African music industry, then, experienced stunted growth in that its incumbent artists did not have access to an international system of provision.

An important occurrence in terms of this thesis was that of the Soweto uprising in 1976, which caused a major break in black South Africans' listening habits (and consequent emergent artists). According to Allingham (2005), archivist for Gallo Records, the 1976 generation

> basically regarded all of the music that their parents listened to, which was Mbaqanga, African Jazz, Penny whistle Jive, all that stuff… as being 'sell out' music. It was actually politically incorrect… the rebellion in Soweto then spread throughout the entire country. It was as much a rebellion against their parents as it was against the government. They were pissed off because their parents had basically become part of the system, and they weren't, sort of, burning the place down… I think there's frequently a sort of impulse in an upcoming generation, to sort of establish an identity, etc., but in this case it was obviously reinforced to a large to degree by the political situation at the times.

One can observe obvious similarities here between the rebelliousness expressed by 1950s youth in America (though the Sowetan rebellion was a heightened version). Just as in America, where rebellion against youths' parents was likely to have been fueled by the political climate at the time (popular writings, McCarthyism, etc.), so the case is true for the Sowetan case. Different to the case of the USA, however, the Sowetan youth did not avidly consume a new genre, but instead began listening to the African-American pop of the time (e.g. Earth, Wind, and Fire). The result was that many black South African bands that emerged generally imitated these styles, such as Stimela (Allingham, 2005). One can speculate, though, that if there had been a distinct genre of music at the time, particularly one that adults disapproved of, it would have been as vehemently consumed by the black South African youth as rock'n'roll was by 1950s the white American youth.

Apart from the case of the Sowetan rebellion, while there has been a gradual progression of tastes in accordance with emerging genres; there have not been any major (adopted simultaneously by a mass) breaks in South African consumers' listening patterns, and this so even into the present day, as is asserted in the next section.

Black South African music was brought prominently into the international pop system of provision in 1986 with Paul Simon's album, *Graceland*, in which he used Ladysmith Black Mambazo for as backing vocalists (see Erlmann, 1994; Mitchell, 1993; Meintjes, 1990). This provides a pertinent example of the dominant signal incorporating an 'authentic' genre into pop. Simon was criticized widely for cultural hegemonic practices, but commentators such as Meintjes (1990) saw the album essentially as a positive expansion of the pop genre, despite any hegemonic undertones. The stability of the dominant signal is illustrated by this case too. When Ladysmith Black Mambazo toured to the UK in 1999, they sold millions of records (Stella, 2005) to those wishing to consume the 'authentic' version of the genre.

The end of apartheid in 1994 saw the establishment of the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (SATRA) and the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA). The functions of these regulators was taken over by the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) in 2000 (ICASA, 2005). ICASA derives its mandates from legal statutes focused largely on freedom of speech. ICASA plans, controls and monitors the frequency spectrum, and has control over licensing issues (ICASA, 2005).

4.2.7 Overview

The importance of signal control is abundantly evidenced in the history of the South African popular music market. The SABC was for years able to help enforce the ideology of separate development through its use of popular music. The fact that an overt national rebellion only occurred in 1976 may be taken as evidence of this. Two factors set the SABC's control of the signal apart from the corporate control of the signal in the history of the western music market. First, and most obviously, they were aided in their control by apartheid legislature, and consequently by physical police force. As a state monopoly they could censor whatever they saw fit, and so isolated incidences of social rebellion were undoubtedly not publicized. The simultaneous adoption of rock'n'roll by the American national youth was surely aided by increased collective social awareness (though it must be noted at this point that rebellion in the South African case is different to that of America, in that it was not essentially elitist). When, in the South African case, awareness of social rebellion reached national proportions, the adoption of a representative protest genre of music was prevented by the government's physical control. If the 1976 youth had attempted to adopt a new (or even an existing) genre of music to represent their protest, the apartheid government would surely have rendered this impossible by the exertion of physical force.

The second aspect that distinguishes the SABC's control from American corporate control, pre-1950s, at least, is that they appeared to be more sensitive to the humanistic elements of music consumption discussed in chapter 3. When the use of traditional music on Radio Bantu was realized to be transparent in its intentions, the SABC adapted and sought genres of music that were less obviously trying to promote false consciousness. It might also be supposed, in terms of chapter 3's findings, that a greater variety of choice would have allowed for Adorno's pseudo-individualization to occur, thereby subduing rebellion.

As concerns the notion of authenticity, the SABC seemed to suggest and promote authenticity in Afrikaans folk music through their practices, though it is not clear what this entailed beyond use of the language. Among the white English population, authenticity (and rebellion) does not appear to have constituted a major part of preference formation, perhaps largely due to their "geographical and cultural isolation." Again, if any specific genre of music had been associated with protest music, it would surely have been confiscated.[85] The inherent hybrid nature of black South African music could have blurred whatever authenticity was attachable to those genres. Also, many of those musics appear to have arisen primarily for their social (populist) use value, as much as for their artistic (elitist) value. This social value necessitates a more simplistic structure to ensure its 'dance-ability', rendering it categorically pop (Willis, 1990: 47). On this note, Hamm (1991: 165) notes that "true jazz" (i.e. jazz unadulterated by pop) never had an appeal that "extended to the largely uneducated rural blacks who made up a majority of the population." This suggests that the high tendency towards elitism (and rebellion) in the western market is a result of higher standards of education. These issues are discussed at the end of the chapter in accordance with the findings of the next two sections.

Additionally, the South African case shows the importance, in the creation and consumption of new music, of a subordinate system of provision running parallel to the dominant system. This is evidenced in the case of the black press in the 1950s and 1960s. Whereas the dominant system saw the government recording and circulating

[85] Drewett (2003) notes, for example, Roger Lucy and Bernoldus Niemand as white protest artists, but they played mainstream white music.

music, trying to establish a retrospective sense of well being, the black press focused on other current styles of music and ideals. The interaction of the two systems accounts in large part for the nature (hybrid of western and local ideals) and progression of black South African music. Again, the physical force of the South African Nationalist government limited the amount of product differentiation that was developed, but allowed for just enough to subdue rebellion. In this sense, it acted for many years as an opiate against rebellion, much as the phenomenon of consumerism appears to do in the western market for many individuals. The western-local hybridization of the musics encapsulated fragments of both western and local ideals which people could consume. In the Beckerian sense, they were able to consume western glamour without disinvesting the capital they had invested into ‘traditional’ music styles[86].

4.3 The South African Popular Music System of Provision

In order to gain insight into the current state of the South African music market, interviews were conducted with some of the various agents in the market that were identified in chapter 3. It is important to be aware, however, that these answers reflect individual (or company) opinions, as is emphasized by David Du Plessis (2005) of the Recording Industry of South Africa (RISA):

> … as many companies as there are in South Africa, every one of them… ends up in a situation where they represent a repertoire, which is always slightly different to any other record company. So as many record companies as you may choose to visit … they’d all be able to give you, probably something that is roughly similar in certain ways, but also slightly different. Also, depending on what background they have, and what route they’ve followed to reach where they are at this point in time, would probably also give you a different picture.

By comparing and contrasting these opinions, it was hoped to get a more or less general opinion on some of the issues characteristic of the market, to get a general idea of the workings of the market, and to gain insight into how the market differs

[86] “Traditional” is a sensitive word. This thesis does not aim debate the politics of the word.

from the UK and USA markets, and how it might be expected to change in the future. This perspective of the market is important and is rarely reflected in the literature, particularly in the South African literature. The result is a rich description of the workings of the market, from which theoretical links are analyzed. Record sales for individual artists, and even individual genres were difficult to come by, but the interviews provided adequate information to provide insight into what the most popular genres in South Africa are.

Since the interviews reflect agents' opinions, their respective backgrounds need to be contextualized.[87]

Ivor Haarburger	Managing director of Gallo Records, independent label, but one of the largest record companies in the country, acts as a major label
Antos Stella	Former managing director of Gallo Records, now runs Astel, an independent label focused on South African music
Rob Allingham	Archivist for Gallo Records
Roy Harman	Sales and marketing executive in international branch EMI South Africa
Clive Rowling	Sales and marketing executive at Gresham Records, independent label
Nicole Fox	Popular DJ on 5fm, national commercial radio station
Nick Grubb	Programming manager at 5fm
Zane Derbyshire	Programming manager for Algoa FM, local Eastern Cape (largely adult) commercial station
David Du Plessis	General manager of RISA
Ross Learmonth	Vocalist and guitar player for Prime Circle, South African (pop-) rock band (one of the most successful pop/rock bands currently in South Africa, in terms of radio play and album sales)
Dirk Boshoff	Bass player for Prime Circle
Lee Thompson	Trumpet player and management for Hog Hoggidy Hog, South

[87] To aid the reader in noting the context of each agent, instead of the Harvard in-text referencing technique of displaying the reference's year of origin in parentheses, the agents' affiliation will be noted where it is relevant, e.g. Haarburger (Gallo).

	African “afro-punk-ska” band (Thompson, 2005), been playing in South Africa’s medium performance circuit for approximately ten years. Unsigned to a record label. Former trumpet player for the Springbok Nude Girls, highly successful South African rock band.
Ross MacDonald	Trombone player for Hog Hoggidy Hog (abbreviated to HHH from this point on)

The structure of the industry is essentially the same as the market in the western world, the primary agents being the composers/performers (who can have their private ensemble of managers/agents etc.), record companies, the media who expose the goods, of which radio is seen to be the primary agent, retailers, and consumers. With the rise of digital technology, cellular telephone networks and *content aggregators* were identified as additional agents (Stella, Astel). A content aggregator is a mediator between record companies and cell phone networks or companies in developing a ring tone for phones. What surfaced in some of the interviews was the feeling that retailers play a major gatekeeping role in the market (Allingham, Gallo; Harman, EMI). This was a fairly unanticipated finding, given the relative sparseness of music retailers (relative to radio) in the academic literature. Unfortunately the retailers approached were either reluctant to be interviewed, or the manager (or staff member responsible for placing orders) was seldom present[88]. Thus details of retailers’ ordering policies were not attained, but a general idea of the workings of retailers in South Africa was gained from the interviews.

It should be noted that, because most of the agents concerned are primarily concerned with serving the middle class market (and higher income groups), the findings of the chapter will better reflect that market. Because many of the agents do have an understanding of the working class sector of the market, analysis of this market is attempted as best as possible.

[88] E.g. at the Musica branch in Grahamstown, the top manager of the branch comes in every Thursday morning for a few hours.

4.3.1 Market Segmentation

Despite the homogenizing effects of pop (as will be made apparent) aided by the practices of commercial stations, the market is segmented strongly into different niches with their respective audiences. The biggest two local genres in South Africa are gospel music, and *boeremusiek*[89] (Du Plessis, RISA). Steve Hofmeyer (Afrikaans artist) was the biggest selling South African artist of 2004. For purposes of simplicity, genres can be divided roughly into *boeremusiek,* supported generally by the white Afrikaans community; rock, traditionally supported by the white English community (see Hamm, 1985); and gospel, *kwaito*, and other African popular music supported generally by the black communities.

4.3.1.1 *Boeremusiek*

As noted in the previous section, the Afrikaans community has historically been active in supporting Afrikaans heritage, with the formation of over thirty *boereorkeste* by 1960, and competitions supporting Afrikaans competitions (Hayman and Tomaselli, 1989; Hamm, 1991: 155). It appears that today the Afrikaans community has similar sentiments, and its members are clinging to their culture zealously, as is reflected (at least in part) by their consumption patterns. This is a normative suggestion, but one that is supported almost unanimously by the market agents that were interviewed (the exception being Du Plessis, who was ambiguous). In spite of the fact that the population by no means constitutes the largest demographic in the country, the culture is rife: "… there are dedicated programmes on TV for *boeremusiek*, there are dedicated festivals, there are dedicated restaurants, there's a dedicated public." (Stella, Astel) The success of *boeremusiek* in South Africa can be summarized by three interplaying factors:

1) The music is produced and sold very cheaply (Haarburger, Gallo);
2) The audience is clinging to its culture and is *dedicated* (Stella, Astel);

[89] This translates directly to 'farmer music.' It is the generic term for Afrikaans folk music and its contemporary form. It refers generally to all music sung in Afrikaans with the exception of rock (Karen Zoid and Fokofpoliesiekar are examples of rock artists with Afrikaans lyrics).

3) The primary promotional strategy involves artists touring vigorously to small (and large) Afrikaans community clusters throughout the country (Stella; Harman, EMI)

The first factor above is self-explanatory, and follows the most basic microeconomic principle, that a decrease in price increases demand. As regards the second factor, because the audience is so dedicated, they have both a higher likelihood per person of purchasing music, and the music is able to transcend age barriers. The third factor can be elaborated upon. For many people in the smaller Afrikaans community centres, live music may be a primary social event. The music is thus endowed with significant social value, which would allow many consumers to associate the music with the geniality of such events, and so listening to the music might provide an escapism so as "to escape the hardships of daily life." (Reublin, 2000) Thus this tactic of touring to small communities, more so than in other genres, is an essential part of *boeremusiek*'s system of provision, that accounts for much its success.

4.3.1.2 Rock

Hamm (1991: 162) contends that, because of white English South Africa's cultural and geographical isolation in the 1950s and 1960s, their musical tastes were shaped largely by touring artists, who were "middle of the road rock; often more pop than rock…" This seems to have had a somewhat lasting effect. Haarburger's (Gallo) opinion that there exists a substantial rock scene in South Africa is testament to this, as he cites American bands that are all included in 'Top 40' formatting as his primary examples (e.g. Green Day, Staind).[90] Of the numerous sub-genres of rock that have developed and progressed since the 1960s, for example punk, metal, and 'rap-core' (hybrid of metal and hardcore rap), modern rock styles in South Africa have very limited airplay outlets, unless they can be classed as pop music as well. The primary source used to be 'The Night Zoo' a late night show on 5fm dedicated to modern rock, which was discontinued some years ago to bring 5fm in line with their purely commercial format. Now limited airplay is given on local campus radio stations

[90] That Mr Haarburger cites predominantly pop artists as representative of rock artists is testament both to the insignificance of the hard rock market, and the extent to which the white English market is characterized by pop culture (and to the false consciousness exerted by pop music).

(Rowling, Gresham). Consequently, the modern rock, or hard rock, market in South Africa is a fairly small niche market.

> …we have not lost any appreciable numbers since the Night Zoo went off air. In fact when it moved off weekday night-times we actually grew audience. The difficulty with modern (harder, more niched) rock when it comes to our format is that the audience that follows it is relatively small, though they are an active audience who have a higher propensity to buy a new album per 1000 people than, say, lovers of commercial pop. What we need is a rock format station to unearth and develop the genre in this country like Yfm does for hip-hop and *kwaito*. (Grubb, 5fm)

Similar to the example of *boeremusiek,* Grubb's comment suggests an intensity of the modern rock audience, indicating a high propensity for consumption. Rowling (Gresham) notes that in 2004, Gresham released album from American metal band, *Cradle of Filth,* which sold over 10 000 copies. Stella (Astel) similarly expresses the possibility of a niche station, like Yfm, for rock music, while also suggesting potential political agendas in South African broadcasting:

> I would've thought that this would have happened down, particularly over the coast – down Durban, you know, because that's where a lot of our Rock bands are coming from. Nobody has grabbed the opportunity to do a radio station like… a Yfm down in Durban…it could come to licenses, I don't know if people applied, and licenses just weren't granted – and licenses were perhaps given ahead of it, perhaps because it's seen as a white genre of music? (Stella)

The fact remains, however, that since rock music is so anchored as a 'white genre', and the white population is far smaller than the black population in South Africa, a niche in the 'white' market is a lot smaller than a niche in the 'black' market, and less commercially viable for radio. While hard rock fans might have a higher propensity to purchase a rock album, radio is essentially unconcerned with album sales as opposed to listenership figures (see Frith, 2001a). What this does is drastically increase the search costs of those wishing to consume hard rock, who may have to turn to the Internet or to international trade publications for information. In spite of pop's power over rock, successful South African pop-rock bands such as Prime Circle do not see the band as a sustainable career in South Africa:

> Well you might be able to sell 50 000 albums and you're lucky, and that's about two rand per album and then you've got, what? Not even enough cash to buy a combi to tour around the country with. So, I mean, we do ok, we're not struggling, I just don't think this could keep up for too many years… (Learmonth, Prime Circle)

On the prospects for rock in the country, Derbyshire (Algoa FM) remarks,

> You know, I don't understand it, I don't know why the record companies don't tell these people… I mean, you've got no market for rock, and yet you've got every Tom, Dick, and Harry in the country wanting to be in a rock band. The record companies should say to them, 'Look, this is what you should be doing: you should be in a pop band, or and R&B band, or…' whatever. There's just no market for rock in this country.

4.3.1.3 *Kwaito*/Hip Hop

As noted in the previous section, black South African music over the last century has been inseparable from western music (Hamm, 1991, 1985; Erlmann, 1994, 1998). The SABC's strategy of promoting the ideology of separate development in the 1960s using traditional music failed as the effects of colonialism and the pull of western ideals were too strong. This has occurred now the point where the word, 'traditional', is largely undefined when used to refer to South African music: "I hate to use the word, 'traditional', because let's face it, that's a pretty loaded word." (Allingham, Gallo) Harman (EMI) uses the term 'urban stations' to refer to black radio stations, suggesting that the forced migration of black labourers to industrial cities during apartheid has had an effect to the extent that an 'urban sound' might be used to refer to 'black music' in South Africa. The decade thus far has seen the rise of *kwaito*, a South African music style borrowing largely from American hip hop. Yfm in

Johannesburg is a station dedicated to *kwaito* and hip hop, and has attained substantial revenues in terms of advertising (Stella, Astel). The popularity of *kwaito* is aptly expressed by Stella: "there are a million people trying to get into *kwaito* because when it sells, it sells in volumes."

'*Kwaito*' is derived from the Afrikaans word, *kwaai*, meaning 'angry' or 'mean' (colloquial). Its instrumentation is primarily backing tracks, and vocals are more representative of a chanting, or shouting, than rapping (Wikipedia, 2006). Thus the sampling and the amelodic vocals are indicative of the hip hop influence. Its rhythm is typically more continuous than is the case with many hip hop songs (which often change timing or tempo within the song). Broadly, *kwaito*'s market is the black middle class youth, but it is consumed largely by the black working class youth as well (Stella, Astel). With apartheid having ended eleven years ago, and the ANC's policies of middle class expansion taking effect (Louw, 1998), many black consumers have found themselves moving to higher income groups. This may account for the more distinct break with previous South African styles. While the apartheid era black working class did look conspicuously to the west with aspiration, exposure to the west was more limited. Presently, with the combined effects of globalization and the changing of class strata, many black South Africans have increased exposure to western styles, and particularly African-American styles, especially through media channels such as MTV (Harman, 2005). This can be argued to account for the conspicuous western influence observed in *kwaito*, and the popularity of hip hop and *kwaito* among black South Africans.

Interestingly, Stella (Astel) notes a trend in present *kwaito* artists to incorporate more melodic sounds into their music: "…the Malaikas and the Mafikizolas – they're moving away from *Kwaito*, it's more Afro-fusion fused with *Kwaito*, and I think that's more where the music's going to come from." If this is the trend, it is yet to be seen whether this music will still be termed '*kwaito*', or whether a new genre will be established. Another trend in recent years has been pop's adoption (parasitism) of *kwaito*, exemplified by the collaboration of *kwaito* star, Mandoza, and 'teenybop' star, Danny K. This collaboration seems at odds with *kwaito*'s origin of expressing anger, or the hip hop-type 'meanness' the genre encompasses, but it does certainly add another fragmented ideal to the South African pop genre.

4.3.1.4 Gospel

Gospel music in South Africa is closely linked with its large contemporary African-American contingent, as well as having a more local contingent:

> The stuff that Lusanda does… it reflects the sort of Gospel music that has been around in this country for over 150 years, that is a mixture of, again, African-American influences, and local, indigenous musics mixed up together. Now the stuff that Rebecca and Pure Magic and those guys put out tends to be a little more of a sort of glitzy, show business kind of stuff. (Allingham, Gallo)

Naturally, content is of primary importance. The popularity of Gospel can be argued to be attributed to the effects of colonialism and early missionaries. Christianity is rife in South Africa, not least among the black populations.

4.3.1.5 Other Afropop:

Afropop is defined as "Contemporary African music in its wide variety. Usually refers to urban, electric dance music." (Afropop, 2005) This definition includes *kwaito*, currently the most popular South African style of Afropop. Another large-selling genre of South African music has traditionally been *maskanda*, which is characterized by Zulu style guitar picking, and one continuous song per artist which evolves as the artist's story evolves. *Maskanda* now tends to be broken into a more fit-for-western-consumption (approximately) twelve tracks per album (Wikipedia, 2006). In the process, it has begun to utilize elements of many other genres, thus it is characterized under afropop. The remainder of music to come out of South Africa is extremely difficult to classify. The South African website, www.peakperformances.co.za, pays tribute to contemporary South African musicians, and gives descriptions of their music styles: for example, Busi Mhlongo whose music style "draws on various South African styles – mbaqanga, maskanda, marabi and traditional Zulu, fused with contemporary elements from jazz, funk, rock, gospel, rap, opera, reggae and West African music…" (Peak Performances, 2005)[91] Of Tucan Tucan, it is said "It is not easy to describe Tucan Tucan's music. A kaleidoscope comes to mind… Latino rhythms like salsa, samba and bossa nova and African elements such as those utilized in Kwasa Kwasa, Marrabenta and Ju Ju are used…" (Peak Performances, 2005). As such it is difficult to define much of the music, except under the general title of Afropop. It is also difficult to analyze specific markets. The majority of these artists rely on live performances as their main form of public exposure.

As distinct as the above genres are, so too are their respective consumer bases. It seems, then, that South African consumption patterns have been perpetuated by apartheid to a large degree, as concerns the broad ethnic categorization by apartheid of white English, white Afrikaans, and black people (with the notable exception of *kwaito*'s recent entry into pop). Before this is discussed further, an understanding of the market's system of provision is required.

4.3.2 The Independents and the Majors

Although all of the majors operate in South Africa, Gallo (an independent) and EMI are the largest companies (Haarburger, Gallo). Thus Gallo in most respects functions as a major (in terms of power and budget), and is included in discussion as a major, but unlike the (international) majors, it is not affected by what happens with their overseas companies: "Just remember that whatever happens with a major there [in the UK and USA] has a ripple effect here. So if there's a merger, it happens here too." (Stella, Astel) Additionally, many of the mergers have effects on independents in South Africa. For example an independent in South Africa might represent a host of foreign independents. But when those independents are bought by majors overseas, they can no longer be represented by the independent in South Africa. Haarburger (Gallo) describes the effect of the merger mania[92] over the past decades:

[91] Though Busi Mhlongo's music is often described as *maskanda*.
[92] (Garofalo, 1999: 338)

> In the early days RPM [an independent closely affiliated with Gallo] had a lot of independent labels. It used to represent Virgin, it represented A&M, it represented Island, it had a whole lot of independents, and that was the strength of RPM, but if you look what happened: Virgin got bought out by EMI, so they lost that; MCA went to Universal, so that went out… A&M went to Universal; Island went to Universal; Motown went to Universal; and that was the end of RPM…

According to Stella (Astel), the majors' primary concern at present is with international product, and it is the function of independents to capitalize on niche markets, trying to release artists for this market locally and globally: "With the majors you have your affiliates internationally. But history tells you that… specifically in our genres of music [i.e. indigenous South African musics], there are very few majors that will sign something out of the African continent and release it entirely, right throughout their territories…" (Stella) This is in stark contrast to Du Plessis (RISA), who claims that almost 70% of local music released in 2004 was released by the majors: "So it's not like it's purely South African music which is being dealt with by independent labels to the exclusion of almost anything else." Despite the majors releasing the vast majority of local recordings, there are over 200 independents operating in South Africa (RISA, 2005). It is reasonable to assume, then, that most independents are primarily concerned with recording non-mainstream genres of music. Astel is concerned exclusively with African music, and it is apparent that Stella's position on the function of independent labels arises out of personal preference:

> I think that the independents are driven by a passion. I'm not saying that any of us don't want to make a profit – that's why we're in the business – but it's driven by a passion too. I mean, the majors just can't. And I think that's probably hitting the nail on the head for why I left… that's literally probably in a nutshell, I would say, where the majors are: the critical mass into the South African market, and your international product (Stella).

It can be argued from the above excerpt that the majors are very rigid in terms of targeting strictly mass markets, whereas many of the independents will sign artists who fall under genres that will not be guaranteed to sell to large volumes. Essentially, the majors will sign their artists on backward-looking criteria (i.e. if the genre has proven to do well in the past, then the artist can be signed), whereas independents, having smaller overheads per release (Stella), can afford to target markets that are known to be smaller. This is consistent with Harman (EMI), who describes the process of budget allocation for new releases in EMI as such:

> …budgets are based on sales, and more so forecasted sales. So over time – with a new artist it's a bit hard, because you kind of go on a *gut feeling* I suppose, asking people in the industry what they think of the release and then you try and verify from that. And then your budgets get basically permitted through that. But if you've got a release of an artist or band that's on their third album, you look at their previous sales history, and then you take into consideration also the material of the new CD, and then try and forecast to your best abilities what it's going to sell over a fiscal year, and the all time sales volumes.

Thus one can observe a gatekeeping role played by the majors, in that their releases will be based predominantly on what is already perceived to be popular (as is consistent with the UK and USA pop markets). This trend, however, is largely influenced by radio programming:

> That is fundamentally probably the most difficult for independents [gaining radio airplay]. I mean, I'm not saying that majors who are in local music don't have that same challenge. But, hey, have a Mariah Carey or a Mohatella Queens and see what's going to be played on radio first – it goes without saying (Stella, Astel).

Thus there appears to be a complex nature between costs of production and what genres of music may be produced by independents and majors. Majors can be said to be essentially risk-averse, with retrospective methods for signing artists. The independents naturally have much smaller budgets per release, making airplay more difficult to attain, and are usually unable to produce music videos, which cost about

R450 000 (Stella). However, it is the fact that they have smaller overheads that allows them to be more flexible with what genres they can support. If majors are risk-averse, it is not necessarily correct to say that independents aimed at niche markets are risk-oriented. According to Stella (Astel), independents are generally closer to their consumers than are majors. This implies that the niche needs to be identified first, so that they can know that they are likely to cover their overheads. From the above arguments, then, independents and majors conduct essentially different kinds of research when defining criteria for signing artists: the majors regularly look at past media and sales trends, while the independents research more live performances (effectively they do more field work) to discover the viability of pursuing a certain niche, and their methods could be said to be more current-looking.

4.3.3 Gatekeepers in the Market and Payola

4.3.3.1 Mass Media

The above discussion points to the effectiveness of the power of radio airplay in determining what will be signed by the majors. While Stella (Astel) contends that record companies hold more power than radio, this is at odds with her struggle to gain radio airplay, though one might argue that it has not affected what genres of music Astel will sign. Du Plessis's (RISA) view on the notion of gatekeepers is more dismissive, to which he remarks, "Nobody has a monopoly on what is popular. That is determined by personal taste out there, about whether people will like it or not. If they like it enough, they will want it." The representatives of the other record companies interviewed all acknowledged the prominent position of radio in the South African market, as illustrated by the elaborate quotes below:

Ivor Haarburger (Gallo):

> …with the radio stations, they wait to see what's going to happen from the record companies, and I think, instead of looking at what's going to happen

in their own territory, they're looking at what's happening internationally. Now, in the UK a couple of weeks ago we had Axl F with 'The Frog'. Now, because it was a hit in the UK, other territories caught on. But I promise you if it was not a hit in the UK, how many other territories would have caught on and *made it a hit*? ... Record companies read radios to break, but radio is also looking to see what's happening internationally, and keeping on terms. [emphasis added]

Rob Allingham (Gallo):

Well, in the first place, if there's a gatekeeper here, I think it's radio. That would be my opinion. And basically, it's the radio to a great extent, and to a somewhat lesser extent it is the retailers… The record companies can obviously influence the process, to a certain degree, and the record companies are always trying to come up with something, that will interest the radio and retailers, but at the end of the day they can only hope to influence them; they are not the decision makers. So those are my gatekeepers.

Roy Harman (EMI):

I think the consumer is actually the last point of that gatekeeper thing, and that's actually very frustrating, because you get stuff that, let's say if it's a gimmicky hit, then the label would identify that, then the radio stations would pick up on it because it's a gimmick, then the retailers would buy a shitload of units of it, and then the consumers get fed that, because that's what they're hearing on the radio, and that's what they're exposed to in the shop and then that's what they're buying. And then something that's really good doesn't get that exposure because it's different and it's unique and it's original and it's cool – it doesn't get that exposure because radio doesn't accept it and doesn't play list it. And because radio isn't play listing it, the retail aren't going to take the stock, and the stock isn't going to be displayed and people aren't going to be exposed to it, and that release just falls away, basically.

Clive Rowling of Gresham, an independent label, agrees with Stella that the main hurdle for independents is radio exposure, as it is what "tells the public what is available." Ultimately, it is able to influence what people play, and not just what they listen to. The fact that it tells the public what is available is at odds with the idea of consumer sovereignty.

An example of radio's criteria for play listing a song is given by Nick Grubb (5fm), the programme manager for 5fm (a national commercial South African radio station):

> Music sources are, in order of number of submissions;
> [1]Record company submissions
> [2]Direct artist submissions (unsigned independents)
> [3]"Hit Disc" compilation albums from the US – radio station format-specific music.
>
> Criteria is [sic] music that would broadly fit into the "pop" category. We are a mainstream Top 40 radio station, so this is the type of sound we target. Contemporary music recorded to good standard. We play ballads from time-to-time, but generally it's up-beat music with a strong chorus (and/or "hook"). The more research we do (we do this weekly, and have done so for the last two 1/2 years), the more we base decisions on types of popular music that have proven successful in the past. As an example, currently our most popular tracks in research are Louise Carver's "Impossible Love" and Black Eyed Peas "Don't Phunk With My Heart".

Similarly, Derbyshire (Algoa FM) remarks that Algoa typically looks at *Billboard* and other radio stations to form their play lists: "Our policy is generally to play the hits, not to break them." Grubb describes 5fm as a mainstream station. This description would imply that any station that is not a mainstream station appeals to one or more niche markets. Naturally, any mainstream station, then, would appeal to a larger audience, and would be viewed by the majors as the key station on which to gain airplay. Consequently, they would most like to sign artists that have songs (of whatever genre) that have strong choruses or "hooks". Effectively, each genre should be homogenized in form and style, to fall under the general "pop" category. This homogenizing effect of pop, dictated by radio, means effectively that the 'culture' may be taken out of the subculture that a particular genre belonged to, as described in chapter 3. This is echoed by popular 5fm DJ, Nicole Fox:

> 5fm is a national, commercial, top 40 hit radio station. It cannot be everything to everyone and, as such, niche markets may have to be overlooked…The 5fm target market is part of the MTV generation – they want to hear bits of everything – all kinds of music – the hits in each genre. While we may lose some listeners who are firmly fixed in their niches we gain more numbers with people wanting to hear the best of a mix of genres.

This statement is concurrent with Haarburger's (Gallo) sentiments that radio stations are excessively concerned with international play listing. Within 5fm itself, the programme managers have almost complete control. This is in contrast to the USA market in its period of massive expansion in the 1960s (Peterson and Berger, 1990: 149), where DJs prided themselves on discovering new music, and their repertoire of air play songs formed a large part if their character. Fox (5fm) explains:

> My radio show (being fairly prime time) is almost one hundred percent play listed with only a few choice tracks scheduled periodically (approximately one per show). The playlisting of tracks is carefully controlled by the programme department who oversee the categorisation of, and thus the rotation of, the tracks... There is a programme strategy in place regarding the rotation and scheduling of tracks which, as a DJ, I trust implicitly and do not interfere at all. I do not allow for any audience discretion (i.e. song requests) on my show due to the almost one hundred percent playlisting. Any emails I may get regarding tracks/track selection/track rotation I will forward on to the programme department.

The fuzzy logic of the chart described in chapter 3 is illustrated accurately by 5fm's policy of how often to play a particular sing.[93]

> New entries rotate together at a relatively low frequency and research dictates whether or not a track attains enough popularity after 4-6 weeks of play to merit the chart. If it charts it rotates at increasingly higher frequency. After charting frequency slows progressively, or the song is taken off completely. Whilst our call-out research is taken seriously, there are times when songs are promoted in the chart due to listener requests, DJ feedback and the experience of our programming staff. (Grubb, 5fm)

Harman (EMI) describes the frustration in dealing with dogmatic radio stations when attempting to promote a new song or album:

> …we try and explain to them: 'Listen, you know, you can't identify yourself as just this type of radio station, because your listeners also enjoy this,' you know, and it's very frustrating sometimes, because it doesn't work. Like Gorillaz, for instance, the first single had a rap by De la Sol, and it was very much like a funky mix of rock and hip hop, and it would have gone down well in all radio stations, but some of the more urban radio stations didn't want to play it because Gorillaz is traditionally a white, Rock orientated band, so they just said 'No, it's not for us,' which is complete bullshit…

4.3.3.2 Relationship between Radio and Record Companies

The above sentiments from the record companies illustrate the strength of radio as a signal generator in the South African music market. It was noted that radio in the western market had potentially the most power in the market, but that they were essentially passive and were co-opted by the active record companies (as evidenced in the 2005 payola scandals). The above sentiments demonstrate clearly the passivity of

[93] 'One needs to have money to make money': Once a song reached a kind of minimum level of popularity, it enters the chart, and for that reason it is given more airplay, and consequently becomes more popular.

radio as a signal generator, thus the activeness of record companies needs to be assessed.

Representatives from the record companies indicated that their relationship with radio stations works usually on a professional-friendly basis. They indicated typically sending people of the same ethnicity as a particular radio station to deal with them so as to establish better rapport (Haarburger, Gallo), presenting formal data to the stations at specified meetings to convince them to play certain songs, and occasionally socializing with radio executives, usually at music functions (Harman, EMI). While of course none of the interviewees would be in a position to admit to any dealing in payola, some indicated that they have been approached, or are aware of it happening elsewhere:

> You know, no doubt it's happening, but there're so many spokes in the wheel that could make it happen, and it's just, for us, we don't want to get involved… if it broke out, and have our names involved – we just didn't want that, and nobody would want it. (Haarburger, Gallo)

> Yes it happens on two stations that I know about. It is a serious and deep-rooted issue but thankfully in my eight years of exposure to the industry I have never been approached (though someone did offer my music compiler a cell phone once, though it was subtle and I am not able to prove it was an "exchange" offer on the promoters' part.) It was immediately reported to me. I am not aware of any overt payola activity in the commercial radio sector in SA. (Grubb, 5fm)

> …not with radio. With print. We have people with print publications who come to us and they're like 'We'll give you good reviews if you do us personal favours,' type thing – 'I've just bought a new house, I need to furnish it… what can you give me?' type thing. So we get that and that really pisses me off, and I try to expose it… but apart from that… radio's quite clean as far as EMI's concerned. Very clean, actually… America is different in the sense that it's kind of a known thing that in order to get something on radio you have to pay. You have pluggers that sometimes aren't actually part

> of the record company, they're outsourced by the record company, and the record company pays them a fee. And the pluggers have good relationships… (Harman, EMI)

Harman's comparison of the South African market to the American market suggests that South African record companies' techniques of coercion are much less sophisticated than American companies'. Whereas American companies outsource 'pluggers' to pay radio stations so as not to tarnish their names, South African stations appear unconcerned to attempt such tactics.

4.3.3.3 Retailers

The other gatekeeper identified by agents was retailers.

> … It's very, very difficult to get retailers to stock this stuff. Retailers have, also, a tremendous amount of power to decide whether or not something is going to fly… The record companies can obviously influence the process, to a certain degree, and the record companies are always trying to come up with something, that will interest the radio and retailers, but at the end of the day they can only hope to influence them; they are not the decision makers. (Allingham, Gallo)

> I would say retail is… very powerful, it's probably the most powerful actually, and radio second… if you don't get the radio support then retail aren't going to take a lot of units of the product… there's no communication and people aren't hearing it. (Harman, EMI)

Essentially, Harman's argument suggests that retailers look to radio for what to stock. This would suggest in fact that radio generates the primary signal to retailers, and thus would be argued to be more important than retailers in gatekeeping.

While radio has the obvious function of letting the public know what is available, gaining radio play benefits record companies additionally in that the radio stations then give their testimony to a song. Grubb (5fm) indicates that brand loyalty and image play a part in 5fm's listenership figures. The benefit of this is summarized accurately by Fox (5fm): "We are perceived to be trendsetters and, as such, if we give our personal stamp of approval to their product it could boost sales." Nevertheless, radio's role as a gatekeeper of music is not all powerful, as they are competing with other, newer mass media channels such as MTV, VH1, and the Internet (Grubb). It seems, however, that the typical way to compete with those channels is to duplicate their play lists.

4.3.3.4 Artists and Gatekeepers

Members from both bands recognized radio as the primary signal generator and felt that pressure was exerted on artists (rock artists, at least) to conform to radio. While Boshoff (Prime Circle) suggested that Prime Circle was lucky in that their music fit well with radio format, Learmonth (Prime Circle) acknowledged that he sometimes kept the radio in mind when he was writing songs: "Sometimes I'm sitting on my bed playing guitar and just messing around and I come across something and say, 'hey, that'd go down well.' 'A slice of cheese,' I call it." (Learmonth) Thompson (HHH) believed that radio has a large impact on what people will listen to, and that if Hog Hoggidy Hog received radio airplay, more people would undoubtedly support them. The band's policy, however, is not to conform to radio pressures.

> We understand that we're not a commercial band, and I think that's part of what makes us 'The Hogs.' I believe that the fans we have support us for who we are, and because of our attitude… I mean, you've got the Blink 182s and the… the pop-punk genre… and I'm happy for them, I am. I can't say I like the music, but good for them anyway, I mean, they've created their own genre and they've got their fans… but no, that's just not us. (MacDonald, HHH)

Interestingly, Thompson remarked, "you've got to remember that there's a difference between 'selling', and 'selling out,'" highlighting the complexity of certain issues raised in chapter 3.

4.3.4 Activeness of Record Companies – Marketing and Ideal Creation

The record companies interviewed differed in the extent to which they 'hype' certain artists as belonging to a certain subculture with its associated ideologies. Haarburger (Gallo) hinted generally towards this tactic, but his discussion suggests more general superstar marketing:

> Today, you know, you might have stylists. You'll have an artist and say 'Guy, you're really looking a little bit crumby, you've got to look at your hair and just make you look like something – your clothes are wrong,' and often we actually employ stylists to look at the artist, to make sure the photo shoots are good, to make sure they look good on television, and we use quite a few people to do that.

Harman (EMI) stressed artistic freedom, both in song writing and an artist's image, at EMI. Usually they will guide artists, not forcefully, and occasionally if they receive a "gimmicky" song they will stylize an artist for that song:

> Well, it depends on the artist, once again. If you've got an artist who is very much their own character, and you let them flow and your art promotions basically take from that artist's character and kind of highlight it – like you say, they hype it up, and they expose the artist for what they're for. Sometimes you have an artist that's more – their music is more 'gimmicky' as such, a more manufactured pop, as such… we get songs basically bought for them … like Pop Idols in a sense.

Learmonth (Prime Circle) has similar sentiments:

> We're lucky to be with Gresham, I mean, they really do look out for us. Once we were there, and we'd proven to be a success, I mean, they support us more than tell us what to do.

The lack of active, or forceful, marketing by these two companies could stem from two reasons. Firstly, they could sign the artists initially because they are content with the image generated by the artist, thus the artist will have to have done their own marketing prior to approaching the record company. Secondly, as Stella (Astel) contends, there is simply a vast lack of research done in the South African music market:

> A couple of years ago, I actually asked this very question: When last did the music industry do some market research on their consumer base? I think that in this country the consumer base has changed so radically. What we saw as the traditional, rural consumer may not necessarily be that person anymore. And I think that you can see it in the sales, in terms of the genres of music, you can see where the music is selling. You can see the IPod generation, you can see what we saw as the rural generation, which has now really migrated into urban, and *I think the industry really, really needs to do research*. [italics added]

With the retrospective forecasting technique that the record companies (majors) are argued here to have, which follows from the retrospective forecasting technique used on commercial radio stations (e.g. Grubb, 5fm; and Derbyshire, 5fm), one can deduce that there is such a heavy reliance on past trends in South African music that many agents would feel that there is no need to do such research. This assertion is, however, based on the mainstream sector of the market. While the assertion could not, at this stage, be applied to the entire industry, it is certainly conceivable that it applies to other popular sectors such as the *Kwaito* market. That Astel, who represents exclusively indigenous, less commercial artists, struggles to attain radio play for its artists is testament to this.

4.3.5 Piracy

RISA is the South African branch of the IFPI, and one of its primary functions is the combating of piracy. It achieves this primarily through awareness campaigns (RISA, 2005). It is funded by its members, consisting chiefly of record companies (Du Plessis, RISA). It is not possible to give a precise account of the current state of piracy in South Africa: "The only person who would have these figures is the pirate himself." (Du Plessis). Du Plessis contends that piracy is more of a threat now than it was with magnetic tapes because of the decreased time required by the pirate to make copies. Because of the substantial digital divide in South Africa, individuals downloading songs and file sharing is less of a threat than 'professional' pirates mass reproducing goods and massively undercutting prices (Du Plessis). Though it is not possible to accurately judge the effects of piracy, Du Plessis estimates the piracy trade to be roughly one third the size of the recording industry, amounting to an annual turnover of approximately R300 million. Commenting on the potential promotional role of piracy versus its negative effects, Du Plessis again indicated the difficulty in judging this: "Well, I don't think it's really possible to say that I will establish that album sales have taken a nose dive because of piracy. The thing might not sell because it is not good. There might be a number of other reasons. I could release a new album, and with no marketing campaign it won't sell." He did, however, indicate that RISA has seen positive results from the anti-piracy campaign launched in 2004, measured by a marked increase in confiscated goods. The general feeling of the other agents interviewed towards piracy is that it cannot be ignored, but it is not, at present, a devastating threat. Justification for this feeling includes the effect of the digital divide (Rowling, Gresham), the fact that the industry is finding ways to deal with piracy (Harman, EMI), and the fact that the relationship between technology and the market is changing (Haarburger, Gallo).

4.3.6 The Music Market and New Media

New media, and particularly mobile technology, is having a massive impact on the music market. 'Mobile' in this sense refers to all portable media technologies, of which a cellular telephone is one kind. Another primary example is MP3 players (e.g. IPods).

> Well already in our studios, we're making an extra track, especially for mobile. If we're doing a video, we'll do more close up shots of the artist for the mobile. So we're looking at all those extra activities, you know, with mobile rings, messages from the artist, putting their pictures on your mobiles. We believe that they'll [young consumers] change their ring tones every 7 weeks, so there's going to be new opportunities in the mobile world. (Haarburger)

Concerning cell phones alone, Stella (Astel) notes that apart from royalties from ring tones, the phone can become a marketing format: "3 million SMSs [text messages] right throughout Africa saying 'Check the new Lucky Dube album, available [wherever]… buy legitimate product only!'" She further gives an example of how effective ring tone marketing can be:

> I'll give you a good example of where youth is at: my daughter downloaded last night the Akon 'Lonely'… ringtone (polyphonic) onto her phone. I said 'How did you do it?' She said 'Ma, I've run out of airtime, because it cost me eight rand to download it.' But that's what they do. They just see it advertised and they just do it.

Rowling (Gresham) indicated that Gresham Records had just negotiated a huge deal converting a Prime Circle song into a ring tone. As an indicator of the effect new media might have on the South African market, EMI's five year forecast of the UK market predicts that 25% of business in the market will come from "sales on the

Internet of tracks, MP3 downloads, ring tunes – anything new media, basically." (Harman, EMI)

This may mean that future songs produced by artists and record companies are written with their ring tone potential in mind, so that there is even more of a focus on "hooks" and gimmicks, but one has yet to see.

As concerns Spence's (2001) claim, that the Internet will provide an interface whereby artists and consumers will be better matched, thus allowing a truer reflection of preferences to prevail, this is a matter of opinion among the agents interviewed:

> I think that people who are passionate about music are going to be able to find their way through the ins and outs… I'm passionate about books. I find, sometimes, Amazon is just incredibly difficult to sort through, you know, until you find your way and you find your niche, and you like the type of books – then you know how to use it. And the same thing's going to exist with music. And the same with downloads: more importantly than buying a full CD off the Internet, this is the era of IPods… (Stella, Astel)

And by contrast:

> In essence, that's how it should work, but in reality people are lazy and they just listen to the radio, and they don't really – unless you're a real music fan – you don't really go out on the Internet and search for music and do that. You'd just listen to what you listen to and people – for most people, music is secondary in their lives, so they just listen to what they're exposed to, and they don't really go out and source the music. (Harman, EMI)

Stella seems to view consumers as active, whereas Harman perceives them to be fundamentally passive. Their backgrounds are perhaps evidenced in their opposing stances. Stella left Gallo because she was passionate about a certain type of non-pop music. Harman works in the international section of EMI South Africa that deals almost exclusively in various kinds of imported pop music. Essentially, the effectiveness of Spence's claim depends on the degree of passion in consumers, or put differently, the activeness/passivity of music consumers. Stella and Harman's perspectives are reminiscent of the stances supported by Dewey and Lippmann respectively (where Dewey believed that the public can be educated, and Lippmann thought a more efficient system would be guided by an intellectual elite). The fact that pop is so prevalent in South Africa would suggest that the public is essentially lazy, as Harman suggests, but one need take into account the search costs imposed on the apparently marginalized niche genres in South Africa. This is discussed in further detail in the overview, section 4.5.

4.4 Consumer Survey

The previous section gives a fairly expressive account of the present state of the South African music market, utilizing various industry perspectives. Analysis of these perspectives adequately allows one to gain insight into the industrial workings of the market, particularly as concerns the market signal that is sent to various agents, and allows one to speculate on consumers' positions in the market. A particularly interesting comment was made by Stella (Astel), in whose opinion the industry desperately needs to do research into its consumer base. While Grubb (5fm) notes that 5fm does regular research on its consumers, this information is for internal use and was unfortunately not available.

A survey was conducted for this thesis aimed at gaining more insight into the position of music consumers in South Africa. The survey was constructed so as to test the various theoretical issues presented in this thesis. These include testing the rigidity of market segmentation among consumer demographics; testing the activeness/passivity of consumers; analyzing where consumers source their new music; gaining insight into the construction of consumers' preferences, for example by testing consumers' susceptibility to consume certain products because of their associated ideologies, and testing what aspects of music they find most important.

The final number of usable, completed questionnaires attained (70) is acknowledged to be too small and idiosyncratic to make any conclusive judgements[94], but the survey does provide a starting point for understanding South African music consumers, particularly middle class consumers. What the survey does do is show that the theoretical structure developed in this thesis seems plausible, and thus its strength is based on the breadth of research. The music market has been placed in context, allowing for the development of some data and impressions about the structural links that have been developed theoretically.

In light of the sample biases, the results of the survey are not used as primary data, and are presented in Addendum C, and the questionnaire used is displayed in Addendum B. The results are used in support of the findings of the chapter where relevant. Some contradictions appear amongst the survey data, as is explained in the Addendum. It is believed that a survey of this nature (aiming to quantify issues of preference formation) is of great relevance to future consumer studies (but would require a larger sample, as the South African population is so ethnically diverse), but it is suggested that future studies should use this approach in unison with longer, recorded interviews with consumers, as was done in the previous section with agents in the industry. The qualitative detail may aid in explaining some of the contradictions or uncertainties of the quantitative data, and allow for the development of more causal links. The most conclusive finding was a rigid market segmentation along racial lines.

4.5 Preferences and Product Development in South African Popular Music

The systems of provision approach again proves to be useful in analyzing the South African popular music market. This is evidenced, for example, during the apartheid era. While there was a clear primary system run by the Nationalist government, this system needs to be analyzed in accordance with the parallel system of the black press, and in light of the political tensions of the time. Where black people were unwilling to be insultingly conned into consuming the ideals of ‘the traditional’, they were able to

[94] (funding constraints prevented more questionnaires from being produced)

turn to the system of consumption provided by the black press, where they were able to consume the ideals of the western lifestyle, in the form of the glamorization of African-American lives, without consuming the ideals of their oppressors. Similarly, Fine and Leopold's "aesthetic illusion," in which "meaning of commodities derives both from the changing interpretation of given physical use values and from unchanging interpretation of potentially changing use value," (Fine and Leopold, 1993: 25) is able to explain why without the physical properties of the music changing, its imputed use values were changed.

The South African music market appears to have a number of systems of provision running parallel to each other. The commercial system circulates pop music, and there exist other popular systems, such as those which provide *kwaito*, gospel, *boeremusiek*, and *maskanda*. They constitute the same physical systems (i.e. record companies for production, radio for circulation, retail for distribution), but they differ as concerns the cultural aspects that initiate them. These divisions seem to be largely perpetuated by the market development under apartheid, as discussed in section 4.2.

Two reasons are suggested for this. Firstly, while the western market, and particularly the American market, encompasses what one might term a 'culture of rebellion,' this appears to be much less the case for the South African market. As was discussed in section 4.2, the notion of rebellion was made to be physically dangerous under the apartheid government. This was reinforced by a certain amount of "pseudo-individualization" they permitted, and from a "geographic and cultural isolation" from America, where social rebellion is prominent. From the survey, one gains the impression that pop culture is pervasive among middle class South Africans, but that there is less resentment of it than appears to be the case in much (not all) of American society. Additionally, it can be argued that in the black communities during apartheid, that music formed primarily a social function. Whereas transistor radios were available, the population density in townships would have prevented much private listening from occurring. As noted from the rock era in America, the private listening of music allows for the formation of more individualistic tendencies in individuals, which might aid in their individualistic 'demand for rebellion.'

Secondly, it appears that the gatekeepers in the market are passively reinforcing this trend with their retrospective gatekeeping techniques. One gains a sense from section 4.3 that radios passively rely on past trends (or international pop trends, in the case of commercial radio) to source their music. Major record companies seem to follow the trend of radio, and are thus indirectly passive in their gatekeeping techniques. What this has done is left an opening for independents in the market, but they are unable to gain much institutional support, in terms of radio airplay. This circular argument would suggest that South African preferences have been institutionalized, but not in the same manner as was suggested in chapter 3.

The American market seems to have embraced and institutionalized the notion of rebellion. The South African market has dealt with rebellion in two ways. ‘Rebellion’, in this case needs elaboration. Social rebellion against consumption norms involves actively choosing genres of music that are contrary to what the socio-cultural norms of one’s environment dictate they should be. Thus rebellion might occur *within* each system of provision (where a system of provision generally represents a specific cultural demographic group), or *between* them. Within each system, the population has been fragmented to the extent that the market that each system serves does not allow for a real possibility of this kind of rebellion.[95] This is what has determined relatively low product differentiation within each system of provision, for example Learmonth of Prime Circle said that he did keep the radio in mind when writing certain songs, terming such songs “a slice of cheese.” This is evidenced in the case of rock music in South Africa. Those wishing not to conform to pop, or pop-rock, would turn within the system to an ‘authentic’ rock form, such as metal. But, aided by a low presence of elitism and the gatekeeping trends, there would not be a large enough market to support this ‘rebellion group.’ Between the systems of provision, however, there is institutional support. Rebellion, or social distinction, (consuming contrary to social norms) would constitute a traditional pop fan (i.e. middle to upper class, usually white) consuming *maskanda* music. In this sense, there is an opening for rebellion. But as suggested above, there is a low tendency for rebellion as history dictates it.

[95] Note that it was suggested that in order for rebellion to occur at any significant levels, the ‘rebel consumer group’ needs institutional support.

Product differentiation, then, is limited within each system of provision. Though it does occur (testament to this would be the existence of so many independent labels), it is not sustainable. Consumers in the country, however, are given more choice than the system that serves them allows for, in that they might consume across systems. A step towards this is the collaboration, for example, between Danny K and Mandoza. While it may increase the level of 'pseudo-differentiation' of pop, using pop as a macrocosm for a single, however, as was suggested in chapter 3, people served by the pop system of provision might research and discover 'authentic' *kwaito*. This could further promote issues of authenticity, allowing the *kwaito* market to be fed, as well as the pop market.

On the other hand, one might speculate that 'authenticity' of music along each system of provision may be invoked merely by language, i.e. any music is authentically zulu if the lyrics are in zulu. This certainly does appear to be the case for much Afrikaans music. Haarburger (Gallo) notes that much of this music is produced far more cheaply than other kinds of music. This illustrates the importance of Fine and Leopold's "aesthetic illusion." The imputed use value of the product is that signifies Afrikaans heritage. The effect that this has on the physical property of the product, is that the music is subsequently adulterated, so long as the imputed use value is maintained.

Another aspect of the South African market is that it is fed by the international system of provision. South Africans have access to, not just international pop, but to more 'authentic' rock and rap acts as well. Search costs are increased for consumers who wish to consume them (these acts do not have airplay outlets in South Africa), but it does provide for *intra*-system of provision rebellion.

The systems of music provision in South African history are characterized largely by the apartheid system of governance. This saw the erection of rigid gatekeepers, which gave musics much of their meaning to disadvantaged groups. The system today is governed by the independent body, ICASA, who may or may not grant licenses to applicants. It seems that ICASA in fact may be the over-arching passive gatekeeper of South African musics. A survey conducted in 2001 revealed that many stations felt the quota system of South African music content on their stations was excessive, considering the *genres they were licensed to play* (NAB, 2001). While ICASA may indeed be attempting to best serve the diverse South African population,[96] by limiting stations to only play certain genres of music instead of advancing, suggesting, and discovering consumers' preferences, it transpires that ICASA may in fact be maintaining the system of preference formation initiated by apartheid.

The above suggestions need to be viewed as just that – suggestions. Again, it should be noted that more information was provided concerning the middle class market (and higher income groups). Anthropologists might be quick to point to errors of generalization; ethnomusicologists might highlight insensitivity to the differences between different genres; sociologists might demand a greater understanding of identity development in post-apartheid South Africa. These issues would highlight the richness of the approach taken. It is just as true that any of these disciplines would not aid in a complete analysis of consumption practices in the music market in South Africa. What this chapter has done is attempt to analyze how these issues interact, and provide a general synthesis with the resources available. In light of the lack of research done on the current market, and a less abundant historical literature, a complete analysis of the South African market would require more research of the type presented here, and would require generous funding. The interviews conducted provided a rich impression of the market, in spite of whatever incompleteness was necessitated by resource constrictions. Thus this chapter has provided a basis for understanding the South African music market, and has demonstrated that the systems of provisions approach would be beneficial to future research projects on the industry.

[96] Though an earlier comment by Stella (Astel) suggests that there may by political agendas involved in granting licences, the scope of this thesis does not allow for such political debates to be advanced.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The insights gained into the respective popular music markets analyzed in this thesis are testament to the chosen methodology of the thesis. While it is not claimed that the findings of the South African music market are truly reflective of the market in its entirety, chapter 4 does demonstrate that valuable insights *can* be gained by applying the chosen methodology. The chapter thus provides a useful starting point for understanding the preference formations of South African music consumers. Future studies on the market could benefit from utilizing the same (or a similar) approach, and a more accurate comment could be given with sufficient funding. The systems of provision approach has been shown to be demonstrably applicable in its absorption of the different perspectives provided by the popular music literature. Those that focus on the role of market concentration (Hirsch, 1990; Peterson and Berger, 1990; Rothenbuhler and McCourt, 1992; etc.) seem impoverished without accounting for those that focus on the role of consumers and ideology (Hebdige, 1990; Clarke, 1990; Keightley, 2001, etc.), and visa versa. Those that acknowledge the different vantage points (e.g. Frith) tend to do so without making formal links, such that the reader may be left with a splintered perception of the market. The systems of provision approach allows for these links to be made, by revealing to what degree each of these perspectives plays a part at any given time.

Particularly useful is Fine and Leopold's (1993: 26) recognition of the "aesthetic illusion," that perpetual tensed relationship between a product's physical composition and its perceived use values, and how the two affect one another. The market, particularly in America, appears to be characterized abundantly by these factors. This is evidenced in, for example, the fact that a genre can be changed physically (i.e. simplified in structure so as to become pop) while some people will still attach the same (or similar) ideals to that genre. Conversely, a genre may not change at all, but simply by being adopted by the mass, its use values change to certain (elitist) people.

This gives rise to another benefit of the approach, that it allows for the advance of an ontological perspective of consumers. Though Fine and Leopold do not attempt to define such a position, further than acknowledging that every person is different, an attempt was made in this thesis to define broad categories of consumers. While no particular consumer might fit neatly into any one category (and in this sense, every consumer is different), the outlining of boundaries of types of consumers was shown to aid significantly the explanation of various trends and practices.

Similarly, in light of the arguments developed in this thesis, not to place a consumption analysis in a historical context seems imprudent. The effects of the governance of preference formations in the 'old South Africa' seem not to be eradicated to this day. The adoption of the Romantic and Modern ethics by rock ideology, and the spread of that ideology into other genres, is demonstrated by the persistence of the dominant signal in the market today.

The development and use of the signal terminology in chapter 3 proved to be a useful tool in the development of arguments generally, thus another benefit of the systems of provision approach is that it can allow for the use of such specificities in an analysis.

Different to Fine and Leopold's methodology, the methodology applied in this thesis sought to demonstrate the relevance of the consumption approaches analyzed. Campbell's study showed the ease with which some people embraced the display of consumer goods to display virtue (i.e. to conform) during the period of Sensibility. Also, it shows how the Romantic ethic came to be embraced, as a defence of the philosophy of *feeling*. This is useful in describing why elitist consumers feel the urgency to consume a genre/artist as 'more than just music.' Similarly, Campbell and McCracken's consumer theories aid in explaining why people might consume ideologies of music, more than just the physical attributes of the goods. Campbell's distinction between modern and traditional hedonists goes a step further towards developing an ideological construct (though he believes modern hedonism is more pervasive in the present day). Galbraith and Adorno's forceful arguments recognizing the role of corporations in determining preferences makes it seem unwise to ignore the possibility. Indeed it was shown in chapters 3 and 4 that they certainly do have an effect. By asserting that the doctrine of neoclassical economics has simply reified a heuristic (i.e. consumer sovereignty and its associated simplifying assumptions) for the sake of comparative-static analyses, neoclassical economics is provided with scope for realistic analyses, and Becker and Stigler's work demonstrates how this might be done. The main criticism of their work is that it is essentially an apologetic, and needs to be contextualized so that more, truly rational, decision-making is possible. The systems of provision approach allows for exactly that to happen. And this is so for all of the consumption theories analyzed. At any one time they all do appear to be having an effect to some degree, and the systems of provision approach allows one gage to what degree this is so.

It is realized that the same methodology as used in this thesis might use different consumption theories as its starting point. Jean Baudrillard's 'critique of the political economy of the sign' seems obviously applicable (Baudrillard, 1981). For Baudrillard, the commodity world is an abstract code of signs, and the signs embodied in a commodity are continuously fluctuating. Commodities that lack a precise use value have the ability to continuously absorb signs, termed the commodity's "enhanced use value." (Buxton, 1990: 429) Similarly, Sahlins (1976) discusses the cultural structure of different types of American clothing so that "the symbolic differences between types of clothing produce and reproduce 'the meaningful difference between' social units," (Sahlins, quoted in Carrier and Heyman, 1997: 357) much as different genres of music do. Pierre Bordieu (1984) recognizes that more impoverished consumers see objects in sensuous terms, "valuing the immediate and the earthy," while wealthier consumers tend to view objects through an "intellectual, aesthetic screen, valuing the sophisticated and the reflective." (Carrier and Heyman, 1997: 358). While the case of popular music may not be as directly applicable to class (for example, many wealthy people consume pop music), one can easily recognize the similarities here between elitist and populist consumers. In fact, using this in conjunction with McCracken's theory, working class people might place the ideals of class onto products that initiate more cognitive simulation (classical music, in the extreme; non-pop genres more generally), which according to the analysis in chapter 3, would make them 'weak-form' sovereign consumers. Many such examples could be demonstrated here. Each of these theories, too, is too generalized to account for a complete analysis of consumption. Baudrillard and Sahlins clearly have a biased focus towards consumers interpreting signs, for example. But each of these approaches can be placed in context by the systems of provision approach, to reveal to what degree each has relevance at a point in time. By contextualizing each theory, historically and in terms of other factors affecting consumption, as with the methodology of this thesis, each benefits from increased credibility.

Another indicator of the fruitfulness of the systems of provision approach, and more generally of the methodology applied in this thesis, is that it can support the development of arguments beyond the mere practices of consumption, and into the politics of consumption, as was demonstrated in chapter 3. The dominant signal argument seemed to suggest that the market had assumed a pattern of functioning similar to that supported by Walter Lippmann. Recall that Lippmann (who seems akin to Hutt in some ways) suggested the most efficient form of democracy entailed an intellectual elite acquiring their education from the public, and thus deciding what was best for the public (see MacGilvray, 1999). In this fashion, the record companies seem to have been 'educated' by the public with the advent and persistence of rock'n'roll (and its development into rock). The question is then raised of whether a more decentralized, Deweyian, project is possible. John Dewey believed that democracy's triumph was that the public could educate themselves through their experiences, and thus govern policies (see MacGilvray, 1999). The notions of 'weak-form' false consciousness and 'weak-from' consumer sovereignty suggested in this thesis seems to straddle the gap between the two pragmatic views, suggesting a less pessimistic view than Lippmann's, and a less optimistic view than Dewey's. This argument could surely be developed further to bare fruit, indicating the advantage of the methodology applied.

Another option would be to consider the possibility of a more utopian project. While this thesis suggests that preferences cannot be unmediated,[97] either by one's environment directly (socially, culturally) or indirectly (unnaturally, i.e. the environment is provided by corporations), Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, in *Empire* (2000), suggest that there exists a "plane of immanence" in society, which is akin to the idea of unmediated preferences ('natural' preferences). This plane of immanence is juxtaposed against those able to suppress this. Both of these streams, according to Hardt and Negri, developed out of the rise of modernism. While Hardt and Negri's argument focuses on these 'twin streams' of modernism as they

[97] Note the etymological likeness of 'mediated' and 'media'.

developed throughout western European countries over the centuries (modernism as it was used to enforce the state's goals of suppression, e.g. the Spanish Inquisition, versus modernism as it was used by the populace to enhance their lives), if their work does not overtly provide a macrocosm of the music market, they do argue the 'utopia versus the machine' dialectic in detail. Their project is essentially idealistic, in that it does not provide the means for consumers to become 'equipped' with the mechanisms to reach the plane of immanence, but the line of argument might stimulate fertile debates.

Many such theoretical links are made possible by the methodology applied in this thesis (of which the systems of provision approach is an integral part), without compromising the original goals of the thesis: to locate and test the applicability of the systems of provision approach against specific markets, and to provide credible, holistic commentary on those markets while presenting innovative insights.

Addendum A – Western Music Chronology[98]

1877 – Thomas Edison demonstrates the first phonograph
1889 – Louis Glass creates the first version of the juke box
1896 – Emile Berliner patents the flat recording disc
1909 – US Copyright Act is amended to establish the basis for royalty payments for recorded music, and not just live performances
1914 – ASCAP if formed to enable songwriters to claim the income due under the amended Copyright Act
1920 – The first news-and-music US radio station begins broadcasting
1939 – BMI is formed as a competitor to ASCAP and to represent the blues and country music ignored by its rival
1953 – Bill Haley and the Comets' 'Crazy Man Crazy' is the first rock'n'roll record to make the *Billboard* charts
1954 – Elvis releases 'That's All Right Mama' in US; UK release not until 1956
1955 – Little Richard records 'Tutti Frutti'
Bill Haley and the Comets perform 'Rock Around the Clock' in the film, *Backboard Jungle*
1956 – Elvis Presley's 'Heartbreak Hotel' is No. 1 for eight weeks in the US
Tommy Steele's 'Singing the Blues' is No. 1 in the UK
1958 – Elvis Presley is drafted for the US army
1959 – Buddy Holly, the Big Bopper, and Ritchie Valens are killed in an air crash
1960 – Congressional investigation into payola begins revealing 'pay for play' arrangements between record companies ad broadcasters
1962 – The Beatles release 'Love Me Do' and later their first album, *Please Please Me*
The Rolling Stones begin a Sunday night residency at the Crawcaddy Club
Bob Dylan releases his first album, *Bob Dylan*
First press reports of 'Beatlemania' are published
1964 – The Beatles receive the MBE from the queen
The first edition of *Top of the Pops* is broadcast; still shown weekly.
1965 – Dylan is booed at the Newport Folk Festival and elsewhere for 'going electric'; he gets the same treatment when he tours the UK the following year
1966 – John Lennon says the Beatles are now more famous than Jesus
The Jimi Hendrix Experience play their first UK gig and release 'Hey Joe'
1967 – Mick Jagger and Keith Richards are sent to prison on drug offences (they are released on appeal)
1968 – First free Hyde Park music festival
1969 – Led Zeppelin release their first album, *Led Zeppelin*
The Who release rock opera, 'Tommy'
The Woodstock festival attracts 400 000 people
1970 – Jimi Hendrix dies
The Beatles disband
Soul Train appears on US television; it is influential in reporting new dances, images and fashions to black America
1976 – The Sex Pistols release 'Anarchy in the UK'; after swearing on television, the band are dropped by their record company EMI and banned from many UK venues

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[98] Adapted from Frith et al. (2001: xii – xvii).

1979 – Elvis Presley dies
1980 – John Lennon is shot dead in New York
1981 – MTV is launched
1982 – Michael Jackson's *Thriller* is released (goes on to sell 45 million copies)
1983 – The first CDs go on sale
The arrival of the video is acknowledged with the first American Video Awards
The Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) becomes available; it allows synthesisers to be connected to each other, and signals new technical possibilities for music making
1984 – Band Aid release 'Do They Know It's Christmas'
1985 – Live Aid raises 50 million pounds
Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) gives evidence to the Senate committee on the explicit sexual and violent content of records
1986 – Paul Simon releases *Graceland*; a row erupts over whether it breaches cultural sanctions imposed on apartheid South Africa
1987 – MTV is launched in Europe; MTV globally now reaches 79 countries and 281.7 million households
CDs now outsell vinyl records
1989 – Public Enemy releases *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold us Back*
1991 – Nirvana's 'Smells Like Teen Spirit' is the most played video on MTV
1993 – Snoop Doggy Dogg's *Dogstyle* is the first debut album to enter the *Billboard* charts at No. 1
1994 – Kurt Cobain commits suicide
1996 – The Spice Girls' 'Wannabe' is No. 1 in 22 countries
1997 – MP3 is introduced allowing music to be transmitted over the Internet
1998 – Elton John's elegy for Princess Diana, 'Candle in the Wind' sells 1.5 million copies in the UK in its forst week; US advance orders are 7.8 million
1999 – Napster software is introduced; it greatly increases access to music on the Internet
US charts dominated by rap metal acts: Limp Bizkit, Rage Against the Machine, and by Santana
2000 – Napster is sued by Metallica for breach of copyright
Record companies establish copyright deals with Internet music providers
2001 – Hear'Say, a group assembled through a UK televised documentary series (*Popstars*), become the first band to top the UK album and singles charts simultaneously with their debut releases

Addendum B – Questionnaire for Music Consumers

1. What are your interests, generally (check appropriate boxes)?

Sport ☐	Finance ☐	Socialising ☐
Music ☐	Travel ☐	Computers ☐
Art ☐	Reading ☐	TV/Movies ☐

2. Do you play any musical instruments?____________________________________

3. How often do you listen to music in hours per day (rough estimate)
   a) while you're doing other things?____________________________________
   b) while focusing only on the music (or doing related things such as playing an instrument or reading the song lyrics)?_______________________________

4. What are your main sources of finding new music? Of the following resources, please rank them in order of most important (1) to least important (7):

A) Radio ☐	E) Friends ☐
B) Internet ☐	F) Clubs/Pubs ☐
C) TV ☐	G) Watching live music events ☐
D) Other media ☐	

5. What radio station do you listen to most?__________________________________

6. Are there any particular shows on that station that you prefer?____

7. Which genres (styles) of music do you most enjoy? Please name the style and give an example of an artist who plays that style, e.g "Kwaito - Zola", or "Punk Rock – NOFX"
   ____
   ____
   ____

8. Which genres (styles) of music do you most dislike?
   ____
   ____
   ____

9. Who would you consider to be your favourite South African artists?
   ____

____

10. How many times per month (rough estimate) do you attend live music events?
    ____

11. What music do you listen to most when you are home alone (may name genres or artists)?____
    ____
    ______

12. Does this change when you are in a social setting, i.e. what do you prefer to listen to when you're, say, at a party?____

____
___

13. If you were given a R150 voucher for a CD store now, what would you buy with it?____
    ___

14. If you were able to see any concert in the world tonight, what would you like to see?____
    ___

15. Which aspect of music appreciation do you find most important? Please rank the following from most important (1) to least important (6):

a) Words of a song	☐	d) It makes you think	☐
b) Good singing voice	☐	e) It is easy to dance to	☐
c) Emotional value	☐	f) You like what the artist stands for	☐

16. Are there any artists who you appreciate especially because of what they stand for?____
    ____
    ______

17. Are there any artists who you dislike especially because of what they stand for?____
    ____
    ______

18. Do you appreciate an artist more if they write their own music?____
    ___

19. Do you feel that the media (radio and TV) has sufficient coverage of the music genre you most enjoy?____

20. What music is played in the places you most usually go out to?____

21. If you hear a song that you enjoy, are you likely to search for other songs by that artist (e.g. the rest of the album)?_______________________________________

22. Are there any artists whose entire works you collect?
____
____
_____

23. **Gender**: M / F **Age**:_______

24. **Ethnic Group**: Black / White / Coloured / Indian / Other_____________

25. **Level of education**: Below matric / Matric / Diploma / Degree

26. **Where is your permanent residence?**__________________________________

27. **What school did (do) you attend?**_____________________________________

28. What is your present job? (If at school, what do your parents do?):
☐ Professional or executive management ☐ Civil servant ☐ Unemployed
☐ Administration ☐ Self-employed ☐ Student ☐ Retired
☐ Technical or sales ☐ Other (please specify)___________________________

Addendum C – Consumer Survey

The survey sample was chosen over a number of days during the Grahamstown National Arts Festival at various venues. Most of the subjects completed the questionnaires in the presence of the researcher, as it was found that questionnaires left for people to fill out on their own had an extremely poor rate of return. The candidates approached were generally between the ages of sixteen and thirty-five, as this is the primary age group targeted by most of the record companies and the national radio station interviewed (Haarburger, 2005; Harmon, 2005; Grubb, 2005). Apart from this general specification, subjects were approached more-or-less at random. The lower proportion of results from working class candidates is a result of 1) a general apprehension expressed by working class candidates to participate, and 2) a strong language barrier. The Arts Festival was selected for the period of survey as candidates could be chosen from different parts of the country, and not just from the local university and schools, which may have skewed results. The final number of useable questionnaires collected is seventy.

While the survey in no way claims to be an all-encompassing study of South African music consumers, particularly as regards the large working class base of South Africa, it was found to be useful in testing the theoretical aspects raised in this thesis. Furthermore, similar studies to this survey were found to be sparse in the literature on general consumer theory, and popular music studies, let alone the South African market. In this respect, some importance can be seen to reside in its seminal value. The final number of usable, completed questionnaires attained (70) is acknowledged to be too small and idiosyncratic to make any conclusive judgements[99], but the survey does provide a starting point for understanding South African music consumers, particularly middle class consumers. Suggestions for further studies of this nature are advanced in section 4.3.7 after a summary of the survey results.

[99] (funding constraints prevented more questionnaires from being produced)

4.3.1 Demographics

Of the 70 usable questionnaires attained, 42 candidates were white, 21 black, and 5 coloured. 2 candidates did not specify their race. Only 20 candidates surveyed were female, largely because of a fairly high participation from one all boys school. Of those females, 4 were black, 2 coloured, and 14 white. The specification of class was determined by inquiring the school the candidate attended, and the candidate's employment (or parents' employment if the candidate is a minor). For simplicity, and due to a difficulty in judgement, the problem was divided very generally into working class and middle class. Thus "upper class" in this discussion is included in the term "middle class"[100]. 64 of the candidates were judged to be middle class, and 6 working class. Of the 6 working class candidates, all were black, thus 15 middle class black people are represented in the data. The mean age of the candidates is 21.2, the median is 20, and the mode is 18. 21 candidates were still at school. The majority of the candidates were from the Eastern Cape (9 from Port Elizabeth, 21 from Grahamstown), 18 were from Cape Town, 3 from Johannesburg, 6 from Durban, and 6 were from small towns (Bathurst, Fort Beaufort, Tzaneen, Nelspruit, Stellenbosch).

4.3.2 Sourcing New Music

38 candidates specified that they listen to 5fm. Two interesting responses were "5fm, unfortunately!" and "5fm, for lack of better options". Of these listeners, 6 were black, 3 coloured, and 29 white. As expected, none of the working class candidates listened to 5fm; 4 listened to Umhlobo Wenene, a regional Xhosa station, and only 1 to Metro FM (national station with more focus on African-American music). Only 1 middle class candidate listened to Umhlobo Wenene. 7 candidates showed that they rather listened to regional campus stations, and 3 of them indicated that this was for the rap/R&B shows they featured.

Candidates were asked to rank their sources of new music in order of importance, choosing from 1) radio, 2) Internet, 3) TV, 4) other media, 5) friends, 6) clubs/pubs,

[100] Middle class consumers will generally have opportunity to be exposed to most of the same media as upperclass consumers, such as MTV and the Internet.

and 7) live music. It was noted which of these were among these they prioritized as their top 3.

Table 1: Sourcing New Music

Source	**Number**	**%**
Friends	48	69
Radio	44	63
TV	30	43
Internet	21	30
Clubs/Pubs	19	27
Live Music	17	24
Other Media	11	16

Interestingly, of 43 candidates who said that they do not feel that there is sufficient coverage of the music they most prefer, 24 of them indicated radio as a main source of discovering new music. Of the 36 5fm listeners, 21 felt there was insufficient coverage of their preferred music. This is, however, not as striking as it first seems; most rational people would want a station dedicated *only* to what they would like to hear, and so unless that is the case, one should be dissatisfied with the amount of coverage one's preferred music receives. It is noted though, that of the candidates who felt that they did hear enough of their preferred music on the air, only one preferred rock, and only one preferred metal; none preferred punk. 5 out of 8 *kwaito* lovers felt they heard enough *kwaito* on the radio, and 8 out of 13 rap lovers felt the same.

Live music and pubs/clubs were prioritized by few, suggesting passive listening habits by most people when they are in a social setting, and indicating narrow prospects for the growth of the South African medium sized performance circuit.[101] This also suggests that people wish to listen to familiar music when they are at social venues.

[101] This is made more pertinent by the fact that these consumers were attending an arts festival. The a priori expectation would thus be for them to have a higher propensity to consume live music.

Of particular interest is that not many candidates look to the Internet for new sources of music, and rely passively instead on radio and TV.

4.3.3 Likes/Dislikes

Candidates were asked to specify their favourite and worst artists, given space for 3 different artists, of which the first 2 were recorded. Often, however, the candidates just specified the genres. The artists were then categorized into genres by the researcher. Naturally, some generalizations had to be made, particularly as regards the afropop genre. Again, *kwaito* is mentioned as distinct from afropop, though it is technically included in the genre. The predominant genres recorded were pop, dance, jazz, rock, *boeremusiek*, classical, gospel, R&B, *kwaito*, rap, punk, and metal. Metal and punk are included as distinct from rock because they traditionally represent strong ideologies to consumers, as discussed in chapter 3. Additionally, artists judged to be commercial rock, commercial punk, and commercial rap were noted (i.e. the weak-form differentiation of pop). This was done by observing if these artists featured in recent charts or prominent articles on the MTV Europe or 5fm websites and newsletters. Typical examples include commercial punk band, Blink 182, commercial rock band, Cold Play, and commercial rap artist, Will Smith. This follows the a priori hypothesis put forward in this thesis that many consumers might support these artists because they are attracted to the ideologies of the original, non-pop genre. Outlying genres included soul, country, and world music.

The results are presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2 on the following page. The category, 'other', refers to the outlying genres, or non-responses. 7 candidates did not identify any preferred genre, and 6 candidates did not indicate any particular dislike.

4.3.3.1 Rock/Metal/Punk

The results for both likes and dislikes were very diverse. Rock invoked the strongest response, with 15% of the candidates liking it, and 19% disliking it. The combined effects of rock, punk, and metal amount to 23% of the candidates preferring 'authentic' rock styles, and 32% disliking them. As follows a priori expectations of

Figure 1: Spread of Preferred Music Genres

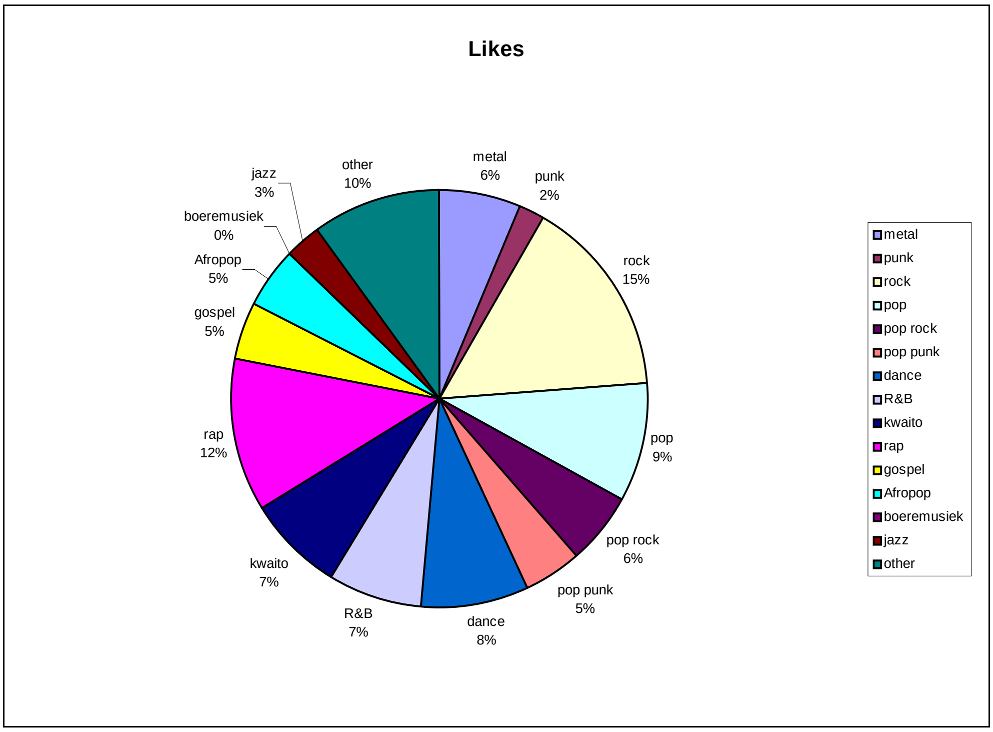
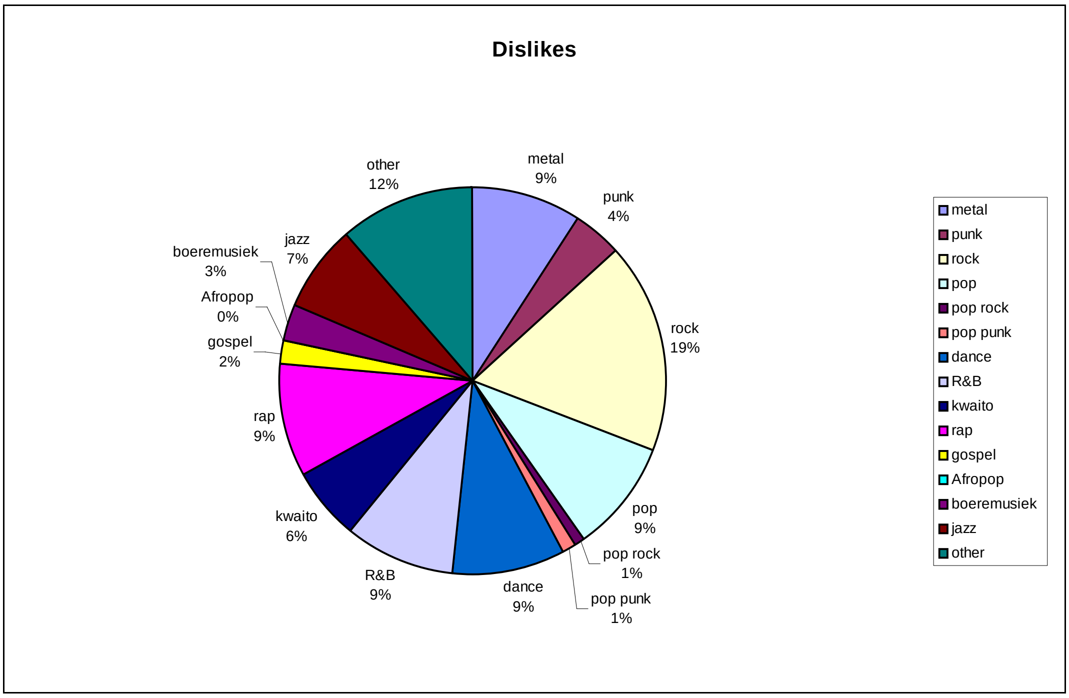


Figure 2: Spread of Disliked Music Genres



market segmentations, of the 17 candidates that disliked rock, 13 were black. However, of the 9 that disliked metal, only 2 were black. Of the 20 females surveyed, only 4 enjoyed rock music.

4.3.3.2 Rap/Kwaito/R&B/Gospel

The next most responsive genre was rap, with 12% liking it, and 9% disliking it. The combined response to rap and *kwaito* amounted to 19% liking it, and 15% disliking it. The total effects of rap, *kwaito* and R&B amount to 26% liking them, and 24% disliking them. Again, according to a priori expectations, of the 9 people who disliked rap, 7 were white. Of the 24 dislikes expressed for rap/*kwaito*/R&B, 20 were white. Of the 8 total likes for *kwaito*, 3 indicated an additional preference for rap, 1 for R&B, and 3 for gospel.

Also, the 5 candidates who listed a preference for gospel were all working class. Thus, of the 6 working class candidates, 5 listed gospel, and the remaining candidate listed *kwaito* and R&B. Of these candidates' dislikes, 3 were non-responsive, and 3 listed rock or punk. Since gospel was preferred exclusively by working class consumers, its preference in conjunction with gospel and rap (middle class preference) can be taken to indicate *kwaito's* popularity among middle and working class black consumers.

Of the 33 candidates who play a musical instrument, 6 indicated a preference for rap, and only 2 for *kwaito* and gospel.

4.3.3.3 Pop/PopRock/PopPunk

Pop was a fairly responsive category, with 9% of candidates preferring it, and 9% disliking it. With its associated genres, 20% liked some form of commercial music, and 11% disliked it. Of the 10 likes expressed for pop, 5 were black and 5 white. However, of the 11 likes expressed for pop rock and pop punk, only 1 was black. Of the 9 dislikes expressed for pop, 7 were by white candidates. According to a priori expectations, 8 of the 20 females showed a preference for pop, pop rock, or pop punk. And as expected again, of the 14 white females surveyed, 7 appreciated these genres.

This corresponds roughly with 10 out of 14 white females who listen to 5fm, and a further 2 who listen to Algoa FM (regional commercial station). Of the 33 candidates that play a musical instrument, only one indicated a preference for pop music, but 2 indicated they like commercial rock, and 3 indicated they like commercial punk. 8 candidates who played instruments preferred rock, and 4 preferred metal, totaling 9 out of 33.

4.3.3.4 Dance

While dance was a fairly responsive genre, dance music did not show any strong groupings along race lines. The 9 likes expressed for dance consisted of 4 white candidates, 3 black, and 2 coloured. However, of the 9 dislikes expressed, 6 were from white candidates, but only 1 from a black candidate.

4.3.3.5 Boeremusiek

None of the candidates surveyed enjoyed *boeremusiek*, and 3 actively disliked it. This is suggestive of the many smaller communities that make up a large part of the genre's success, as very few candidates were from these areas. Unfortunately, no further tests could be done concerning the genre.

4.3.4 South Africans and South African Music

In addition to citing their favourite artists, a separate question asked candidates to name their favourite South African artists. From this, the genre was recorded, as well as if any of the candidates' favourite South African artists were included in list of their favourite artists generally. The spread of preferences is displayed in Figure 3 on the following page. *Kwaito* proved the most popular South African genre, with 23% preferring *kwaito* artists. Rock had 17% (with an additional 2% from metal and punk supporters), and pop had 7%. Pop rock, however, had 13%, and pop punk had 6%, producing a combined total of 26% for a type of commercial music. Afropop in its wide variety was supported by 10% of the candidates. These figures reflect fairly accurately the spread of consumers along the racial demographic. Of the 15 candidates who preferred *kwaito* South African bands, 13 were black, 1 white, and 1 unspecified. 47 of the candidates indicated different South African bands than the bands listed in the first (general) list, indicating a preference for international artists. 40% of black candidates indicated a preference for international artists, compared with 76% of white candidates, and 80% of coloured candidates. Since the 6 working class candidates unanimously preferred local music, 52% of middle class black candidates preferred international artists to local.

4.3.5 Music and Use Values

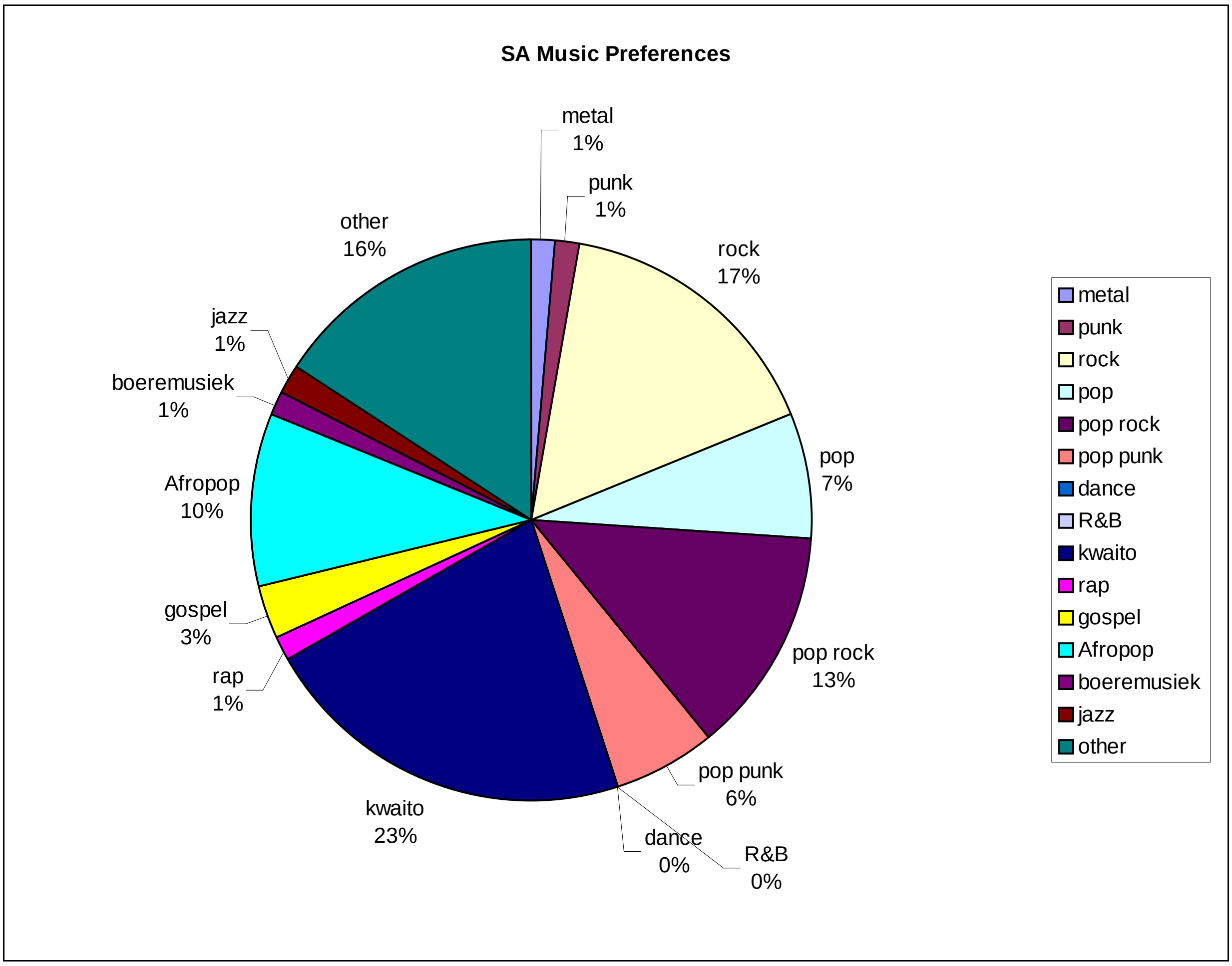
It was hoped to get an idea of the level of activeness/passivity of consumers by ascertaining how frequently they listen to music ‘while doing other things’, and how frequently they listen to it ‘while focusing only on the music (or doing other related things such as playing an instrument or reading the song lyrics)’.

Table 2: Music as Primary and Secondary Activity

Type of Average	Hours/Day (Secondary)	Hours/Day (Primary)
Mean	3.5	1.7
Median	3	1
Mode	2	1

It is possible that some candidates mistook ‘hours per day’ for ‘hours per week’, for example one candidate indicated that he listened to music for ten hours as a primary activity, and ten hours as a secondary activity. This can explain the much higher mean than mode averages, as they were skewed upwards by high outlying figures. Taking the relative mean and mode averages then, candidates spend on average twice as much time listening to music as a secondary activity. Taking the median average, they spend three times as much time listening to music as a secondary activity. 47% of the candidates play a musical instrument. This figure is estimated to be fairly high, and may have decreased the ratio of secondary to primary listening.

Figure 3: Spread of Preferred South African Genres



When asked what music candidates preferred to listen to in private, their answers were fairly consistent with their preferences generally, with only 7 candidates' answers differing to the original question concerning their favourite artists.

The most common style of music that candidates listened to in a social setting was dance music, as indicated by 29% of the candidates. 23% listened to pop music when they were out. This corresponds with the fact that 60% of the candidates indicate that their preferred choice of music changes when they are in a social setting. Though the question was phrased as a yes/no question, typical responses were "Yes, more beats," or "Yes, must be faster."

Candidates were asked if there are any artists whom they liked and disliked because of what they stand for. The response was fairly strong, with 28 indicating "no" for the former, and 29 indicating "no" for the latter. 3 people indicated that they like Christian bands and disliked satanic bands, a further 2 indicated that they disliked Marilyn Manson, but did not respond to whom they liked, and a further 2 indicated a dislike for metal, with an appreciation for U2. U2 was by far the most popular artist in terms of their ideals/ideology, with 9 people saying they appreciate what U2 stands for. 5 people indicated that they don't like what pop music stands for generally, and a further 4 displayed a dislike for particular pop stars. Only 1 candidate stated that he disliked commercial rock as opposed to harder rock. 4 people showed an appreciation of protest artists, corresponding to a dislike for pop music or pop stars. Only 2 people showed an appreciation of what *kwaito* stands for, and interestingly, one showed a dislike for rap. While 4 candidates liked what rap stands for, 8 indicated that they disliked it. Only 1 person indicated that they liked rap, and disliked commercial rap. That, of the candidates who showed a preference for 'authentic' genres, only 2 indicated a dislike the commercialized versions of those genres, indicates a low degree of elitism among the consumers.

The strong response to the above question is at odds with what candidates feel is important about music. They were asked to rank in order of importance whether they have an appreciation for 1) lyrical content, 2) vocal quality, 3) emotional stimulation, 4) cognitive stimulation, 5) whether they are able to dance to it, or 6) whether they like what the artist stands for. It was noted which of the above criteria were considered by candidates to rank in the top 3.

Table 3: Most Popular Attributes of Popular Music

Attribute	**Number**	**%**
Lyrical Content	50	71
Vocal Quality	38	54
Emotional Stimulation	36	51
Cognitive Stimulation	28	40
It is Easy to Dance to	17	24
What the Artist Stands for	12	17

Only 12 candidates found ‘what the artist stands for’ to be important. It can be noted as well that, of all of the specific artists that people mentioned in the previous question, each could be considered a superstar (featured prominently on commercial stations and MTV). This is illustrative of the pervasiveness of commercial media as a signal to middle class South African youths, corresponding with the importance placed on commercial sources of new music indicated by the candidates generally. In fact, of the 12 who urged the importance of what the artist stands for, 5 abstained from answering whether there is an artist who they appreciate for that reason. These inconsistencies display the passive listening habits of many who listen to commercial music.

Interestingly, not many candidates placed importance on music one can dance to. The term ‘cognitive stimulation’ was phrased in the questionnaire as ‘it [music] makes you think’. It was realized afterwards that this might easily have been perceived to refer to lyrical content and not musical qualities. Nonetheless, if ‘cognitive stimulation’ can intuitively be seen to suggest active listening, a proportion of 40% is judged to be fairly high, but does correspond to the high proportion of candidates who play a musical instrument. Only 12 people who play an instrument, however, indicated cognitive stimulation to be important.

4.3.6 Music as Advertising

80% of candidates said that they are likely to make an effort to hear more songs by an artist if they hear a song that they enjoy. This high figure corresponds to the 64% of candidates who stated that there are artists whose entire works they collect. As typically follows the literature, fans of rock and its associated categories showed a strong tendency to collect albums, with 9 people collect rock albums, 5 collecting metal, and 2 collecting punk. Of these 16 people, 15 followed the typical profile of white and male, and 1 was a coloured male. 12 people collected commercial rock, 7 of whom were white females, and 5 of whom were white males. The 3 collectors of *kwaito*, 2 collectors of rap, and 2 collectors of R&B were all black males. Of the 4 black females, 1 collected metal, and 3 did not collect any artists' work.

4.3.7 Assessment

- The high preference for non-pop genres of music (though it is realized that this is likely to be an idiosyncrasy of the sample and not a general trend) is at odds with the high percentage of consumers who cited radio as a primary means of sourcing new music. It can be assumed that these consumers source the music primarily from their friends, as 69% of the consumers indicated they do. As concerns exposure in the media, rap is likely permeated into South Africa through channels like Metro FM, and it cannot be said where non-pop rock is discovered, as the supporters of these genres indicated that their friends and radio were their primary means of music sourcing.

- Not many people viewed the Internet as a primary means of sourcing new music, indicating a small likeliness of the Internet forming its own efficient market place where consumers consider themselves to be more sovereign.

- The fairly low figure of 20% of people who enjoyed pop music in its variety is at odds with the high number of people who indicated that they appreciate certain pop stars because of what they stand for. This is indicative of the pervasiveness of pop culture amongst middle class South African youth, and is further supported by the high percentage of people who listen to commercial radio.

- That most white consumers prefer international artists to South African artists is indicative of a number of things. Firstly, of those consumers who prefer ‘authentic’ (elitist) genres, they could be faced with an under provision of that good locally, as few ‘authentic’, niche rock artists have an incentive to pursue a career in these styles of music. Secondly, as concerns the pop consumers, pop is a field dominated by international artists, so they would likely prefer those artists, despite quota systems in South African broadcasting. That black consumers prefer more local music than do white consumers is obviously a result of their preference for indigenous styles of music. That only 52% of middle class black consumers prefer local artists (as opposed to all of the working class consumers surveyed) is perhaps a result of increased pervasiveness of western culture with a rise in income. This may have interesting consequences for the South African market with the expanding black middle class base of South Africa (see Louw, 1999).

- For all of the inconsistencies apparent in the results, they do provide a clear indication of a rigid market segmentation along racial lines.

- While this type of survey is helpful in assessing such generalities as demographics and preferences, it is felt that richer results would have been obtained from longer, qualitative interview recordings, as was done in the previous section with other agents in the market. This would enable the researcher to better understand the apparent inconsistencies.

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