Beatles for Sale: The role and significance of storytelling in the commercialisation and cultural branding of the Beatles since 1970

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Introduction

The subtitle to this thesis is: *The role and significance of storytelling in the commercialisation and cultural branding of the Beatles since 1970.* In large part, this idea has been informed by and evolves from experiences of the role and significance of storytelling in my own Beatle fandom, as I came to the story of the Beatles before I ever consciously listened to their music. I was 10 years old in 1980, the year of John Lennon's assassination, and I had never heard of the Beatles. I suppose it was seeing endless streams of news reports about the Beatles and John Lennon's death that took me not to the record shop but instead the public library to learn more about them. In the children's section, I found Nicholas Schaffner's biography, written for young adults, called *The Boys from Liverpool: John, Paul, George and Ringo* (1980). Schaffner spun a tale of friendship and music, of derring-do and faraway places, a story about four poor-but-honest boys from a poor-but-honest place called Liverpool. By the time I saved up enough of my allowance money to finally buy a Beatles record a few weeks later, it almost didn't matter what they sounded like. I was already a Beatles fan.

More than just the catalyst for my awareness of and interest in the Beatles, stories about the Beatles continued to feature prominently in my ongoing fandom. From a contemporary perspective it seems almost unimaginable, but as a young Beatles fan growing up in 1980s America, there were almost no Beatle products on the market. While local music shops were overrun with t-shirts, posters, coffee mugs and pencil cases from pop music acts of the era, bands like Duran Duran, Wham! and Def Leppard, spotting Beatles merchandise amongst them was a rarity. For years, my most prized Beatle possessions were a garishly psychedelic black-light poster obtained in a novelties shop and a Beatle badge, acquired in 1982 as part of the promotional campaign for the US cinema re-release of *A Hard Day's Night* (1964). Besides Beatle records, the regular purchase of new Beatle books was the only readily available opportunity I had to express and indulge my fandom.

While I have never stopped being a fan, by November, 2001, the Beatles had long ago ceased to be a central focus in my life. I was by then living purely by chance in Liverpool, enrolled in the University of Liverpool's MBA in Music Industries Studies programme. It was only when news of George Harrison's death from cancer broke on 29th November of that year, did I realise just how little time I had taken to

explore the city's Beatles connections. I made my way into Liverpool's city centre, to Mathew Street and the Cavern Club. The narrow alleyway was full of reporters, journalists and grieving fans. Bouquets of flowers, cards, and photos of Harrison were laid at the foot of the John Lennon statue opposite the Cavern Club. This was seen again, on an even larger scale inside the Cavern Walks shopping centre, where there was at the time a sculpture of the four Beatles, now presented in bronze as they would have been in person, performing on the original Cavern stage in the 1960s.

Figure 0.1
A television news crew reporting Harrison's death from Mathew Street, 2001

Figure 0.2
Tributes to George Harrison along Mathew Street, Liverpool, 2001

Figure 0.3
Tributes to George Harrison outside the gates of Liverpool's Strawberry Field, 2001

I also purchased a ticket for the Magical Mystery Tour, a guided coach trip around sites of Beatle significance. The coach, a replica of the one used in the Beatles' 1967 film *Magical Mystery Tour*, takes its passengers to places like Mendips and 20 Forthlin Road – John Lennon and Paul McCartney's childhood homes, respectively; down Penny Lane; to St. Peter's church in Woolton – the place where John Lennon met Paul McCartney; Strawberry Field. Over the next few days, I walked round the art school area, near to my own flat, in the neighbourhood where John and Stu had lived as students; I took a bus to West Derby to glimpse the imposing suburban home of the Best family, whose basement housed the Casbah club; I went to the Beatles Story museum along the Albert Dock.

Until that time, I had never paused to consider the fact that Beatle storytelling was not just a process that happened in books and documentaries, but was alive and dynamic, implicated with places and people and events, happening in ways and through means which extend far beyond the Beatles themselves. Realising that the Beatles were autochthonously bound up with the wider cultural, material and historical frameworks of not only Liverpool, but also of places like London, Hamburg, New York, and even more broadly still of British popular history and culture catalysed me into thinking more substantially about the further implications of Beatle storytelling.

At the same time, I also began to think about the inverse – how all of these Beatle storytelling enterprises impacted on the group themselves. In a marked contrast to my 1980s Beatle experiences, by 2001, there was a wealth of Beatle-logoed merchandise available locally, globally, virtually. There was 'new' Beatle

music in shops and with *Anthology*'s 1995 release, an authorised narrative and musical chronicle of the group's history. Further, following the news of the March, 2008 death of Neil Aspinall, CEO of Apple and longtime friend of the Beatles, the official Apple press release stated:

> Shrewd, innovative and totally-trusted, Neil was the unseen architect of the reinvention of the post-Sixties Beatles, first with *The Beatles At The BBC* CD in the mid-90s, followed by the record-breaking *Beatles Anthology* and *Beatles 1* albums (Apple Corps 2008).

On reading this document, I was particularly struck by the notion of a 'post-Sixties Beatles,' and how they differ from the 'Sixties Beatles.' What emerges out of this discourse is confirmation of a substantive change of management strategy at Apple. Where the group and their stakeholders spent much of the 1970s and 1980s in efforts intended to distance themselves from the Beatles' history and 'legacy,' it is clear they have more recently begun to engage with Beatle storytelling and narrativising in support of their own branding, promotion and marketing plans.

It is in consideration of all of these observations that I undertook the research presented here. In Chapter 1, I begin with a survey of key texts in the three fields of scholarship relevant to this study: the Beatles, storytelling and branding/cultural branding. As I will argue first, while there have been substantial numbers of works produced about the Beatles, none to my knowledge have epistemologically considered the holistic implications of such a comprehensive body of work. Accordingly, a first goal of this thesis is to redress this theory gap by seeking *not* to append, augment or correct the *content* of stories about the Beatles, but instead to consider the ways in which multiple iterations of Beatles narratives work *collectively* within cultural and commercial parameters.

Second, in aiming to more fully understand the theoretical discourses underpinning the concept of storytelling, I draw on scholarship from cultural anthropology, marketing and organisational management. Building on work presented by Finnegan (1998), I make the argument that while there has been much research into individual life-histories as well as stories told within firms and organisations, there has been comparatively little exploration of 'plurivocal,' (Boje 1995) multiply iterated narratives, where there are many independent accounts of the same story-subject. Through this thesis I intend to investigate the ways in which

Beatle storytellers work collectively within a storytelling marketplace, defined and informed by commercial and cultural strategies, practices and ideologies.

Third, in researching the processes and theories of marketing and branding, I would regularly encounter the concept of a 'brand story,' where stories are not stories in the narrative sense but rather the bespoke and deliberate creations of marketing and advertising specialists intended to communicate ideas and beliefs about a given product. However, what the general notion of a brand story does not account for is how literal, narrative stories can also function as branding devices. Thus, in relation to the Beatles and popular music more generally, I am arguing that stories found in album liner notes, packaging texts, press releases, websites and the like can also be read as brand stories. In this way, I seek to explore the intersections between storytelling as culturally and commercially motivated and storytelling as a central mechanism of branding and marketing.

In the second half of Chapter 1, I present a discussion of discourse analysis, the dominant methodology utilised throughout this research. Drawing on work from Phillips and Hardy (2002), I examine specific perspectives and theories within this emerging field. Specifically, I aim to contribute new scholarship to the discipline through use of a new, multi-layered discursive analytic technique, storytelling genealogy, itself derived from a practice developed by Holt (2004), which he termed brand genealogy.

In Chapter 2, I begin an analysis of Beatle storytelling in the same way I began my Beatle fandom in 1980, with fixed-form Beatle stories. Looking at narratives printed in books and articles, recorded in documentaries and television programmes and displayed on plaques and memorials, I am concerned to uncover the ways in which multiple accounts of events, places and people significant in early Beatle history work collectively to produce something I term Regularly Recurring Narratives, RRNs. I argue that rather than function as a monolithic, totalising history, RRNs instead diffuse particular aspects and elements of the group's experiences across wider popular history and culture. More specifically, I will show that storytelling is not a uni-directional, 'trickle-down' process from storyteller to story-listener, but instead a series of ongoing commercial and cultural negotiations which constantly reframe and recontextualise contemporary understanding of the Beatles. Put another way, I will assert that while the content of Beatle stories seldom change,

their contexts often do change, and indeed, must change in order to remain relevant to new audiences, consumers and markets.

In Chapter 3, I seek to establish a connection between fixed-form Beatle storytelling and the more active and dynamic processes which inform it. By interacting with stories and storytellers predominantly but not exclusively in Liverpool, I was interested in learning how 'Beatle people' tell their tales. Emerging from my research is evidence which suggests that beyond its narrative implications, storytelling is also a process driven by material as well as ideological motivation. Looking at specific representational practices and discursive strategies utilised by Beatle storytellers I encountered in the field, I argue that these storytellers work in both competitive and complementary ways, forming a kind of network, what I term a storytelling marketplace. In this marketplace, anecdotes about the Beatles transform from the literal and narrative to the cultural-commercial, with the intention of ascribing prominence and authority to both the storyteller and his story.

In Chapter 4, I advance this idea a step further, by considering the implications of conceiving of storytelling as a commercialised and commercialising process, apart and distinct from the actions and activities of the Beatles themselves. By looking at storytelling as something which informs and is informed by both intra- and extra-market influences, I begin an extended analysis of the development and evolution of Beatle storytelling enterprises since 1970. I make the claim there have been three key periods of storytelling intensification and consolidation, coalescing around a phenomenon Holt (2004) terms 'cultural disruptions': the group's 1970 breakup; the assassination of John Lennon in 1980 and the 1995 release of the *Anthology* project. Using a methodology of storytelling genealogy, for each period, I look at the ways in which Beatle storytelling has been influenced, motivated and advanced through interactions with and responses to movements and actions of: the Beatles and their stakeholders; the media; and wider cultural/social/political upheaval at the national and international levels. Through this kind of multi-tiered discourse analysis I arrive at the conclusion Beatle storytelling is commercialised in three distinct forms: as a cultural object; as a metaphor/symbolic good; and, most critically, as a 'co-author' of the Beatle brand (Holt 2004).

In Chapter 5, I approach analysis of Beatle storytelling from the opposite perspective, seeking to understand how the Beatles and their stakeholders have utilised storytelling in transforming the Beatles, a musical act, to the 'post-Sixties

Beatles,' a cultural brand. Through an evaluation of the Beatle brand's assets, identity and, most critically its evolving story, I demonstrate how the Beatles can be perceived as a brand as well as a popular music act. Next, by using case-study examples, I will show how storytelling has played a central role in the emergence and the ongoing evolution of the Beatle brand, through a chronological evaluation of narratives created by the Beatles and stakeholder entities. Looking at changes in the way the Beatles have engaged with their story over time evidences a clear strategic progression in the management and stewardship of the brand, reflecting an apparent desire to move the Beatles away from their primary 1960s audience towards a younger demographic.

In the conclusion to the thesis, I consider the wider implications of my research. I first question the future of Beatle storytelling, as the Beatles continue to become bound up with increasingly broader and more diverse narratives in popular history and culture *writ large.* I also question whether the Beatles' short-term marketing and branding strategies will have lasting impact on the group's history and legacy – whether the (substantial) financial gain derived from more aggressive promotion of the Beatle brand will ultimately erode the cultural and political authority that has been ascribed to the group through three decades of antecedent storytelling. I next demonstrate how this thesis has contributed new scholarship to popular music/music industries studies, storytelling and marketing and branding research through the redressing of inherent gaps in extant bodies of literature and methodological practices. Lastly, I discuss opportunities for future research based on the ideas and arguments presented in this thesis.

Chapter 1 – Literature Review and Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter I seek to identify and discuss the literature and methodologies which underpin and inform my work. In the first half I discuss key texts situated in three distinct areas: writing and research on the Beatles, storytelling and branding/cultural branding. Each of these sub-sections are organised in the same way. I first address in general terms both how and why these fields are relevant to my research. I next survey specific works which have shaped, directly or indirectly, the thoughts and ideas which form the basis of this thesis inquiry. I then assess the collective strengths of the research in each of these fields, with the overall aim of demonstrating a study that focuses on the role and significance of storytelling in the commercialisation and cultural branding of the Beatles necessarily requires consideration of literature drawn from a number of different academic disciplines. Lastly, I identify gaps in contemporary research in each area and discuss how my work functions to redress these oversights and contributes to new scholarship in these fields.

The juxtaposition of the study of two very broad subject areas – the Beatles and storytelling – alongside a comparatively new and still-evolving sub-field within marketing, that of branding and cultural branding – raises interesting questions about how best to collect, analyse and synthesise data from each of these diverse fields, what this multidisciplinary research can contribute to ongoing academic research and debate as well as some of the potential problems associated with this kind of study. Discussion of these questions forms the basis for the second half of the chapter on the perspectives and methods utilised in this thesis. I begin with a general overview of discourse analysis, the dominant methodology I used in looking at Beatle storytelling forms and their wider implications in commercialised entrepreneurial and branding activities. I then move into more particular consideration of the three specific discursive analytic techniques I adopted in this research, chiefly social linguistic analysis, interpretive structuralism and critical linguistic analysis (Phillips and Hardy 2002). Paralleling the structure of the literature review, I turn next to evaluation of both the strengths and limitations of a methodology of discourse analysis, with emphasis on how this thesis can contribute to ongoing and future methodological inquiries. Lastly, I demonstrate that my work has been informed by and conducted

within the parameters of ethical research standards published by the University of Liverpool. I conclude the chapter with holistic consideration of how issues and ideas presented by and of the literature review and methodology will flow throughout each subsequent chapter of the thesis.

Part 1 – Literature Review

The Beatles

The subtitle to Ian Inglis's (2000) book, *The Beatles, Popular Music and Society* is *A Thousand Voices*. Reflected in Inglis' title is the notion that the Beatles have been the subject and object of so much discourse in so many different arenas, the primary challenge to any researcher interested in the Beatles is, first, to make a meaningful attempt to assess, even in broad strokes, the depth and scope of texts about the group; and second, to ensure any new contributions to this already substantial body of extant work provide genuinely new ideas and scholarship: 'As we enter the new millennium and indulge in the pastime of enumerating and evaluating the twentieth century's more significant achievements, the Beatles are predictably prominent across a variety of categories – historical, sociological, cultural and musical' (Inglis 2000: xv). Indeed, practical and realistic limitations of time, space and access to over one thousand texts written in and translated into various languages prohibit holistic analysis of the full range of Beatle books. Instead, what follows is a qualitative appraisal and discussion of key groupings of Beatle texts and the ways in which they have directly shaped and informed this research.

As I began work on this thesis, I first engaged in the process of reacquainting myself with the significant names, events and dates of the Beatles and their career, as documented in a number of anthologies, day-by-day diaries, discographies and reference guides. Bill Harry's *The Beatles Encyclopedia* (2000) and *The Encyclopedia of Beatles People* (1997), Omnibus Press' two-volume set *The Beatles Diary Volume 1: The Beatles Years* (Miles 2001) and *The Beatles Diary Volume 2: After The Break-Up, 1970-2001* (Badman 2001) in addition to Mark Lewisohn's *The Complete Beatles Chronicle* (2004) all provided helpful documentation of the group's history, acquaintances and achievements from the 1940s through to the 21st century. J.P Russell's *The Beatles on Record* (1982) and his subsequent *The Beatles Complete Discography* (2006) provided similarly reliable information about the Beatles' recorded releases in both the UK and US.

Beyond a factual recitation of dates, places and names, the story of the Beatles has also been more narratively documented in a large number of autobiographies, biographies and histories. Especially helpful to me were Hunter Davies' authorised biographies *The Beatles* (1985) and *The Quarrymen* (2001), as well as Philip Norman's *Shout: The True Story of the Beatles* (2004), Barry Miles' 1997 biography *Paul McCartney: Many Years from Now* and Bob Spitz's *The Beatles: The Biography* (2005), as each provided me with a renewed general and foundational understanding of the group's history (and 'prehistory').

Perhaps most significant of all Beatle biographies on the market is the Beatles' own and, at the time of writing, only collectively authored text on their history, *the Beatles Anthology* (2000) published in conjunction with the television documentary series and companion CD releases:

> What a book *The Beatles Anthology* is! Each page is brimming with personal stories and rare and vintage images. Snapshots from their family collections take us back to the days when John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Richard Starkey were just boys growing up in Liverpool. They talk in turn about those early years and how they came to join the band that would make them known around the world as John, Paul, George and Ringo. Then, weaving back and forth, they tell the astonishing story of life as The Beatles: the first rough gigs, the phenomenon of their rise to fame, the musical and social change of their heyday, all the way through to their breakup. From the time Ringo tried to take his drum kit home on the bus to their eagerly anticipated meeting with Elvis, from the making of the *Sgt. Pepper* album to their last photo session together at John's house, *The Beatles Anthology* is a once-in-a-lifetime collection of The Beatles' own memories (The Beatles 2000: front jacket flap).

As will be discussed throughout the thesis, what makes this text so interesting beyond its status as the only jointly authored Beatle autobiography, is despite its promotion as being 'the Beatles' story told for the first time IN THEIR OWN words and pictures' (The Beatles 2000: back cover, emphasis original), the volume in fact provides comparatively little 'new' information about the group. Instead, as will be illustrated particularly in Chapter 2, the narratives and anecdotes repeated in *Anthology* sit comfortably alongside the biographies that both preceded and succeeded it to market.

Thus, consideration of the primary role and significance of the Beatles' story is not in the production, correction or augmentation of the 'facts' of the group's career, but rather in the wider contexts and frameworks within which they are

situated. For instance, one such dominant and emergent narrative thread within Beatle storytelling is in the creation of autobiographies not of the Beatles themselves, but instead of people who have had contact and interaction with the group. Cynthia Lennon, John's first wife, for example, has written two autobiographies: *A Twist of Lennon* (1978) and *John* (2005). Other 'tell-all' and 'insider' books about the Beatles include works from Apple's former 'House Hippie,' Richard DiLello, *The Longest Cocktail Party* (1973), George Martin's *All You Need Is Ears* (1979), journalist Larry Kane's *Ticket to Ride* (2003), Roag, Pete and Rory Best's *The Beatles: The True Beginnings* (2002) and Allan Williams' self-authored *The Man who gave the Beatles away* (1975) and its subsequent sequel, *Allan Williams is...The Fool On The Hill*, written by Lew Baxter in 2003.

In reading these and other Beatle-related biographies, I was struck by the idea that in addition to hyperbolic promises of 'new' and 'previously untold' stories and insights, these authors were, either tacitly or overtly, also competing within a kind of narrative storytelling marketplace, seeking both economic and cultural gains by publicly promoting an early and/or brief association with the Beatles:

> Early in 1976 the 47 year old [Allan Williams] announced to the world that he was going to try and cash in on the infamy of his classic showbiz horror story. Various estimates put his lost earnings after the Beatles fiasco at an estimated two million pounds sterling. He was to embark on a series of one-man chat shows calculated to shock; he had even planned a QE2 cruise across the Atlantic paid for by entertaining the well-heeled passengers. The shows did become very popular, in a macabre sort of way, with full houses greeting him. He described it as Beatlemania without the screams. "I thought it was about time I made some cash out of the Beatles. Hanging around like a bad penny for fourteen years is a long time to wait for a payoff" he recalls telling the national press (Baxter 2003: 137).

While few Beatle storytellers have been as overt as Williams in their intentions, more significant than the mechanics of how individual storytellers express their connections to the Beatles is consideration of their *collective* actions and activities. Motivated by the narratives iterated by Beatle storytellers, Chapters 2 and 3 of the thesis investigate the role and significance of storytelling in the formation and advancement of what I term Regularly Recurring Narratives (RRNs) about the Beatles. In turn, I argue these RRNs form the basis of commercial and commercialised Beatle storytelling enterprises, implicated in but not limited to businesses and industries like tourism, heritage and culture, publishing and media,

galleries, art and museums and the emergent field of Beatle 'collectables' and memorabilia.

Parallel to the idea of commercialised Beatle storytelling is the notion of how the Beatles themselves are profiting from and/or exploited by these collective storytelling activities. Thus, another thread of Beatle literature important to this research is consideration of how storytellers document, describe and contextualise, and ultimately complement and compete with the group's business strategies and ventures. O'Dell's (2002) text *At the Apple's Core: The Beatles from the Inside*, Blaney's (2008) *Beatles For Sale: How everything they touched turned to gold* and Southall and Perry's (2007) *Northern Songs: The True Story of The Beatles' Song Publishing Empire* each examine different aspects of the Beatles' business dealings, both in the 1960s and contemporaneously.

What emerges from close reading of these and other Beatles-as-business texts is the understanding of the group not only as musically and culturally important, but also as commercially valuable. Yet rather than argue for a somewhat artificial and overly simplistic dichotomy between the creative and commercial aspects of the Beatles' career, these narratives have led me to consider instead the bi-directional movement and understanding of the Beatles as simultaneously both creative entity and business enterprise, influenced by and influencing other Beatle storytellers and other Beatle storytelling activity. As I will show in Chapters 4 and 5, specifically I mean that where the Beatles themselves were resistant to engaging with their history and legacy in the period between their break-up in 1970 and the release of *Anthology* in 1995, other Beatle storytellers, through both their narrative and commercial efforts, established and continue to maintain a Beatle storytelling marketplace. While the actions of Beatle storytellers cannot, definitionally be classed as marketing or branding activities (as they are not explicitly working under the direction of or in conjunction with the Beatles or their stakeholders), with the release of *Anthology*, the Beatles entered into an already extant marketplace. In this regard, how the Beatles utilise, adapt and indeed, continue to create the group's story, becomes critical for understanding the interrelated nature of collective and popular memory, commercialisation and cultural branding.

Lastly, the increase in academic and formal critical study of the Beatles is another key foundational element of this research. Early scholarly works like Mellers' *Twilight of the Gods* (1976), MacDonald's *Revolution in the Head* (1995)

and Kozinn's 1995 work *The Beatles* formed the basis of what is today, an increasingly diverse and robust collection of research into the wider implications of the Beatles. While clearly lyrical and musicological analyses of the group's work are vital to understanding of the Beatles as musicians, creators and innovators (c.f. Moore, 1997; Everett 1999, 2001; Reising 2002), my concentration here is instead on the ways in which the Beatles, and significantly, storytelling about the Beatles has been represented and analysed in what can broadly be termed sociological and cultural studies terms.

Authors like Mäkelä (2004) and Pritchard and Lysaght (1998) seek to contextualise the Beatles as part of popular music and culture, drawing on stories of and storytelling about the Beatles as the basis of new understanding and research. Pritchard and Lysaght (1998: ix) for instance utilise a methodology of 'collecting hundreds of wonderful stories over the years from the men and women who knew The Beatles, and from The Beatles themselves.' Similarly, Mäkelä remarks that in the period immediately following Lennon's death, he found himself, 'drawn to the massive flow of "secondhand" writings, stories, recollections and interpretations' (Mäkelä 2004: 3). In a slightly different approach Sawyers' edited volume, *Read The Beatles*, published in 2006, seeks to generate new holistic understanding of Beatle storytelling through the creation of a compendium juxtaposing historically significant articles, newspaper and magazine stories and book excerpts with new original essays. She writes:

> The fact that we are still writing about the Beatles and, more important perhaps, that millions of people are still listening to them certainly attests to their unprecedented longevity. The release of *the Beatles Anthology* in 1995 and, more recently, the Beatles compilation, *1*, in 2000, has introduced a whole new generation to their music. As remarkable as it sounds, millions of people today are listening to the Beatles for the first time (Sawyers 2006: xliv).

Thus, these researchers have established a precedent for exploring the connection between storytelling about the Beatles and its wider implications upon which my study rests.

More broadly, however, also interesting is how far study of the Beatles has travelled, into subjects as diverse as cultural geography, tourism and urban studies (c.f. Cohen 1991, 2007; Connell and Gibson 2003; Kruse 2005), philosophy (Baur and Baur 2006) and cultural studies and literary criticism (Womack and Davis 2006).

Similarly, in works intended for more general audiences, writers like Stark (2006) and Gould (2007) question both the influence of social and cultural influences on the Beatles and its inverse, the influence of the Beatles and society and popular culture:

> To a certain extent, almost all the books about the Beatles – even the so-called objective histories – are a form of fan literature: "Don't tell me what it means, just tell me again what happened," is the way a critic once put it. As such, these books always seem to me to miss the key elements of our modern version of the greatest story ever told. They tell the *what* without ever really explaining the *why*. I decided to try to write a serious cultural history that focused on that *why* (Stark 2006: 1).

These kinds of works form the foundation for my own research and indeed the likely future of much ongoing research about the Beatles, as they seek to extend, via the Beatles as exemplar, the notion of intertextual and critical study.

Strengths of current research and writing about the Beatles

The collective breadth and depth of research and writing about the Beatles is both its greatest asset and its greatest weakness. As a strength, the maturity of the *oeuvre* of Beatle texts presently in publication forms one of the most comprehensive discourses in popular music studies. Indeed, the existence of Inglis' (2000) 'thousand voices' affords present and future researchers the opportunity for more holistic and contextual consideration of the Beatles, rather than requiring of them a prerequisite focus on quantitative or factual inquiries. Second, this diverse multiplicity of voices helps to shape a robust and dynamic discursive Beatle framework. Third, a seemingly limitless market demand for chronicles of the group's lives, history, music and career has meant the recording and documenting of Beatle events, ideas and innovations which might have otherwise been lost. Lastly, that so much has been written about the Beatles means that, perhaps counterintuitively, rather than fading into history, there is a strong academic and popular foundation on which future studies of the Beatles can continue to grow and evolve.

Limitations of current research and writing about the Beatles

As a weakness, the sheer number of works about the Beatles is simply overwhelming. While of course there can never be 'complete' understanding of any subject or body of work, that there is so much research and interest in the group

means there is no practicable way one researcher or one research project can access, let alone absorb the massive quantities of extant ideas. Thus, one of the ways my research seeks to redress this problem in part is to take a more epistemological approach to Beatle scholarship. Where there have been hundreds of books published about the Beatles, to the best of my research abilities (read in consideration of the above observation), no one has, to date, looked at how, collectively, these texts work to establish and generate a creative-commercial Beatle storytelling framework.

Second, despite the recent emergence of a small body of work focussed on the business aspects of the Beatles' career, there has been little, if any, consideration of the ways in which the group and its stakeholders have interacted with antecedent and external Beatle storytelling enterprises. Put more directly, with this thesis I intend to consider 'the Beatles' and the Beatle brand as an entity created not only by the group, but also one that has also been made meaningful through interactions with and awareness of the activities of non-stakeholder storytellers. Lastly, while there has been much written about the Beatles, there has not yet been substantive and sustained research into the implications of the Beatles, as a (cultural) brand. Beatle scholarship has seemingly shown little interest in the largely counterintuitive commercial success of the Beatles into the 21st decade, nearly 40 years after their breakup and following the deaths of two members. Discovering how and why the Beatles have remained so popular, as well as storytelling's role and significance in this process is a central aim of this thesis.

Storytelling

When speaking of Beatle stories and Beatle storytelling, it is important to note that 'stories' are not exclusively published in books, articles and magazines. Stories about the Beatles are told in personal interviews, emails, guided tours, live performances and public appearances, film, television, radio, Internet events , album sleeve notes, packaging texts. More, storytelling can also be found in what I call 'secondary' and non-verbal forms: in plaques, art installations, museum exhibitions, advertising copy, shop window displays. That there are so many forms of Beatle storytelling leads naturally into the necessity of discussing what work has informed my understanding of storytelling and, critically, how I am defining and delimiting my use of the term.

As one of humanity's oldest modes of communication, storytelling is a most fundamental and basic yet also deceptively complex and nuanced form of interpersonal expression. In a way that both parallels and dwarfs the amount of research and writing produced about the Beatles, scholarly inquiry into various aspects of storytelling and narrative has been all but global in scope. It would be both impractical and unhelpful to attempt to synthesise the whole of storytelling philosophies and perspectives here. Instead, my intention is to summarise key facets of storytelling research, explaining both how and why it has informed my use of the concept in this thesis.

Gabriel (2000: 3-4) has characterised the evolution and diffusion of modern storytelling across the academic disciplines and throughout popular culture in the following way:

> For a period in the nineteenth century, storytelling, as the object of enquiry, was of interest only to folklorists, themselves a marginal group of the scientific community, the majority of whom preferred to focus on facts rather than stories. In the twentieth century, however, an ever-increasing range of scientific disciplines started to take an interest in stories. Cultural anthropology turned to the stories of pre-literate societies as a vital feature of their cultures and meaning systems. Psychoanalysis found in the stories told by its patients a route into the world of the unconscious almost as valuable as that offered by dreams. Even history, the declared adversary of fiction, came to acknowledge oral history, composed of personal narratives, reminiscences, and stories, as part of its remit. By the end of the twentieth century, stories had made a spectacular comeback; far from being marginalized by their declared enemies, theories, information, and facts, stories suffused most popular culture and art, mass media, advertising, and journalism...And storytelling...became ubiquitous – the craft and trade of artists and advertisers, the stuff of television talk shows, the preoccupation of lawyers and managers, the unending project of all people trying to make sense of their daily lives and experiences.

Emerging out of this sweeping *précis* of storytelling are several key themes with direct significance to this thesis, each of which will now be discussed in turn.

Storytelling, narrative and text

The first issue arising in discussion of storytelling is, specifically what is intended by this term. As Finnegan (1998: 9) notes, uses of 'story' and 'storytelling' are commonplace, 'no technical concept, but a familiar and readily used word in everyday speech, a shared understanding.' In discourses like literary and narrative

analysis, ontological differentiations between narrative, story, text and myth are critical (c.f. Bruner 1991; Czarniawska 1998; Nash 1990; Polkinghorne 1987). Here, however, informed by arguments constructed by Finnegan (1998: 8-9), rather than focus on the more theoretical and procedural aspects of storytelling, I use the terms narrative, text and story interchangeably, with text and narrative understood as subsets of storytelling intended to focus on the ways in which stories, texts and narratives of a single subject area work collectively to produce new knowledge:

> It draws on the view of story as art-ful communication – a view consonant with traditional literary analysis but no longer confined to just that; on the role of myth as elucidated in anthropology and folklore; on the idea of self-as-narrative that now appears across so many disciplines, most notably in psychology; on the relevance of contexting, performance and process from folklore, sociology and, above all, from anthropology; on structured conventions of plot, style and protagonists from literary, anthropological and narratological studies; and on issues about relativism, the multiplicity of our storied view of 'reality' and the construction of narratives now being debated among postmodern writers and their critics. It also draws on that in one sense outmoded, but in another still vital, anthropological aspiration to a holistic rather than separated view of culture. Here that evinces itself not in the impossible project of covering 'everything' but in the more modest aim of bringing together multiple narratives relative to one key topic in our culture rather than – as so often – treating them separately.

Storytelling as collective process

One reason I am so influenced by Finnegan's work is because her research, like my own, is concerned with the *collective* implications of multiple story versions. Specifically, I am interested in first in the ways multiple personal recollections of the Beatles flow throughout popular history and culture, appearing not only in various primary forms as first-person narratives, but also reproduced in books, documentaries, performances and exhibitions. Chapters 2 and 3 seek to understand *not* how these multiple accounts work in some all-encompassing, totalising way, but instead how they diffuse multifarious understanding and awareness of the Beatles across many different layers of culture and history. Building on this idea, Chapters 4 and 5 move beyond the social, cultural and historical implications of storytelling to consider the role and significance of storytelling in the formation of Beatle-based enterprises, marketing and branding activities. Again, echoing sentiments above, rather than impose a dichotomous framework isolating storytelling's 'creative' and 'commercial'

functions, I am more interested in finding out how multiple storytelling accounts speak to issues of cultural and political authority (Holt 2004) and how these ongoing cultural renegotiations become implicated with more practical entrepreneurial and organisational behaviours.

Storytelling in organisational and management studies

This notion leads to a second important aspect of storytelling theory, chiefly the so-called 'narrative turn' in the creative industries and organisational and management studies in the mid-1990s (c.f. Boje 1995; Czarniawska 1998). Here, the exploration of the contexts of storytelling becomes critical. Negus and Pickering (2004: 34), for instance consider the role of storytelling in the 'creative realisation of experience.' Building on this idea, researchers in management studies have increasingly begun to question the complex, often contested terrain between individual accounts of day-to-day organisational activity and the organisation's own narrative constructions. As Boje (1995: 98) writes:

> In the past, management theorists have written stories without attention to plurality and economic context. As writers, researchers are therefore complicit in marketing the happy kingdom stories to their readers. In the "management of writing and writing of management," the construction and choice of the happy story over competing voices is less a search for the truth than a naive political and economic complicity that marginalizes alternative stories.

For my purposes, the general ideas expressed by Boje raise the issue of how multiple and competing accounts of the Beatles function not within a single organisational framework, but instead a storytelling marketplace, where storytellers, as entrepreneurs, have advanced increasingly ubiquitous and hegemonic narrative strands of Beatle history through commercial exploitation. There is comparatively little research in this area, however. One article which has been critical in the formation of my understanding and consideration of the ways in which competing stories and narratives function in an extra-organisational environment has been Thompson and Tian's (2008: 596) work on an idea they call 'commercial mythmaking':

> Commercial mythmaking can also function as an ideological process that merges entertainment, education and indoctrination in a particular interpretive rendering of the past and its sociocultural meaning.

Through their work, Thompson and Tian establish a framework that includes consideration not only of the intertextuality of creativity and commerce but, also and critically, of producers and consumers of commercialised narratives:

> We have shown that commercial mythmaking is structured by a heterogeneous mix of historical influences, ideological and competitive goals, and multiple and contextually shifting countermemories rather than a hegemonizing intent (Thompson and Tian 2008: 610).

In this way, storytelling emerges as a central function of both commercial/entrepreneurial activity and as the basis of ongoing value renegotiations of the historical and cultural meaning of a given subject area. As I will show in Chapters 4 and 5 particularly, in the case of the Beatles, meaning and perceptions of the group and its contributions to broader popular culture and history have fluctuated with changes in contemporary trends and thought. Yet, through the adaptive negotiating strategies of Beatle storytellers, the group have continued to remain relevant and meaningful to successive generations. In this way, I am arguing it is not the stories about the Beatles that have changed, but rather the wider contexts which surround them. Thus, storytelling becomes a channel for the symbolic and semiotic expression of meaning of the Beatles, which is the third and final element I wish to consider here.

Storytelling as symbolic form and activity

Beyond the expression of facts and dates, storytelling about the Beatles also works at another level, that of symbolism and metaphor. By this idea I mean that particularly in the era following their 1970 breakup, stories about the Beatles have become a primary channel for the expression of sentiments, ideas, beliefs both about the group itself and more generally about the 1960s and increasingly also about British popular history and identity. In this regard it is not the content of the stories but rather their existence and function in popular culture in a given moment which becomes significant. As I will show in Chapter 4 specifically, storytelling and understanding of the Beatles has undergone (at least) three substantive periods of 'cultural disruption' (Holt 2004) since 1970: the group's breakup, John Lennon's murder in 1980 and the release of *Anthology* in 1995.

In this way, storytelling becomes the link between the Beatles – as a musical group, as human beings, and 'the Beatles' a symbol, emblem and metonym, and most

recently, a cultural brand embodying ideals and ideas ascribed to them through nearly 40 years of storytelling. But rather than being understood as a uni-directional, 'trickle-down' flow of information, stories about, in this instance, the Beatles, are both subject and object of ongoing cultural exchanges of information between storytellers, story-listeners and varying groups of intermediaries. Building on earlier ideas from Barthes (1983, 2000), which looked at the symbolic and semiotic meanings of stories and myths, Ravasi and Rindova (2004: 15) write:

> Organizational theorists and sociologists of arts and culture have observed how various actors actively influence not just the reputational standing but also the symbolic value of a company, a product, or a brand, by influencing the degree to which they are labeled as being "in" or "out," as well as more specific characterizations of the cultural meanings associated with them. Journalists reframe information regarding a company, and through storytelling influence the set of favorable or unfavorable associations that the general public attach to a company (Hayward, Rindova and Pollock, 2004). They also make companies and brands visible to the general public or specific communities. Awards committees implicitly rank companies, influencing their relative status and prestige, and their public perception as design innovators. Critics perform the role of official interpreter of taste, orienting consumers' choices towards what is considered to be "good" or "bad."

My interest in this idea is to explore the role and significance of storytelling in determining both how and why the Beatles, a pop music act that disbanded in 1970 can, decades later, still release 'new' albums, creative projects and an increasingly varied assortment of products and merchandise. The further implications of the role of storytelling in the processes of branding and cultural branding will be addressed below.

Strengths of current research and writing about storytelling

Like the extensive body of writing and research about the Beatles, one of the great strengths of the ubiquity and near-universality of storytelling in academic work is that it affords a plurivocal (Boje 1995) perspective rather than prescribed and monolithic explanations for popular and cultural phenomena. Similarly, the nature of storytelling enables both storytellers and story-listeners (as well as story-intermediaries) an opportunity for ongoing sense-making and renegotiations of meaning. In turn, these reflexive and auto-reflexive dynamics speak to the ways in which power, specifically cultural and political authority, is articulated in a given

organisation or culture in a given moment in time. Lastly, storytelling provides a means of bridging the theoretical and ontological gap between creativity and commerce, allowing instead for more robust and original intersubjective analysis. In the instance of the Beatles and Beatle storytelling, these kinds of broad-based discourses are essential for advancing new and original knowledge about the group.

Limitations of current research and writing about storytelling

While there have been numerous accounts of the Beatles, their lives and their careers, these narratives have, generally, tended to focus on a specific aspect of the group's development. With this thesis I undertake a more holistic consideration not just of the Beatles but rather of the interrelationship between the Beatles, Beatle stories and Beatle storytellers. Through this research approach I intend an emphasis which stresses story context over story content. Second, more generally, storytelling scholarship has, to date, centred on research into two distinct kinds of narratives: personal histories and life-stories and corporate and organisational narratives. While each of these two areas has plainly informed and motivated my own understanding of storytelling, there is nevertheless an emergent gap in research, chiefly that of collective storytelling practices. Thus, this thesis aims to redress this oversight, examining the role and significance of collective storytelling activities and practices where there is no clearly delimited organisational or personal construct. Finally, as will be addressed in more detail in the following section, within contemporary business and marketing literature, there is a lack of specificity in the ways in which the notion of storytelling is deployed. With this research I intend on helping to clarify and extend current definitions and understanding of storytelling as it particularly applies to business, popular music and music industries studies.

Branding

Klein (2002: 5) writes:

> Though the words are often used interchangeably, branding and advertising are not the same process. Advertising any given product is only one part of branding's grand plan, as are sponsorship and logo licensing. Think of the brand as the core meaning of the modern corporation, and of the advertisement as one vehicle used to convey that meaning to the world.

Indeed, upon embarking on the research for this thesis, it was both surprising and curious to learn just how nebulously defined discourses of branding are. Many industry practitioners use pithy analogies, metaphors and synonyms to sum up the general function of branding without convincingly addressing any of its wider specificities or theoretical implications. For instance:

> 'A brand is much like a reputation' (Calkins 2005: 1).
>
> 'Brands are promises that consumers believe in' (Chiaravalle and Findlay-Schenck 2007: 9).
>
> 'A brand is a person's gut feeling about a product, service, or company' (Neumeier 2006: 2).
>
> 'The modern brand is like a smell' (Twitchell 2004: 20).

What none of these ideas expressly articulate is how, or why, managers use branding to advance their products and services from faceless, interchangeable commodities to identifiable and distinct brands. Yet in continuing to research branding and marketing theory one recurrent theme I kept encountering was the notion of a 'brand story' or a 'brand narrative,' which Neumeier (2006: 163) defines as, 'the articulation of a brand as a narrative; a coherent set of messages that articulate the meaning of a brand.' From this general concept I began to think about connections between the cultural and commercial functions of storytelling. More specifically, I began to think about the connections between extant stories about the Beatles and how, or even if, one of their collective functions was in support and/or advancement of a 'Beatle brand.'

One such way storytelling contributes to branding is through the production of packaging texts, quite literally stories printed on the boxes and packages of material goods. In the case of the Beatles, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, beyond *Anthology*, Beatle storytellers have articulated concentrated 'micro-narratives' about the group in places like album and liner notes, DVD packages, in press releases and on websites. Of course, these forms of storytelling augment other antecedent and non-stakeholder storytelling efforts. As argued above, while the storytelling and entrepreneurial ventures of non-stakeholder storytellers cannot be considered marketing and branding in the definitional sense, their actions have nevertheless substantively shaped and advanced cultural awareness and understanding of the

Beatles in meaningful ways, which I term 'commercialised storytelling activity.' Together, stakeholder and non-stakeholder storytelling provide a tangible connection between Beatle products, services and Beatle consumers where, 'all the significance attached by storytellers to the products transforms otherwise powerless consumers into powerful marketplace players' (Kniazeva and Belk 2007: 63). In this way, storytelling becomes a mediated form of communication between brand agents and consumers in ongoing renegotiations of meaning.

Implicit in this idea is the notion that storytelling communicates not just isolated pieces of cultural information between individual consumers and single products, but rather collective, far-reaching culturally coded information important and relevant to a given culture at a particular moment in time. Holt (2004: 3) writes, 'marketers often like to think of brands as a psychological phenomenon which stems from the perceptions of individual consumers. But what makes a brand powerful is the collective nature of these perceptions; the stories have become conventional and so are continually reinforced because they are treated as truths in everyday interactions'.

Cultural branding

Thus, in the case of the Beatles, I began to consider how extant narratives about the group influenced not only cultural and historical understanding of the group, but also consumption of the Beatles. Conversely, I also started to wonder about how *Anthology's* release and its subsequent 're-launch' (Apple 2008) of the Beatles into 1990s contemporary popular music and culture influenced and was influenced by storytelling. In seeking answers to these questions, I utilised research from Douglas Holt, specifically his work on cultural branding, which forms a central theoretical pillar for this thesis. In developing the idea of cultural branding, Holt (2004) moves away from traditional marketing and branding thought, which centres on the function of brand narratives in the promotion of a product's unique features and qualities, to a philosophy that instead focuses on the notion of brand as cultural story, reflecting and reflective of ongoing discourses in wider society. In establishing this new branding idiom, Holt identified three key aspects of storytelling which function as effective branding strategies: mythmaking, cultural expression and historical fit.

By mythmaking, Holt intends the idea that what consumers buy is not products, but stories: 'The product is simply a conduit through which customers can

experience the stories that the brand tells' (Holt 2004: 36). Citing Coke, Corona beer and Snapple teas as examples, he argues that cultural branding creates 'storied' products which have as much, if not more symbolic and cultural value than their tangible or financial worth. By the concept of branding as cultural expression, Holt intends the idea that effective brands use storytelling as metaphor, creating specific articulations of broader ideas and qualities important to a culture in a given moment. Lastly, with the idea of historical fit, Holt argues that powerful brands remain powerful not through consistency, but instead through their ability to adjust and adapt to cultural disruptions, sudden and unexpected changes in the cultural, sometimes also economic and political, environment: 'Success depends on how well the brand's myth adjusts to historical exigencies, not by its consistency in the face of historical change' (2004: 38).

With so many stories about the Beatles in circulation, Holt's theory intrigued me. I was curious to explore how, or even if his axioms of cultural branding could apply to narratives about the Beatles; and conversely, whether the actions of the Beatles, Apple, EMI and Sony-ATV could be read as branding activities. Thus, in Chapters 2 and 3 I explore Beatle storytelling as product and process, examining specifically who, what, how and even where stories about the Beatles have been told. Through this kind of story collecting process I draw out common narrative themes, tropes and ideas which I term Regularly Recurring Narratives about the Beatles, or RRNs. In the second half of the thesis, Chapters 4 and 5, I then interrogate how RRNs about the Beatles function not only as products of culture and history but also as the basis of commercial and branding activities. Ultimately my research supports Holt's thesis and methodologies. However, I also contribute new information and scholarship by extending Holt's work into popular music/music industries studies. Further, I have used as my primary data not professionally, purpose-driven brand narratives artificially and deliberately created by advertising agencies and marketing professionals but instead already extant, 'organic' narratives, demonstrating a further analytical layer to Holt's original notion of the relationship between storytelling and cultural branding.

Strengths of current research and writing about branding and cultural branding

One of the most compelling strengths of branding and indeed of cultural branding is its comparative newness. Emerging research in branding suggests its potential to spur new holistic understanding of the interrelationships between cultural and commercial activity. As Tybout and Calkins write:

> Prior to 2003, the Kellogg School of Management[1] didn't offer any courses or executive education programs on the topic of branding. The issue wasn't that the faculty thought branding was unimportant. Rather, we thought branding was *so* important and encompassing that it was incorporated into almost every marketing class and executive education program offered by the school. So when people asked for a branding program, they were directed to consumer marketing, or business-to-business marketing, or another course based on their specific situation and need. This changed in 2003, when the Kellogg School decided that the time was right to launch a program focused solely on issues related to branding. Interest in branding was high and growing, as companies recognized the critical role brands played in driving profitable, long-term growth (2005: xi).

Similarly, branding has a reflexive and holistic ability to reflect and refract issues that are of importance and significance to culture and society in a given period of time. Third, paralleling the notion of Boje's (1995) plurivocality in storytelling, branding and cultural branding easily accommodate the many layers and many voices which make contemporary culture so dynamic. Lastly, branding and in particular cultural branding acknowledge and directly utilise the cultural potential inherent within storytelling, extending its value into new applied and theoretical fields of discourse.

Limitations of current research and writing about branding and cultural branding

As Thompson and Tian (2008: 609) observe, marketing, branding and cultural branding have privileged analysis and consideration of consumer-side actions and behaviours, leaving the production of commercial and brand narratives comparatively understudied: 'This research stream has given relatively little consideration to the production side of consumer culture and the tacit theories, goals, and competitive and ideological influences that shape the actions of commercial mythmakers.' My

[1] The Kellogg School of Management is part of Northwestern University in the US. It is consistently ranked amongst the top 5 business schools in American university league tables.

research seeks to go some way towards redressing this gap, by studying not only the interactions between brand, narrative and consumer, but also and specifically, the ongoing cultural and entrepreneurial negotiations between Beatle storytellers, Beatle stories and the Beatle brand.

Second, Holt (2004: 184) writes, 'marketing has yet to crack the code on how to develop branded cultural texts, largely because the discipline continues to apply conventional branding models to the cultural terrain. When cultural texts are viewed as mere entertainment, rather than as myths, their potent identity value remains hidden.' Accordingly, with this thesis I seek to challenge Holt's assertion, demonstrating that, via the Beatles as a case study, cultural texts can be, have been, and continue to be successfully branded. This research thus seeks to contribute new knowledge not only to popular music/music industries studies but also to marketing and branding research.

Lastly, as indicated above, there has been, to my knowledge, no substantive academic enquiry into the role and significance of storytelling in cultural branding, where stories are not bespoke creations of advertising and marketing professionals but instead already extant cultural texts. By challenging this present definition of and dichotomy between story as cultural text and story as brand narrative, I seek to further instantiate the interrelated nature of storytelling, commercialisation and cultural branding in popular music/music industries studies.

Summary

The aim of this literature review has first been to introduce and discuss key texts in the three areas of scholarship that have influenced and driven the production of this thesis: research and writing on the Beatles, storytelling and branding/cultural branding. Second, by looking at each body of work individually, I was able to draw on overall strengths in extant research to help me more sharply hone my own research questions and to form a clearer understanding of relevant issues and debates emerging in contemporary scholarship. By identifying limitations and gaps in current thought in each area, I have been able to show how my work intends to contribute new knowledge not only in each separate field of study, but also collectively through intersubjective and multidisciplinary research linking all three.

The first way I intend to contribute new academic research is through epistemological analysis of the Beatles. Rather than seeking to uncover, amend or

supplement new 'factual' or historical information about the group, instead I have considered the Beatles more contextually and holistically, with a line of enquiry which was, intentionally, as reliant on the products and processes of Beatle stories and Beatle storytellers as it was on the group itself. A second way this thesis presents new scholarship is by locating storytelling within an understudied field of research, chiefly that of storytelling entrepreneurship. As discussed above, where there have been considerable numbers of research projects which look at the role and significance of storytelling in both individual self-narratives and life-stories as well as stories in firms and organisations, there has been far less consideration of the implications of collective and plurivocal (Boje 1995) storytelling of a single subject area where there is no formal organisational structure in place. A final way I present new research is by challenging and extending current modes of thinking in the (comparatively) emerging academic fields of branding and cultural branding. At present, key thinkers in cultural branding have argued that no popular music act or genre, and indeed, no cultural text in general, has been successfully culturally branded. Through the research presented in this thesis, I will demonstrate that since *Anthology*'s 1995 release the Beatles have been and continue to deploy marketing and branding strategies which fulfil criteria developed and outlined by Holt (2004) in his theory of cultural branding. In this way, I have established a precedent for further study into the ways in which other popular music acts and cultural texts utilise the principles of branding and cultural branding. Additionally, this thesis extends understanding of the role and significance of storytelling in branding and cultural branding by interrogating how 'already extant' narratives in popular history and culture can be adapted into brand narratives, challenging the notion that branding and brand stories must be bespoke and artificial, performed and created by marketing and advertising specialists. In the second section of the chapter I turn to the methods and methodologies I utilised in collecting and analysing data for this research.

Part 2 – Methodology

My interest in the connections between and the collective nature of the texts, contexts and discourses which inform Beatle storytelling naturally led me to utilise a variety of discursive analytical methods and methodologies in collecting, analysing and synthesising primary data. Although drawn from and influenced by techniques and philosophies across a broad range of social science disciplines, I was surprised to

learn that as a single cohesive and coherent methodology, discourse analysis is relatively new, emerging only in the 1990s (c.f. Fairclough 1995; Phillips and Hardy 2002). Thus, in coming to understand and engage in various discursive analytic methods I have relied primarily on a foundational text by Phillips and Hardy (2002), to shape and guide my general understanding of the discipline:

> Discourse, in general terms, refers to actual practices of talking and writing (Woodilla 1998). Our use of the term is somewhat more specific: We define a discourse as an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that brings an object into being...In other words, social reality is produced and made real through discourses, and social interactions cannot be fully understood without reference to the discourses that give them meaning. As discourse analysts, then, our task is to explore the relationship between discourse and reality (Phillips and Hardy 2002: 3).

Echoing the argument presented in the literature review, my primary intention in this thesis is not to quantitatively identify the variety and scope of 'texts' about the Beatles, nor the content of their narratives. Rather, my aim is to look at the collective implications of the role and significance of storytelling, as discourse, in the commercialisation and cultural branding of the Beatles. In this regard, discourse analysis seemed a most appropriate method: 'Texts are not meaningful individually; it is only through their interconnection with other texts, the different discourses on which they draw, and the nature of their production, dissemination, and consumption that they are made meaningful' (Phillips and Hardy 2002: 4). Beyond providing a series of techniques and practices for the conducting of research and the collection of field data, discourse analysis is underpinned by a more holistic set of qualitative and epistemological concerns about how discourse produces social realities and how these realities are maintained and modified over time (Phillips and Hardy 2002). What follows is a brief justification and discussion of how and why I have adopted a methodology of discourse analysis in this thesis.

One reason discourse analysis seemed an apt mode of research enquiry is through what Phillips and Hardy (2002) have termed its 'linguistic turn.' Reflecting the same kind of concerns identified in discussion of organisational management, above, discourse analysis allows for consideration of language and texts not as reflective of social reality, but rather as *constitutive* of social reality (Phillips and Hardy 2002: 12). Indeed, in my own research, I am interested in uncovering not just what is being said and written about the Beatles, but also how and why those stories

and narratives flow throughout popular culture and history. By understanding stories and storytelling as being implicated with and not as a product of wider cultural and commercial processes, my research meshes well with this particular aim of discourse analysis.

A second justification for the use of discourse analysis is that as sweeping changes in technology, economics, politics and society lead to the emergence of new fields of scholarly enquiry, new forms of research and data collection and analysis will be required. As Phillips and Hardy (2002: 13) argue, 'new topics of study raise new challenges for researchers by creating new categories and drawing out attention to how boundaries are constructed and held in place.' As my own work is concerned with reframing and advancing understanding of the Beatles and Beatle storytelling, deploying a methodology that affords multidisciplinary and multisubjective analysis is key.

Lastly, understanding storytelling as central to both cultural and commercial processes, leads naturally to considerations of the relationship between power and storytelling. Largely originating with the work of Foucault (c.f. 1977, 1991, 2004) discourse analysis has progressed beyond the specific bounds of narrative and linguistic analysis to come to embody a broader definition of language and text. Through this reconceptualisation, questions of the cultural and political authority embedded within products and processes of Beatle storytelling become vital to understanding its greater role and significance. In this regard discourse analysis allows for exploration of, 'how processes of social construction lead to a social reality that is taken for granted and that advantages some participants at the expense of others' (Phillips and Hardy 2002: 15). With this general overview of the aims and objectives in place, I next turn to the specific forms of discourse analysis I have used in this thesis.

Social linguistic analysis

Drawing on earlier works by Phillips and Ravasi (1998), Phillips and Hardy (2002) have identified specific areas of empirical enquiry within broader discourse analysis bounds. While, 'not all research will necessarily fall neatly into a particular category' these typologies nevertheless provide a clear and concise consideration of the various perspectives which underpin discourse analysis more generally (Phillips and Hardy 2002: 21).

The first specific form of discourse analysis utilised in this thesis is social linguistic analysis, which Phillips and Hardy (2002: 22) define as constructivist and text-based: 'Much of this work examines specific examples of text and talk such as recordings of conversations... interviews... participant observation...focus groups...and stories...The goal of this work is to undertake a close reading of the text to provide insight into its organization and construction, and also to understand how texts work to organize and construct other phenomena.'

Social linguistic analysis is the dominant mode of primary data collection used in this thesis. In particular, I began my research with a close reading of a number of texts produced about the Beatles. My aim was to trace the origins and progressions of particular sub-stories about the Beatles through multiple iterations told over time. By doing so, I was able to establish a pattern of Regularly Recurring Narratives, RRNs, which in turn continue to manifest themselves in subsequent Beatle-specific texts as well as in wider extra-Beatle entrepreneurial and cultural demesnes.

A second form of social linguistic analysis utilised by me in this research is through the conducting of personal interviews. As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3, I spoke to a number of people predominantly but not exclusively in Liverpool regarding the Beatles and Beatle storytelling. My initial hope in conducting these interviews was to gain greater insight into the musical, economic, geographic and cultural worlds from which the Beatles emerged. By this idea I mean that rather than ask interviewees the 'same old questions' about the Beatles, I had asked of them what I believed to be new and more biographically centred queries, in which the Beatles were not the primary focus but rather part and parcel of a broader line of enquiry.

For instance, in speaking to people like Nigel Walley, a friend and early manager of the Quarrymen, and Colin Hall, a Woolton, Liverpool youth in the 1950s and now caretaker of John Lennon's home, Mendips, I sought to draw out remembrances of everyday life and local music-making practices in Liverpool, with an aim of creating a fuller understanding of the Liverpool of the Beatles' youth. While each man did indeed provide colourful and robust descriptions, as will be addressed at length in Chapter 3, I found in these and in subsequent interviews that despite my efforts to the contrary, interview subjects would naturally, perhaps even unconsciously, keep bringing the conversation thread back discussion of the Beatles.

It is in fact this development that began to lead me away from my initial and early research aims and objectives and towards the work presented here.

A third form of social linguistic analysis used in this thesis is participant observation. By this term I do not intend the more ethnographic idea of 'thick description' (Geertz 1975) in support of study and understanding of a single group of people, culture or environment, but rather a more broadly defined application. In my research I used participant observation in such situations as taking guided Beatle tours of Liverpool, attending fan conventions and tribute band concerts, appearing as a guest on BBC Radio Merseyside and visiting Beatle-related art exhibitions and museum displays. Through this kind of research I was able to determine the ways in which stories about the Beatles circulate beyond the Beatle-specific as well as beyond the printed page. Identifying just how extensively narratives about the Beatles have diffused into wider popular history and culture led me to consider the ways in which storytelling can be implicated in commercialised and branding activities.

Critical linguistic analysis

A closely related method to social linguistic analysis, Phillips and Hardy (2002: 27) differentiate critical linguistic analysis as being concerned with, 'individual texts, but with a strong interest in the dynamics of power that surround the text.' Emerging out of my primary research into Beatle stories and Beatle storytelling were questions about how and by whom these narratives are being controlled. In one aspect, this is a concern centred chiefly on the competitive and complementary interactions between and amongst Beatle storytellers. In Chapter 3 I look at the representational practices and discursive strategies employed by some Beatle storytellers in seeking to promote and affirm their narratives. What my research suggested was that storytellers in some instances ally themselves with others to form 'blocs,' which collectively seek to advance both narrative and cultural hegemony over other competing storytellers.

However, as addressed in Chapter 4, the relationship between power and storytelling also becomes a focus not just between storytellers but also between storytellers, story-listeners and various story-intermediaries. While I am hesitant to impose such deterministic labels on Beatle storytelling processes, what this research reveals is that storytelling is not a unidirectional, 'trickle-down' process from storyteller to story-listener, but instead one that is influenced and motivated through

both intra- and extra-market events and activities. I will demonstrate that wider changes in popular culture, what Holt (2004) terms 'cultural disruptions' have advanced some stories and RRNs about the Beatles whilst others have been minimised.

A third aspect of my research produced through critical linguistic analysis is consideration of the interactions between what I term Beatle stakeholders and non-stakeholders. By this idea I mean that for Beatle storytellers who are not affiliated or directly connected with the Beatles, their management company, Apple, their record label EMI (as well as EMI's US affiliate label, Capitol), or their publishing company, presently Sony-ATV, the products, processes and outcomes of storytelling are commercially, culturally, even juridically apart from those of the Beatles themselves. Yet what makes this situation so interesting is that , in the case of the Beatles, following their 1970 breakup, the four now ex-Beatles had publicly and consistently worked to separate themselves from the group's collective musical and cultural legacy, a practice which continued to some degree until the 1995 release of the *Anthology* project. As will be addressed in Chapters 4 and 5, in the intervening years, non-stakeholder storytellers exploited this opportunity, establishing, maintaining and adapting narratives about the Beatles to more sympathetically reflect contemporary cultural ideals and beliefs. The methods of critical linguistic analysis afforded me a way to consider the ways in which stories told by the Beatles and by non-stakeholder storytellers are bound up with wider considerations of power, cultural and political authority.

Interpretive Structuralism

A final discursive analytic method I wish to discuss here is one which Phillips and Hardy (2002: 23-24) term interpretive structuralism, defined as, 'the analysis of the social context and the discourse that supports it...Even when texts are collected and analyzed they may be more important as background material because these studies aim at understanding context and on studying data that provide insight into the "bigger picture," rather than a microanalysis of individual texts.'

While the basis of my research rests on the collection and analysis of stories about the Beatles, ultimately my concern is the role and significance of storytelling in the commercialisation and cultural branding of the Beatles. To that end, the processes and methodologies of interpretive structuralism underpin and support this aspect of

my work. Specifically, in Chapters 4 and 5 I take a more holistic approach to understanding the ways in which Beatle storytelling is not only a narrative and cultural force but also one that has significance as a commercial and branding tool. Here, my chief concern is not the specificities within Beatle stories and RRNs but rather how they have been and continue to be deployed in increasingly broad and diverse fields.

In Chapter 4, I utilise a specific methodology derived from Holt's (2004) concept of a 'brand genealogy,' which I term 'storytelling genealogy,' that uses a multi-levelled discourse analysis to fully understand the wider contexts and implications of Beatle storytelling. With this practice, I look at the evolution of Beatle storytelling over time, and as read against the actions and activities of the Beatles and their stakeholders; as the object of media and mediated coverage in outlets like popular music magazines, radio and television, film and the Internet; and against wider developments in culture, society, politics and the economy, with an aim of demonstrating that while the content of stories about the Beatles seldom change, their contexts regularly do. As I will show in Chapter 5, this ongoing renegotiation of meaning in turn informs the ways in which the Beatles and their stakeholders have both reacted to and harnessed the power of antecedent narratives in their own marketing and branding strategies.

Strengths of discourse analysis as methodology

Phillips and Hardy (2002: 16) have identified a number of advantages to be gained by research which incorporates a discursive analytic methodology which I will discuss here. First, they believe that, 'discourse analysis is important [because it] grows out of the increasing calls for pluralism that can be heard across the social sciences...The idea of "one best method" has been challenged more and more frequently; in fact, it has largely been replaced by the idea that research is best served by a plurality of methods and theories.' Second, they assert that, 'it is not individual texts that produce social reality, but structured *bodies* of texts of various kinds – discourses – that constitute social phenomena' (2002: 82, emphasis original). Third, 'discourse analysis pushes researchers to think carefully about their own research practices...Reflexivity involves reflecting on the ways in which research is carried out and understanding how the process of doing research shapes its outcomes' (Phillips and Hardy 2002: 83). Indeed for all of these reasons, my own research is more

controlled, supported and informed by a methodology which accommodates multiplicity, plurality, and interdisciplinarity.

Limitations of discourse analysis as methodology

There are however, also challenges to using discourse analysis as a methodology. First, there is a question of limitations, of what can realistically be explored with the notion of 'text,' 'context' and 'discourse'. As Phillips and Hardy (2002) note, there must be some bounds placed on the subject area by the researcher – while interdisciplinarity and plurality can produce new knowledge, too much can be cumbersome and distracting from the intended aims and objectives of the research project. Similarly, although discourse analysis allows and indeed enables the articulation of different voices and viewpoints, 'researchers – even discourse analysts – cannot stand outside the discourses in which they are located, and some actors and subject positions will remain invisible' (Phillips and Hardy 2002: 83). Lastly, because of the specific and individual nature of discourse analysis research, there is at present a lack of standardisations and established benchmarks for the collection and analysis of data gathered through discourse analysis methods. Thus, through this thesis I aim to contribute new thinking in discourse analysis by applying these techniques, perspectives and methods across a new combination of disciplines: popular music/music industries studies, storytelling and cultural branding.

Ethical considerations

At the time of writing there are no published ethical guidelines created specifically by the Institute of Popular Music or the School of Music. This research has therefore been guided in ethical considerations by the university-wide standards and practices in effect during the time of my fieldwork. As my research involved human participation, in the forms of personal interviews and conversations, I used the university's postgraduate handbook as well as its ethics website for guidance and clarification (http://www.liv.ac.uk/gradschool/pgrhandbook.pdf; http://www.liv.ac.uk/researchethics/, accessed 21 July 2008).

As I discuss in detail in Chapter 3, the interviews I conducted for this research were done either in-person or by phone. In one further instance, an interview was conducted via email. In all instances, I contacted the potential subject ahead of the interview and informed him/her of my status as a postgraduate research student and of

my interest in speaking to him/her. Once a time, date and place for the interview was agreed, in each instance, I explained that I would be recording to Dictaphone the conversation, and would be using portions of their comments in my research. I further explained that while the thesis would not be released in commercial form by a publishing company, it would eventually be publicly accessible as part of the university's library holdings. In all instances, interviewees acknowledged and were happy with these stipulations[2].

During the interview, I asked each person questions about their broad experience and interactions with the Beatles. In some cases, these questions extended to queries about daily life in Liverpool and Hamburg in the 1950s and 1960s. Beyond this, however, no other subject areas were addressed. At the conclusion of each interview I asked every subject if there was any information he or she wanted to add or correct or anything he or she would feel uncomfortable about me using in my research. I further invited interviewees to contact me in future should there ever arise a situation where he or she would be concerned about the use of any of the information provided to me. At the close of each interview I confirmed that I would be able to contact the subject again should I have the need to clarify or further discuss any of the ideas covered in the initial conversation. In all cases, each interview subject agreed. In this way, I have taken every reasonable step to ensure interviewees were both informed of their role in my research and of my use of their comments in my work. With these verbal agreements in place I believe I have met the ethical standards established by the university in regards to personal interviews.

Conclusion

This purpose of this chapter has been to discuss in broad terms the literature and methodologies which inform and underpin my work. In doing so I have identified several important issues and research aims which are developed in and throughout subsequent chapters. First, there is a need for a multidisciplinary approach to understanding the role and significance of storytelling in the commercialisation and cultural branding of the Beatles. Drawing on literature from a number of different

[2] I list personal communication with two further 'non-interviewees' in the bibliography: On 21 May 2008, at the Paperback Writer Literary Festival at the Beatles Story Museum in Liverpool, I spoke briefly to Julia Baird about my research and requested a formal interview, which she declined. Sam Leach did agree on two separate occasions (30 November and 02 December 2003) to an interview. On the agreed day, he turned up to the meeting, but left almost immediately after arriving, affording no opportunity for an interview.

fields of study affords an opportunity to produce new research, synthesising diverse ideas into one new cohesive whole. Second, paralleling this interdisciplinarity in research, there is an equal need for a methodology like discourse analysis, which can accommodate if not also encourage the collection and examination of various data obtained through a number of different techniques and processes. Third, in identifying gaps in both relevant literatures and methods, I intend this thesis to contribute new knowledge to popular music/music industries studies, storytelling and studies of branding and marketing. The theoretical ideas and arguments developed here will be applied in practice throughout the remainder of the thesis.

Chapter 2 – Establishing Regularly Recurring Beatle Narratives

Introduction

I begin this chapter where I began the research for this thesis – by looking at stories about the Beatles. My original intention in reading as much as I could about the Beatles' early history was, at first, purely informational. I wanted to re-acquaint and re-familiarise myself with long-forgotten facts and figures, names, dates and places that I now felt would be important to my work. But in spending months and years engaged in the process of sequentially reading book after book about the Beatles, it gradually became impossible for me *not* to notice that I kept seeing the same anecdotes, recollections and eyewitness accounts time and again. More, as I started to visit Beatle sites and places in Liverpool, I found that many of these same stories were also being told by tour guides, curators and other 'Beatle people.' Having seen these tales in print so regularly made me attuned to how often I heard them repeated in other texts and contexts beyond Liverpool and even that of the Beatles themselves. History involves the repetition and rearticulation of past events. But in the case of the Beatles, these stories were so often repeated, that it raised a number of questions in my mind, beyond just the evident narrative and historiographic implications. I began to think about how and why these stories had become so ubiquitous; and began to query how, collectively, they were shaping and influencing wider understanding of the Beatles in the present day.

I selected three such examples of regularly recurring stories about the Beatles to use as case studies. As above, my original intention in identifying these accounts was only to use them as a point of departure for my own argument. In effect, I wanted to trace the same research steps as the authors themselves, to read the same books, contact the same people, visit the same places, but rather than asking the 'same old questions,' I had expectations of finding the 'real' or a 'hidden' history of the Beatles that no one else had ever thought to research. Yet on reading these texts, speaking with people who knew the Beatles and experiencing the places in Liverpool that were important to the group in the 1950s and 1960s, it soon became clear to me that telling stories about the Beatles was a much bigger enterprise than I had ever imagined it to be.

I must emphasise that I do not wish to imply that there is just one Beatle story to be told; nor do I wish to imply that all authors who have researched the group have

uncritically and without evaluation reiterated precisely the same biographical, historical and anecdotal information about the group. Indeed, there are many authors who have written texts about the Beatles which contradict, fall outside of or go beyond the versions of events I have documented for this research. More, there are many texts about the Beatles which focus on particular spheres of influence – like musicological analyses – not directly addressed by this research. Nevertheless, it cannot be disputed that in the popular press, in tourist attractions in 'Beatle places' like Liverpool, London and New York and embedded within wider cultural events around the world, the public are so increasingly being presented with tales about the Beatles, that even people who are part of the group's life-story are finding it difficult, if not impossible, to challenge frequently iterated versions of events.[3]

Accordingly, what I intend to accomplish in this chapter is to lay the foundation for the bigger thesis argument, which is how *collectively*, multiple iterations of key events in Beatle history have contributed to the codification, commercialisation and cultural branding of the Beatles since 1970. The first part of the chapter presents the three case studies I have selected for evaluation, demonstrating how a number of biographical and historical texts about the Beatles describe in strikingly similar fashion the same events and developments. In all three examples, each narrative itself becomes a further narrative-container for even smaller anecdotes, what I term 'sub-stories,' about the group. Some of these accounts adopt a direct and factual tone, where others are far more flowery and embellished in nature. Yet they all share a core narrative and timeline, rarely adding new information or seeking to redress evident gaps in this shared narrative. After looking at how various accounts and anecdotes about the Beatles' early history in Liverpool and Hamburg are narratively organised and articulated I conclude that a number of these texts appear to coalesce around key events, names, places and dates, creating what I term here Regularly Recurring Narratives (RRNs).

But again, it is not my intention to challenge the veracity, completeness or validity of these accounts. Rather I want to make plain the argument that, taken collectively, these multiple iterations of the same events in Beatle history form a

[3] For a recent example, note in Appendix A the press release issued on 09 October 2008 by the Beatles Story museum on behalf of Julia Baird, John Lennon's half-sister, in which she requests a retraction from Reuters news service for a comment made in a recent story in which John Lennon was characterised as a, "lonely teenager abandoned by his mother." Baird contends instead that Lennon, "was not abandoned nor was he unloved – despite what the accepted tale might be." (in Bowman 2008).

powerful voice, efficiently delivering to readers a normalised, expository account of past events that is consistent across significant numbers of texts, visitor attractions, media coverage and in public events around the world. Thus, the second part of the chapter explores how storytelling about the Beatles can be understood as both ideologically and materially motivated. The establishing of these particular RRNs sets the scene for the rest of the thesis in exploring how Beatle narratives have, over time, and through key periods of storytelling intensification and consolidation, been deployed to achieve the intended and specific cultural and economic outcomes of various firms, agencies and entrepreneurs, and, critically, story-listeners, directly and indirectly involved with the commercialisation and cultural branding of the Beatles.

Part 1 – Three Beatle RRNs

What follows is a selection of three case studies demonstrating how storytelling about the Beatles displays a clear cohesion and uniformity of content across multiple accounts. It should be noted that these narratives are not unique within Beatle history, but have been selected because they are instead typically indicative of how some stories and anecdotes about the group have been told and retold numerous times. While I am electing to study accounts of the Beatles' early years, these kinds of regular narrative iterations can be found throughout the whole of the group's career.

Again I must restate the intention of this process is *not* to highlight inaccuracies, omissions or contradictions within or between accounts. Nor is it intended to argue that there is just one, or just one correct, version of Beatle history. Rather, in using these three selections as exemplars, my aim in demonstrating the regularity and uniformity with which authors, researchers, guides and other storytellers articulate these tales is to show that, collectively, they form coherent and cohesive narrative strands of Beatle history, what I term Regularly Recurring Narratives, or RRNs. There are numerous RRNs about the Beatles, including those about their innovation in recording and production techniques, their tours of America, their films, their personal lives. But it is impossible to try to meaningfully address the whole of Beatle history. Instead, by focusing here on three indicative RRNs of the Beatles' early years in Liverpool and Hamburg, I intend to show the power and value embedded within such storytelling. By contextualising Beatle storytelling against a

theoretical background of collective and popular memory, I will show that there are material, cultural and ideological implications for literally 'getting the story straight.'

I initially selected each of the three case studies which follow because of their overt narrative similarities. In some cases, the repetition of a single distinctive word, phrase or date was enough to catch my attention. In others, it was the vivid description of places, events and developments which made me want to take a closer look. In selecting these three examples, I was hoping that as I was based in Liverpool I would be able to explore many of the places mentioned – pubs, clubs, homes, performance venues – and also speak to some of the primary participants mentioned in the stories, many of whom remain in Liverpool, or at least visit frequently. While I knew that contacting more prominent people in Beatle lore – like Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, George Martin or Neil Aspinall – would be difficult, I had nevertheless hoped that lesser-known names would be more amenable to speaking with me. Accordingly, I kept my attention focused on this comparatively understudied time period.

All three case studies are organised in the same fashion. I first provide some contextualisation to the stories and explain the significance of each narrative moment in relation to larger Beatle history. I then examine how each RRN is articulated across multiple iterations, drawn primarily from printed texts. I have also used excerpts from video documentaries as well as personal interviews I conducted for this research. I break down each case study into three smaller constitutive parts, what I term 'sub-stories.' I do this to demonstrate how, in explicit, specific terms, Beatle history has been so studied, so analysed that some moments, even some which are, at best, insignificant to their wider career trajectory, have been pored over and written about extensively. Lastly, following each narrative, I supply a brief description of how I have traced these stories beyond the printed page to the wider world of popular culture and history, looking at how they are articulated through contexts like tourist attractions, popular film and live musical performances.

RRN 1: The Day John Met Paul

> 'The 6th of July 1957 is arguably the most important date in the early story of The Beatles. This day above all others has probably been discussed and investigated to a greater depth – even being worthy of a book dedicated to this day alone. For this was the day John Lennon met Paul McCartney' (Porter 2003: 50-51).

Background and relevance to larger Beatle history

As Porter states, there is indeed much written and documented about this one day in Beatle history. What initially drew my attention to this narrative is how frequently storytellers ascribe so much significance to this day, the 6th of July, 1957, the day John Lennon and Paul McCartney first met. On this date, the Quarrymen skiffle group, fronted by John Lennon on lead vocals and guitar, Eric Griffiths on guitar, Rod Davis on banjo, Pete Shotton on washboard and percussion, Len Garry on tea chest bass and Colin Hanton on drums, performed at the Woolton village fete. The group were to play two sets that day – one in the afternoon, on the grounds of St. Peter's church, and a second later that evening, as a support act to the night's main entertainment, George Edwards' band (Davies 2001). Paul McCartney, not a resident of Woolton village but of neighbouring Allerton, along with a friend, Ivan Vaughan, went across to the fete and watched the Quarrymen's performance. Later that afternoon Vaughan introduced McCartney to Lennon. Several days (or weeks) after that initial meeting, McCartney joined the Quarrymen.

The Day John Met Paul is an important RRN for several reasons. First, the dichotomous characterisations of Lennon and McCartney that emerge from descriptions of that day colour narratives of the whole of their partnership and in turn the whole of the Beatles' career: Lennon as the rebel, an acerbic but innately talented wordsmith, McCartney as the precocious showman with an ear for melody. Second, accounts of The Day John Met Paul are meticulously recounted and commemorated in Woolton village in Liverpool. Like Abbey Road studios in London, or the Cavern Club in Liverpool City Centre, the St. Peter's church grounds and hall are physical links – artefacts and landmarks – signifying the Beatles' tangible connections to Woolton and Liverpool, a point which will become central in theorising storytelling as a function of collective memory. Lastly, I discovered that many of the people who were at the 1957 village fete are still in Liverpool and are active storytellers about the Quarrymen/Beatles, sustaining The Day John Met Paul as a prominent and celebrated moment in the group's history.

The first sub-story, below, focuses on John Lennon and his penchant for making up his own lyrics to popular songs of the day. The second centres on the actual meeting between Lennon and McCartney. The last of the three showcases

descriptions of McCartney's musical abilities. Taken in sum, these sub-stories, as iterated across a number of different sources, paint a telling and powerful portrait of Lennon and McCartney and of the significance of their first meeting.

Sub-story 1: the 'Penitentiary'

> The sleek, slender, slippery figure of sixteen-year-old John Lennon inclines his head toward the microphone and rips the local latitude and longitude with 'Come Go with Me.' He has a whipcord of a voice. This being his home field, he gives the show a little something extra. He purrs the lyric, then snarls it. The simple amplification system translates the lyric into bolts of words. In the long sculpture of his face, his mouth seems chiselled with a toenail cutter. His lips slice the words thin. The expression is half smile, half smirk. The teenager doesn't know all the words to the song, so he makes them up. No one in the Quarry Men is surprised. His bandmates never know what he's going to do next when he picks up a guitar. He might do anything – and it will probably fun. In his hands, the guitar is an exclamation point (O'Donnell 1996: 98-99).

> The Quarry Men also played their usual arrangement of the Del Vikings' hit *Come Go With Me.* On the original the lead sings 'love, love me darlin'. Come and go with me, Please don't send me, way beyond the sea.' Unable to make out the last phrase John had slotted in what he thought was a typical American word. The result was '*Come, come, come go with me. Down to the penitentiary*' (Porter 2003: 53, emphasis original).

> When Paul arrived they were already on stage and John Lennon was singing his version of the Dell Vikings' recent hit 'Come Go with Me,' but since he had only heard it on the radio, he had the words hopelessly wrong: 'Come go with me, down to the penitentiary…,' he warbled. No one in Britain knew what a penitentiary was since it is not a word in English usage, though it seemed to occur in a lot of American R & B songs. What Norman Wright actually sang on the record was, 'Come go with me, don't let me pray beyond the sea.' John's line was probably better (Miles 1997: 26).

> Rod Davis: 'The only way you could learn the words was by listening to the radio – or buying the record. Records were six bob (30p) each, and none of us could afford that. So John always used to make up his own words to the songs that were popular. 'Long, black train' was one of them. Another one went 'Come, go with me, down to the Penitentiar-ee.' They weren't any worse than the words you were supposed to sing (in Norman 2004: 24).

Spencer Leigh: And what about John Lennon singing the wrong words in concert? Did he do that deliberately, do you think?

Colin Hanton: He didn't change the words deliberately. Basically, he didn't know the words. All you could get of music then was what you had to listen to on Radio Luxembourg, or whatever, didn't you? So I mean, you would scribble down some of the lines while you were listening to it, but you couldn't get the whole song down. You'd have to listen for several days, or however often they played it, to get all the words down. So, basically, if there were a couple of lines missing. Then he'd just put in what he thought was good.

Spencer Leigh: Like 'Come go with me?'

Colin Hanton: Like 'Come go with me down to the penitentiary.'

Spencer Leigh: Which is actually pretty good!

Colin Hanton: Well, that was how impressed Paul, didn't he? 'Cause Paul heard him singing that (Artsmagic 2006).

Holly Tessler: Could you play [skiffle melodies] by ear?

Rod Davis: I was lucky enough that I obviously had an ear for it and very quickly learned to pick things up by ear. In fact, I still play by ear today...So we'd play by ear. And if you hear something on the radio, the skiffle and basic rock and roll was only three or four chords anyway, really...There was this 'Come Go With Me' thing. I had completely forgotten about the tune. And I heard on the radio somebody playing it. And I thought, 'Hey! That was a Quarrymen tune!' And of course, it was the Del-Vikings playing it. But they didn't sing, 'Down, down, down to the penitentiary,' which is the line we were singing when Paul McCartney saw us. And he, apparently, I've read, somewhere, you know, he thought, [imitating McCartney's voice]: 'That's cool. John's onstage, they're cool, and he's throwing in all these lyrics about, you know, penitentiaries and stuff, and I thought it was real cool.' What he didn't know was that we always sung that way anyway because a lot of the stuff we did was trains or penitentiaries, you know, so it's a good word. Definitely an American-sounding word. Penitentiary. So that's how it found its way in. So it's really because we were short of lyrics. We couldn't get the lyrics down properly. That was the reason. (Personal communication, 28 September 2005).

Sub-story 2: Lennon as 'beery old man'

Paul McCartney: John had a few beers and I finally said 'Hello' to him. We were backstage and John was leaning over me with this beery breath. One of them leant me their guitar and I had to turn it round because I'm left-handed, but because I had a mate who was right-handed, I had learnt to play upside down, so that was a little bit impressive (in Badman 2000: 16).

Paul for example remembers John as a, 'beery old man breathing down my neck.' John at the time was aged 16 ¾, so must have seemed quite old. Paul had had his fifteenth birthday just three weeks earlier (Davies 2001: 57).

Paul's recollection of this momentous occasion is somewhat briefer than other accounts; he recalled: '*this beery old man getting nearer and breathing down my neck as I was playing. It was John...I showed him a few more chords he didn't know, then I left. I felt I'd made a good impression.*' (Porter 2003: 56-57, emphasis original).

Paul McCartney: Then I did my Little Richard bit, went through me whole repertoire in fact. I remember this beery old man getting nearer and breathing down me neck as I was playing. 'What's this old drunk doing?' I thought. Then he said 'Twenty Flight Rock' was one of his favourites. So I knew he was a connoisseur. (in Davies 1985: 32).

As Church Committee ladies washed up in the scullery nearby, Paul borrowed a guitar and launched into his full Little Richard act – 'Long Tall Sally,' 'Tutti Frutti' and the rest. As he played, he became aware of someone getting uncomfortably close to his and breathing a beery smell. The Quarry Men's chronically short-sighted leader was paying him the compliment of watching the way he shaped his chords (Norman 2004: 32).

Sub-story 3: Paul plays 'Twenty Flight Rock'

Paul took John's guitar, retuned it from banjo chords, and demonstrated how to play 'Twenty Flight Rock.' Very smart. This was Paul's party piece. John was most impressed, but said nothing much at the time (Davies 2001: 58).

John Lennon: And we met and we talked after the show and I saw that he had talent and he was playing guitar backstage and doing 'Twenty Flight Rock' by Eddie Cochran.

Paul McCartney: But the thing that I think impressed him the most was I knew all the words (Beatles 2000).

Paul McCartney: I met up with John backstage in this little church hall, and just picked up his guitar (which I had to play upside down, because I'm left handed), and played 'Twenty Flight Rock.' They were all impressed 'cos I knew all the words, then somebody played the piano, somebody sang 'Long Tall Sally,' and later they asked me to join (in Miles 2001: 11).

With some encouragement from Ivan, Paul launched into his party piece Little Richard impersonation and sang *Long Tall Sally*. Asked by John if he knew anything else Paul admitted to knowing all the words to Eddie Cochran's *Twenty Flight Rock* and proceeded to demonstrate by playing the whole song. Despite it now being recognized as a classic rock tune, at this point *Twenty Flight Rock* was an obscure track…So why would Paul choose this song to learn, and where would he hear it often enough to learn the lyrics? This either serves as a perfect example of how far ahead of the time musically, and in terms of awareness of US music, Paul, John and the rest of the Quarry Men were. Or, it may be an indication of how one person's faulty memory through repeated telling gets accepted as the norm and becomes adopted as the truth, even by those involved (Porter 2003: 55).

He [Paul] was evidently a quick learner for – after the Quarry Men had come off the outdoor stage that day at the fête and were setting up for the post-fête evening dance in the church hall – Paul grabbed a guitar and displayed to them his versions of Eddie Cochran's recently released 'Twenty Flight Rock' and Gene Vincent's 'Be-Bop-A-Lula.' Both were great favourites of John's but he was unable to remember the lyrics and would often resort to making up his own. Recalling lyrics was one of Paul's strong points and he obligingly jotted them down and handed them to the young Lennon. As if this wasn't impressive enough, Paul then showed John and Eric Griffiths his most recent accomplishment, the art of tuning a guitar (Lewisohn 2004: 12).

It impressed John further that Paul knew the lyrics of rock and roll songs all the way through. He himself could never remember words, which was partly why he preferred to make up his own. Paul was even prepared, in his neat hand, to write out all the verses of 'Twenty Flight Rock', which Eddie Cochran had sung in the film *The Girl Can't Help It*. Then, with equal obligingness, he wrote out the words of Gene Vincent's 'Be Bop a Lula' (Norman: 2004: 32).

> Fifteen-year-old Paul McCartney knocks off 'Twenty Flight Rock' and gathers more momentum, plunging into Gene Vincent's 'Be-Bop-A-Lula.' He has no idea that he's opening the book on a friendship that will have all the joy and pain of brotherhood. With a death grip on the guitar, everything in McCartney's being seems concentrated in the ten fingertips of his hands. Dancing fingers lace fast patterns again and again and again up and down the guitar neck; young fingers search out old truths...To finish up, McCartney requisitions a medley of Little Richard tunes from his well-stocked musical memory. He sings raucously, unrestrainedly, dropping salvos of strident howls on his young listeners...The voice paints the church hall ceiling in teen sparkle, whereupon St. Peter's Church Hall, Liverpool, England, becomes rock'n'roll's Sistine Chapel (O'Donnell 1996: 118).

Further iterations

The Day John Met Paul remains a highly visible and frequently celebrated moment in the Beatles' history. Beyond the printed iterations, I have encountered this story most prominently in Woolton and in Liverpool, where it is a central part of Beatle tours through the city, chiefly Cavern City Tours' *Magical Mystery Tour* which takes visitors to St. Peter's church in Woolton. The Lennon-McCartney meeting is also commemorated by plaques above the entrance to the church hall, as well as by temporary markers and souvenir items left by fans, each 6 July, as in the photos below. Also, with each significant anniversary of the first Lennon-McCartney meeting, there are numerous celebrations and events in the village. In 2007, to mark the 50th anniversary of The Day John Met Paul, Woolton organised another garden fete, where the Quarrymen re-created their original performance, with a set list that included 'Come Go With Me' – sung with Lennon's improvised 'penitentiary' lyric. Interest in the Quarrymen remains high, and they have performed around the world, retelling the story of the meeting between Lennon and McCartney in every performance.

As part of Liverpool's 2008 celebration as European Capital of Culture, the World Museum of Liverpool featured a popular music exhibition called 'The Beat Goes On' which has as one of its display items the stage from St. Peter's hall on which the Quarrymen performed. And significantly, the magazine *Entertainment Weekly* named this day the, '12th greatest moment in Rock 'n' Roll History' (28 May

1999)[4]. Thus, it is clear that The Day John Met Paul remains a regularly recurring story in the wider history of the Beatles' early years.

Figure 2.1
Commemorations of The Day John Met Paul as documented in Woolton, 2003

RRN 2: The art school years

> 'College life was so free I went potty... I was always torn between being a Teddy boy and an art student. One week I'd go to art school with my art-school scarf on and my hair down and the next week I'd go for the leather jacket and tight jeans' (Lennon, in Beatles 2000: 13).

Background and relevance to larger Beatle history

Unlike The Day John Met Paul, this second example of a frequently repeated story in the Beatles' early history covers not just one day, but a period of roughly four years, 1957-1961. Yet similarly to accounts of the Woolton fete, what initially drew my attention to this narrative was the vivid and frequently repeated descriptions of people and places that the Beatles encountered in Liverpool. As above, I had hoped to follow my reading of these accounts with my own local investigations.

The art school period is a transitional era both personally for John Lennon but also more broadly for the group that would become the Beatles. On enrolling in a lettering course at the Liverpool College of Art in the autumn of 1957, just three months after meeting McCartney, Lennon begins to experience the freedom of university life away from his austere upbringing in Woolton under the care of his Aunt Mimi. Lennon would form significant relationships whilst in art school, all of which began to change his world view: he would meet Cynthia Powell, who would

[4] In Porter 2003: 50

become his first wife and mother of his first child, Julian; he would become friends with Bill Harry, founder and editor of *Mersey Beat*; and he would forge a close relationship with Stuart Sutcliffe, a serious art student, already receiving critical attention and acclaim from both his lecturers and from art world patrons. Sutcliffe made a personal and artistic connection with Lennon, gradually expanding Lennon's musical and aesthetic sensibilities beyond skiffle and rock and roll, culminating with Sutcliffe's arrival in the Quarrymen in 1960. This intense relationship (sometimes portrayed as latently homosexual [c.f. *Backbeat*, 1994; Sutcliffe and Thompson, 2002]) was comparatively brief, as Sutcliffe died suddenly of a brain haemorrhage on 10 April 1962, at just age 22. Yet in this part of the RRN, Sutcliffe's contributions are recollected as both considerable and enduring in regards to the group's sound and look for several reasons.

First, and perhaps most significantly, these accounts ascribe a certain amount of tension between Sutcliffe and McCartney, implicitly arising from McCartney's jealousy of the closeness between Lennon and Sutcliffe, but also from Sutcliffe's musical ineptitude. This rivalry, in turn, is depicted as driving the younger and more insecure McCartney (and Harrison) to perform ever better, to 'show up' Sutcliffe's musical deficiencies and to force Lennon into choosing between the group and Sutcliffe. Second, Sutcliffe's untimely death, coupled with his brooding good looks and star-crossed romance with Astrid Kirchherr, cause him to be portrayed in this narrative strand as a tragic Romantic figure: a kind of Toulouse-Lautrec to the Beatles' Montmartre lifestyle in Liverpool and Hamburg, leaving behind enduring aesthetic and personal contributions to the group.

Finally, in this transitional era, while the Beatles were struggling between music and art, between being students and musicians, they were also struggling to come to understand the politics and economics of local music-making. To become a musical group capable of competing effectively in Liverpool, alongside an estimated 350 other bands (Du Noyer 2002), meant an engagement with local entrepreneurs and businesspeople who controlled popular entertainment in Liverpool. Many of these early entrepreneurs and musicians have become central storytellers and providers of primary source material for research into the Beatles in this era. In discussing this second RRN, I have accordingly selected three sub-stories from the Art School era: 'Stu buys a Hofner bass,' 'Stu names the Beatles' and 'the New Cabaret Artistes

Club' to represent the type of tales frequently repeated about this time period in the group's early development.

Sub-story 1: Stu buys Hofner bass

> Stuart lived in Gambier Terrace in a building filled with would-be beatniks. One of his paintings was selected for the biennial John Moores exhibition held at the Walker gallery in Liverpool from November 1959 until January 1960, and at the end of the show, John Moores bought Stuart's canvas for £75, a huge amount of money at that time. One night at the Casbah Coffee Club, John and Paul used their considerable skills to persuade Stuart to spend the money on a Hofner President bass and join the band. Stuart had little talent for playing, but the bass looked good and Stuart began acting as a booking agent for the group (Miles 1997: 50).

> A week later Stuart Sutcliffe officially joined the group. It could have been John's powers of persuasion or just the desire to get involved in the other side of John's life, but whatever the reason on 21st January Stuart found himself outside Hessy's music store. It wasn't long before he emerged with a large Hofner 333 bass. Legend has it that Stuart spent the £65 pounds from the art sale on this bass and that it was a light wood "blonde" model. A recently discovered receipt in Hessy's archives shows that, like the rest of the group, he signed a hire-purchase agreement and placed a £15 deposit with the rest of his weekly payments bringing the total cost of the guitar to £59. It also says that the Hofner was a "brunette" finish. After joining the band, Stuart threw all his energy and enthusiasm into playing and as a result his art started to suffer, much to the dismay of his friends and teachers (Porter 2003: 94).

> Finally, haltingly, he said, "now [that] you've got all this money, Stu, you can buy a [bass] and join our group."...Could Stuart pick up the beat or carry a tune? For that matter, would he be able to learn how to play the instrument? These were all questions that John had no answers to. But Stuart took only a long moment to mull it over before responding to John's offer...Years before aesthetics became the cornerstone of rock 'n roll, Stuart knew that image was everything. As for the bass, Stuart decided it'd be relatively easy to learn...The hardest part about the bass, he figured, was getting hold of one. As it turned out, that was the least of his problems. He found a sunburst Hofner President at Hessy's Music Store that filled the bill nicely. Stories about how he turned over the entire Moores commission in exchange for the bass are legion (Spitz 2005: 173-174).

Allan Williams: Stuart Sutcliffe and John Lennon were from the art college, and from the institute there was George Harrison and Paul McCartney. Anyway, Sutcliffe was John Lennon's best friend. Stu had just won an award for an exhibition of his art. He got paid some money, like 65 pounds, and John persuaded him to buy a guitar – a bass guitar. Now Stu was never really a Beatle. When he played, he was so embarrassed he used to turn his back to the audience because he really couldn't play. But he was John Lennon's mate, and it was John's group, not Paul's (in Pritchard and Lysaght 1998: 28-29).

An artist of genuine talent, Sutcliffe had entered some of his paintings in the John Moores Exhibition founded by the Littlewoods pools and mail-order family. He won a prize worth £60 – a large sum of money in those pre-inflationary days. Lennon cajoled him into investing the whole lot in a bass guitar. George would have been happier if he had opted for a drum kit. McCartney, on the other hand, would have preferred it if Sutcliffe hadn't joined at all (Benson 1992: 36).

...Stu entered a painting in the John Moores Exhibition in the Walker Art Gallery. Stu's painting was not only chosen to hang in the elite exhibition, but the great John Moores himself bought it for sixty-five pounds. Stu raced off to buy himself a bass with his prize money and thus did this true aesthete join what would soon become the Beatles (Flippo 1988: 38).

Sub-story 2: Stu names the Beatles

Stuart Sutcliffe's first important contribution to the band was the name Beetles, the title of the other gang in Marlon Brando's motorcycle romance *The Wild One*. If it was natural that Stu, a great fan of Buddy Holly and the Crickets, should light on this insect name, it was just as natural that John Lennon, the habitual punster, should twist the name around so that it echoed the "big beat" and "beats all." In this manner the most famous rock band in history got the oddest name of any band in its day (Goldman 1988: 85-86).

It was Stuart who first came up with the Beetles, as a 'play' on Crickets. It appealed to John who, in a masterly example of his skill in word-play which was to stay with him throughout his life, later modified the spelling to Beatles, to incorporate the word 'beat' which was fast becoming conversational currency in Liverpool, with its proliferation of rock groups that no other city could match (Coleman 1992: 195-196).

After Stuart joined the group, a proper name seemed more appropriate. One night in February, while sitting around the Gambier Street flat, John and Stuart brainstormed to come up with something that worked better than Johnny and the Moondogs…Stuart might have suggested beetles from the slang term given to biker chicks in *The Wild One*…It was John's idea to change the spelling "to make it look like beat music, just as a joke," although when they printed it on a card to show the other boys, it became Beatals…Paul remembers being told of the name the next day, along with George and immediately liking it…It had the right sounds, its reference a dazzling throwback. The name was bluff and cheeky, sturdy; it possessed an easy, buoyant, ornamental quality. *The Beatals*. Yes, he thought, it would do, it would do nicely (Spitz 2005: 175).

It was also Sutcliffe who came up with The Name. Playing around with variations of the name of Buddy Holly's group, the Crickets, he hit upon Beetles, then Beatals. Lennon, never one to resist a pun, turned that into Beatles, 'to make it look like beat music, just as a joke' (Benson 1992: 36).

Paul: We were into the Marlon Brando film *The Wild One*, particularly John and Stuart, and in that they use the word beetles, and we think that kind of clinched it. It was John and Stuart one night at their art-school flat. I remember being told next day the new idea for the name. It definitely wasn't my idea. I said, 'Oh, great, marvellous' (Miles 1997: 52-53).

Stuart appears to have come up with the name Beetles. Employing his talent for word play John decided to turn the second "e" into an "a" to make the name a pun on the word "beat" – The Beatles.

Paul: It was John and Stuart who thought of the name…One April evening in 1960, walking along Gambier Terrace by Liverpool Cathedral, John and Stuart announced, 'Hey, we want to call the band "The Beatles".' We thought, 'Hmmm, bit creepy, isn't it? – It's all right though, a double meaning.'…

George: There was The Crickets, who backed Buddy Holly, that similarity; but Stuart was really into Marlon Brando, and in the movie *The Wild One* there is a scene where Lee Marvin says: 'Johnny, we've been looking for you, the Beetles have missed you, all the Beetles have missed you.' Maybe John and Stu were both thinking about it at the time, so we'll leave that one. We'll give it fifty/fifty to Sutcliffe/Lennon (Beatles 2000: 41).

Sub-story 3: New Cabaret Artistes Club

Unable to play the Wirral dances without a drummer, they agreed to provide background music at a couple of unlicensed cootch joints run by Allan Williams and Lord Woodbine. John, Paul, and George had not thought it possible to sink much lower...One of the tenements, the New Cabaret Artistes, was nothing but a cover for a grungy strip club in one of the city's worst neighborhoods. Nothing in their experience had prepared them for the likes of this. Their mission was to back "an exotic dancer" while she wound up a small crowd of randy middle-aged men. Miserable, embarrassing, presumably pathetic, and depressing – an indication of how badly their dreams had stalled (Spitz 2005: 193-194).

Lord Woodbine: Allan Williams and I used to run some clubs together, and the Beatles used to play in one of the clubs. In the first one they used to play at dinner time [noon] until 3:00 p.m. The second one was a striptease club in a basement. [It was] called the cabaret Artists' Social Club [and was] in Liverpool's Chinatown district. Their job was to play music for the strippers. The strippers used to get them to play very slow numbers, which The Beatles really didn't like. There was only one [stripper] who wanted an uptempo song. She used to use a hula hoop in her act. The Beatles weren't interested in the strippers or the music. They just did it for the money (Pritchard and Lysaght 1998: 30).

Williams took them over to the New Cabaret Artists Club. They were horrified at what they beheld: a dank urine-smelling basement, cigarette butts littering the sticky floor, some discarded panties under the little awning that served as "dressing room" for the strippers, a mangy curtain behind the tiny stage. They swore under their breath, then they swore at Williams.

"We've come a long fucking way, Allan," Paul said.

He tried to mollify them, but they knew they had definitely come to some sort of bottoming-out moment, careerwise.

'The one time we had to play for a fuckin' stripper is when I really started thinkin',' John later told me. 'They did us a favor in a lot of ways. I knew then I couldn't sit around on my fuckin' ass and wait for lightnin' to strike us. Time to get serious about a few things. I had to ask myself: How serious was I? Was I content to play the bleedin' piss cellars the rest of my life?' Things couldn't change overnight, though. First, they were committed to backing Shirley up for a week (Flippo 1988: 50).

The 'star' turn at Allan Williams' new venture was a buxom dancer from Manchester who went by the name of 'Janice.' As part of her contract she demanded a live backing band rather than dance to the usual records…Alan [sic] Williams offered them a wage of 10 shillings a day for two twenty-minute sets. It wasn't much, but it was better than beans-on-toast. They took the gig. When they arrived at the club 'Janice' gave them a set of sheet music for her usual backing numbers. Music by Beethoven and Khachaturian. It was meaningless to a group of teenagers who couldn't read a note of music…They agreed to play a set of instrumental numbers they did know (Porter 2003: 115).

George: It was in Upper Parliament Street where a guy called Lord Woodbine owned a strip club. It was in the afternoon, with a few perverts (five or so men in overcoats) and a local stripper. We were brought on as the band to accompany the stripper; Paul on drums, John and me on guitar and Stuart on bass. She came out and gave us her sheet music: 'Now here are the parts for my act.' We said, 'What's that? We can't read it.' She told us it was "The Gypsy Fire Dance."' We said, 'Well, how does that go? What's the tempo?' We decided to do "Ramrod" instead, because we knew it, and then "Moonglow"' (Beatles 2000: 44).

With no drummer The Silver Beatles (as they were now called) were reduced to playing at Williams' strip club…He offered the group 10 shillings (50p) each every [sic] night to provide the music for a stripper called Janice.

Paul: John, George and Stu and I used to play at a strip club in Upper Parliament Street, backing Janice the Stripper. At the time we wore little lilac jackets…or purple jackets or something…Janice brought sheets of music for us to play all her arrangements. She gave us a bit of Beethoven and the Spanish Fire Dance. So in the end we said, 'We can't read music, sorry, we can play the Harry Lime Cha-Cha which we've arranged ourselves, and instead of Beethoven you can have 'Moonglow' or 'September Song' – take your pick…and instead of the 'Sabre Dance' we'll give you 'Ramrod.' So that's what she got. She seemed quite satisfied, anyway (Miles 2001: 22).

Further iterations

Through my research, I have discovered the narratives surrounding the Beatles' art school period are frequently reiterated both in Liverpool and Hamburg, but also far beyond the world of the Beatles exclusively. Most significantly, the Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts (LIPA), founded in 1996, with Paul McCartney as its primary patron, is housed in the old Liverpool College of Art and Liverpool Institute buildings, where John Lennon and Stuart Sutcliffe, and Paul

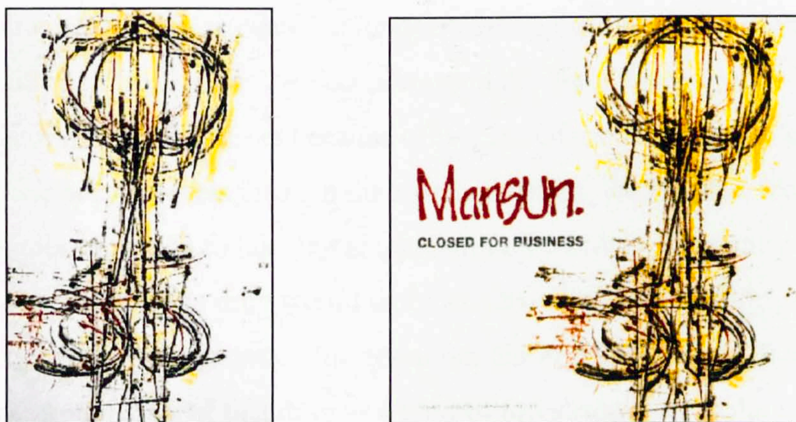
McCartney and George Harrison were, respectively, enrolled as students. LIPA, as a physical site, as well as an academic institution, trades heavily on its Beatle connections not only in student recruitment efforts, but also in promoting itself as a central part of Liverpool's educational, cultural and heritage infrastructure, with regular appearances and contributions by patrons like Paul McCartney and George Martin.

Additionally, there are several pubs in the area, the L8 section of the city, which also trade on their connections to the Beatles' art school years. The most notable example is the Jacaranda, now a pub, originally a coffee bar in the 1960s. Owned by Allan Williams, an early Beatle manager, today the walls of the pub are covered in Beatle memorabilia with displays, murals and artwork painted by the Beatles, including Sutcliffe, in its basement rooms. Williams himself, as will be addressed in subsequent chapters, was amongst the very first of the Beatles' former acquaintances to seek to publicise and capitalise on his earlier relationship with the group. Similarly, Ye Cracke[5], located on Rice Street, is directly across from the buildings which used to house the art college (now LIPA), and boasts being a former favourite hangout of Lennon's. A third pub and club, the Blue Angel, also once owned by Williams, was, in the 1960s, an after-hours hangout for Merseybeat bands and the venue for the Beatles' audition with Larry Parnes in May, 1960. Photos and memorabilia of the group still endure on the ground-level rooms of the club today.

Beyond Liverpool and tourism, the story of the Beatles' art school years is also reiterated through exhibitions of Stuart Sutcliffe's artwork, which has been displayed in shows around the world. Indie band Mansun used one of Sutcliffe's paintings for the cover of their 1999 EP, *Closed For Business*, pictured below, making implicit links to Sutcliffe and the Beatles. Sutcliffe himself has been the subject of numerous books, films and television documentaries and dramatisations, further adding to the mythical qualities of this particular aspect of this RRN. Similarly, people who knew Lennon and Sutcliffe during this period have often recounted their own memories in texts, interviews and documentaries. Cynthia Lennon has penned several works about her life with John Lennon, and Bill Harry has authored multiple volumes of encyclopaedia of Beatle trivia and history and still actively promotes *Mersey Beat* and Liverpool's 1960s Beat scene.

[5] Also known as *Ye Crack* and The Cracke

Figure 2.2
Stuart Sutcliffe's original untitled artwork (left) and its appearance on Mansun's 1999 EP *Closed For Business*



(Image of Sutcliffe artwork from: http://stuartsutcliffeart.com/gallery.php?category=Late%20Work, accessed 15 August 2008).

RRN 3: The Beatles in Hamburg

'I grew up in Hamburg, not Liverpool' – John Lennon (Beatles 2000: 45).

Background and relevance to larger Beatle history

The final RRN I have selected for analysis covers roughly the two-year period of time between 1960-1962, when the Beatles were playing a series of extended residencies in Hamburg, Germany. Like the art school years, narratives of the Beatles' time in Hamburg are regularly iterated in memorable anecdotes full of colourful stories and characters. Often painted as the era that forged the group's trademark sound and look, the Hamburg residencies were marked by marathon performances of between eight and ten hours each, performed up to six days per week. Faced with so much performance time, the group developed an extensive repertoire, not only of their own music, but also a vast array of contemporary chart hits, songs from films and musicals, standards from the 1920s and 1930s as well as arrangements of jazz and even classical numbers.

One reason the Hamburg period is significant to the group's larger history is the implicitly patriotic terms in which stories about it are presented. In a period less

than a generation removed from World War II, tales of the Beatles' rollicking, nose-thumbing performances in the clubs of Hamburg's Reeperbahn district intimate an inherent sense of British superiority over unwitting German audiences and music business personnel. This underlying sense of nationalism will become significant in theorising how storytelling is central to understanding the commercialisation and cultural branding of the Beatles. A second reason the Hamburg period is important to the wider history of the Beatles is because of its connection to the group's drug use. To sustain their energy levels through their performances, the Beatles, like other groups in Hamburg, began to take the amphetamine Preludin. Especially when consumed with alcohol, the drug would work as a harsh stimulant, filling users with frenetic energy for hours at a time. Stories about the Beatles' time in Hamburg often showcase the group's use of this drug as a kind of foreshadowing to the heavier drug use in their later career.

Third, whilst in Hamburg, the Beatles befriended a group of German art students known as Exis, interested in the literature, art and philosophy of Existentialism, as chiefly filtered through the Left Bank thinkers of 1940s and 1950s Paris. One of these art students and Exis, Astrid Kirchherr, was especially close to all the Beatles, and soon became romantically involved with Stuart Sutcliffe. Through his involvement with Kirchherr, Sutcliffe began to read works of philosophy, resume his painting career, and enrol in Hamburg's art college. The changes in Sutcliffe's lifestyle were reflected in his clothing, now all black, and especially his hairstyle, which was soon adopted by the rest of the Beatles. By 1964 it would come to be known the world over as the group's trademark Mop-Top look. More, characterisations of the Beatles' later period, roughly 1965-1970, are a direct reflection of the kinds of descriptions of the group's musical, artistic and philosophical thinking, borne in and of the Hamburg years.

Lastly, the Hamburg period was so significant to the group's development is because during this time the Beatles were gaining autonomy in managing their career, learning the value of networking and discovering how to negotiate the city's music-making infrastructures. Whilst in Hamburg, the Beatles were befriended and mentored by an English musician, guitarist Tony Sheridan, the first UK performer in the Hamburg nightclub circuit. Working regularly with Sheridan, the Beatles convinced him to use them as his backing group in a recording session for Polydor Records in 1961. One of the tracks the Beatles recorded in that session, 'My Bonnie,'

became their first UK hit which in turn led to their management contract with Brian Epstein, and ultimately to their signing with EMI Records in London.

Accordingly, this final RRN focuses on three frequently told tales of the Beatles' Hamburg years: 'Mach schau!,' or 'make a show!' – how the Beatles learned to satisfy the angry Hamburg crowds; the Exi experience – how Stuart and Astrid gave the Beatles their unique look; and the taking of Prellies, or Preludin – amphetamines used by groups in the Hamburg clubs to stay awake and energised through the long performance hours each night. Collectively, these stories and anecdotes form a robust picture of the Beatles' time in Hamburg.

Sub-story 1: 'Mach schau!'

> Johnny Guitar [of Rory Storm and the Hurricanes] remembers some collusion between the Hurricanes and the Beatles. 'Germans like you to *mach schau*, which means "stamp your feet and clap." The rickety stage was very dangerous, so we came to an arrangement with the Beatles that we'd wreck it. First, they'd go on and stamp their feet and then we'd go on and jump up and down' (Leigh 2004: 56).

> Bruno [Koschmider, owner of the Indra Club] started fuming. This was not what he was paying good money for. He frowned and then stamped on the floor with his good leg and loudly ordered 'his' Beatles (as he called them) to 'mak show.' The exhortation was taken up by some of the drunker members of the sparse crowd. 'Mak show, boys, mak show!' 'Mak show!' Mostly out of the anger they had for Bruno and the contempt they felt for the audiences, John and Paul started doing what at first was their idea of a parody of a stage show. Paul began racing around the stage imitating Little Richard, which he could do very well...Trembling legs and pelvic seizures and rotating knees and windmill arms: Paul had it all down...John started by resurrecting his favorite moves from Liverpool, where said moves had not been especially well received: his George Vincent [sic] cripple imitations. And his spastic impressions. In Hamburg the drunks loved watching John imitate a drunk and reel around the stage while he actually was drunk and reeling around the stage...As for George's 'mak show' duties, he was pretty much left alone. There was a good reason for that: As the best musician among them, he often had to carry all the musical weight. Someone had to hold things together onstage while John and Paul ran amok...They all taunted the crowds to a certain extent, but John became an expert at it. He would call them 'fucking Nazis' or 'fucking krauts' or 'German spassies' (Liverpool Scouse for 'spastic'). He would goose-step around the stage, saluting, and daring the crowd to 'get up and dance, you lazy bastards!' (Flippo 1988: 91-95).

Koschmider complained to Williams who yelled, 'Make a show, boys!' and encouraged them to move around. Koschmider, who spoke no English, took up the chant: 'Mach schau!' In future, every time they slowed down or looked tired, Koschmider would exhort them to 'Mach schau!' Their act was transformed: first John and then the others began to throw microphones and instruments about the stage. They smoked, drank and sometimes even fought on stage. John once performed wearing only his underwear and a toilet seat around his neck. They painted swastikas on old Afrikka Corps caps, and goose-stepped around the stage giving illegal Seig Heil salutes and yelling at the audience, 'clap your hands, you fuckin' Nazis'. The audience loved it. Insulting the customers not only went down well but also began to attract large crowds (Miles 2001: 25).

It was left to Williams, still in Hamburg looking after his ten percents, to sort out the mess that was appearing nightly on the Kaiserkeller's large, rotting stage. One evening in October he had had enough and started shouting at the Beatles to 'Make a show, boys!' That got picked up as 'mach shau' and the cry resounded throughout the club. It had a galvanising effect on the band and on Lennon in particular. He started leaping around the stage like a demented dervish, sometimes pretending to be a spastic, sometimes imitating the crippled Gene Vincent whose leg had been irreparably damaged in a motorcycle accident. He would raise his right arm, shout '*Seig Heil*' – illegal in Germany at the time – goosestep across the stage and shout 'Nazis' at the audience. The audience loved it. The Kaiserkeller was no afternoon tea dance (Benson 1992: 46-47).

John: At first we got a pretty cool reception. The second night the manager told us: 'You were terrible, you have to make a show – "mach shau,"' like the group down the road were doing...So I put my guitar down and I did Gene Vincent all night: banging and lying on the floor and throwing the mike about and pretending I had a bad leg. That was some experience, We all did 'mach shauing' all the time from then on (Beatles 2000: 47).

During the next set the Beatles attempted to rock softly, but no matter how they played, they could not satisfy Koshmider [sic], who kept dashing up to the stage, slapping his hands together like an agitated seal and barking: '*Mach Schau!"*...Sensing now what the audience wanted, Lennon urged his boys to indulge in a lot of rough horseplay. He and Paul would stage a mock fight, or one would leap upon the other's back and go charging into George or Stu, toppling him off the stage. Or John might take a great flying leap into the house, a stunt that Rory Storm had developed back home. There were even nights when John and Paul would rouse the drinkers from ringside and,

joining hands with them, dance ring-around-the-rosy! As Lennon got drunk, he would start to send up the krauts. He and the boys had picked up some Afrika Korps [sic] caps with swastikas on their peaks. John would goosestep up and down the stage, ending the number with a stiff-arm salute and a ringing cry of *Heil Hitler!* The startling gesture would be followed by a volley of curses and insults that should have provoked a riot but simply made the juiced-up Germans laugh all the harder...(Goldman 1988: 100-102).

Sub-story 2 : The Exi experience

The Exis, short for Existentialists, modelled themselves on the habitués of St-Germain-des-Prés, the Paris Left Bank literary crowd which centred on Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Juliette Greco and Albert Camus...They were students and artists; anti-establishment in a cerebral, intellectual way. They wore dark clothes, black turtleneck sweaters, tight-fitting corduroy, tight black trousers. Like the Rockers they also wore their hair brushed forward in the French fashion. They were cool, disengaged, impassive with no visible show of emotion; they were existentialists, or tried to be. This was not how they described themselves – both names, Rockers and Exis, were slightly derogatory and were only used by one group to describe the other. The two groups had many things in common...It was inevitable that there should be a mutual attraction between the Beatles and the Exis. Of all the British rock 'n' roll bands of the time, the Beatles were the most intellectually inclined and appreciative of art. The Exis seemed like an extension of a scene with which they were already familiar (Miles 1997: 60-65).

Dialogue for the purpose of dialogue between Exi and rock 'n' roller was to ensue about, say, the transmigration of souls, the symbolism of dreams, what Sartre wrote about the Soviet intervention in Hungary in 1956 and what Camus thought he meant. Then it might drift off into word games, free-association poetry – and ego-massaging asides about the masterpieces an Exi was going to paint, the *avant-garde* films he was going to direct, the ground-breaking novels he was going to write, interrupting his new-found British chum's soliloquy about his life, his soul, his agony – and his bloody bass player's perpetual machinations to be allowed to sing 'Red Sails In The Sunset' (Clayson 1997: 144-145).

Existentialism – the popular movement as opposed to Sartre's esoteric philosophy – had hitherto found its musical expression in modern jazz. The Beatles disliked jazz...They liked the Exi style, however, and adopted it as their own. And by setting it to a thumping rock-and-roll beat, by blending Kerouac with Little Richard, they took it out of the universities and off the campuses and turned it into a mass trend (Benson 1992: 50).

Astrid [Kirchherr] and Klaus [Voormann] were the first intellectual Beatles fans...Astrid's effect on the Beatles was enormous. On their four further visits to Hamburg in the two years that followed, she was to offer them much more than the warmth, eggs and steaks and chips which they desperately missed, and total commitment as their closest German friend. She was to invest them with style and point them in a direction that would stir the world. Her own firm leanings were towards the 'exis'...Derived from the existentialists, they were in the foreground of the avant-garde. They believed in firmly rejecting universal values and stamped their own imprimatur on everything from appearance to opinions: in art, fashion, music, and in personal behaviour the 'exis' were fiercely independent. Most of all, they wanted to define youthful freedom (Coleman 1992: 208-209).

Paul: They all liked the rock'n'roll and the quiffed-back hairdos, but they were different; they all wore black. In fact, we got a lot of our look from them. They called themselves 'Exis' – Existentialists. They were not rockers or mods, but 'Exis.'

George: We started hanging out with them. We learnt more from them at that point than they learnt from us, including style. Klaus, Astrid and Jürgen became real friends. (Beatles 2000: 53).

Sub-story 3: 'Prellies'

Preludin was a mild stimulant which John and the others acquired mostly from the waiters, and in John's case, not surprisingly, from a barmaid girlfriend. Basically they were slimming pills which had to be taken with beer to have the right effect: they stirred the brain and the body into such activity that, until the effects of the pills wore off after twelve hours, the pill-taker could not bear to be still. Adrenalin poured from the system...One effect of Prellys, as John and the Beatles christened them, was to give them a false confidence (Coleman 1992: 205-206).

As a chemical counter to the booze and on the pretext that they kept them going through their nightly sessions, the Beatles started popping pills. 'We learned from the Germans that you could stay awake by eating slimming pills, so we did,' said Lennon. Their first supplier was Rosa, the ankle-socked cloakroom attendant at the Indra who kept the pills in a large sweet jar and dispensed them readily. The first they took were the amphetamines Preludin, known as 'prellies', but they soon moved on to Purple Hearts and Black Bombers...The Beatles (with the exception of Pete Best, who never really fitted in with the others) were soon swallowing them by the handful. They insisted that

they never became dependent on them but it was the beginning of what became a lifetime's association with drugs' (Benson 1992: 51).

> Mutti took care of the Beatles when they came offstage and were soaked to the skin with sweat from all that making show and drinking. She dispensed towels while they stripped, towelled off, and changed into dry clothes. She would later move on to the Kaiserkeller with them, as would her large jar of "Prellies," or Preludins, a popular amphetamine tablet that would become standard Beatle fuel for those long nights onstage...Speed, like everything else the Beatles encountered, was regarded as a tool, as a means to an end. A pony to ride, as it were (Flippo 1988: 97).

> John: In Hamburg the waiters always had Preludin (and various other pills, but I remember Preludin because it was a big trip) and they were all taking these pills to keep themselves awake, to work these incredible hours in this all-night place. And so the waiters, when they'd see the musicians falling over with tiredness or with drink, they'd give you the pill. You'd take the pill, you'd be talking, you'd sober up, you could work almost endlessly – until the pill wore off, then you'd have to have another.
>
> George: We were frothing at the mouth. Because we had all these hours to play and the club owners were giving us Preludins, which were slimming tablets. I don't think they were amphetamine, but they were uppers. So we used to be up there foaming, stomping away. We went berserk inasmuch as we got drunk a lot and we played wildly and then they gave us these pills. I remember lying in bed, sweating from Preludin, thinking, 'Why aren't I sleeping?' (Beatles 2000: 50).

Further iterations

The story of the Beatles' Hamburg years, once just a minor footnote, has become increasingly discussed and capitalised-upon, and is now a familiar and accepted part of their history. Notable to this rise in prominence is the 1994 film *Backbeat*, which centred around Sutcliffe's intense relationships with both Lennon and Kirchherr, and which brought this previously unfamiliar aspect of the group's 'pre-history' to a mass market audience. A corresponding soundtrack album did not include any original Beatles' material, but was instead a compilation of songs the Beatles performed whilst in Hamburg, recorded by an 'all-star' band of 1990s pop and

Grunge acts[6], which brought this previously little-known element of the Beatles' history and live performance oeuvre to a wider and younger music-buying audience.

Bolstered in part by *Backbeat,* the city of Hamburg, like Liverpool, is increasingly embracing its Beatles and 1960s musical heritage. The Reeperbahn has over the past two or so decades undergone a period of significant gentrification, with the intention of drawing in Beatles tourists eager to visit clubs like the Star-Club, Indra and Top Ten, who will in conventions and festivals, hear stories of the Beatles' Hamburg years as told by people like Astrid Kirchherr, Jorgen Vollmer (artist) and Klaus Voormann (artist and creator of the Beatles' *Revolver* album cover). More, stories about the Beatles' time in Hamburg are often told by fellow musicians and entrepreneurs who worked with the group in Germany, or in Liverpool between their Hamburg residencies, such as: Joe Flannery, a talent booker at the Star-Club; Allan Williams; Sam Leach, a Merseybeat promoter; and Lee Curtis, a Merseybeat musician. Like the Quarrymen, many of the musicians who performed with the Beatles in Hamburg have exploited their long-ago relationships to the group and have been able to sustain regular bookings, primarily but not always, at Beatle-related conventions, festivals and fairs. Similarly, amongst the hundreds of Beatle tribute bands around the world, many acts specialise in performing Beatles' music exclusively from the Hamburg period[7], where effective contextualisation of these musical performances relies on storytelling and regular iterations of key narrative threads.

For all of these reasons, stories of the Beatles in Hamburg are a potent example of the power of storytelling. Through the efforts of a comparatively small group of people, what was once a virtually forgotten aspect of the Beatles' history has now become a dominant narrative strand, with resultant cultural and economic gains ascribed to those storytellers who have worked to make the 'Hamburg Years' part of a Regularly Recurring Narrative about the Beatles. Discussion of the theories and implications of these cultural, material and ideological gains follow.

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[6] The line-up of performers recording as 'the Beatles' for the *Backbeat* film were: Dave Pirner (Soul Asylum) and Greg Dulli (Afghan Whigs) on vocals; Thurston Moore (Sonic Youth) and Doug Fleming (Gumball) on guitar; Mike Mills (R.E.M.) on bass, and Dave Grohl (Nirvana, later of Foo Fighters) on drums.

[7] See, for example, Las Bestias, a Hamburg-era tribute band from Argentina, the Prellies from Belarus, or the Beatween from Moscow.

Part 2 – Discussion

Beatle storytelling and collective memory

Regularised storytelling, or the discovery of multiple, similar accounts of past events (particularly events from the recent past), can be related to Halbwachs' (1992) influential concept of collective memory, where social groups, 'create and maintain a sense of solidarity through the active construction of a shared past...through oral and written storytelling traditions, the designation of sacred landmarks, ancestors, and historical protagonists, and in other public affirmations of the group's self-defining historical experiences' (Thompson and Tian 2008: 596). Certainly, Beatle storytelling seems to mesh convincingly with this thinking. If understood as a function of collective memory, the creation of these and other RRNs about the Beatles works as both sense-making and celebratory socio-cultural mechanisms. For many people who actually knew the Beatles, relating stories about the group to others with no personal experience of them, can ascribe to the storyteller a certain level of status within specific contexts like fan conventions or memorabilia shows, for example. Even for people who did not have a personal relationship to the Beatles, researching the group or publishing stories about them, even collecting artefacts and memorabilia also empowers them as storytellers by giving them additional specialist knowledge.

Similarly, a number of firms and organisations in the cities of Liverpool, London, Hamburg and even New York (the site of John Lennon's 1980 assassination), trade on their Beatle connections in the same ways as individual storytellers. Statues, memorials, displays of public art and plaques, even informational signs, all tell (sometimes truncated) stories about a city's connection to the Beatles, establishing in the mind of the story-reader or visitor, the role and significance of the city to the Beatles. Thus, when multiple iterations of the same types of stories are presented, as in the above case studies, the details contained within these individual tales are fortified, supported by a number of complementary voices. While it is unlikely many people will read multiple accounts of early Beatles history, it is reasonable to assume many fans will have read at least one or two texts. They may also find the same stories being told in a video documentary, or a radio programme. If visiting Liverpool, they may hear the same stories again, from tour guides and curators. Taken collectively, these multi-media tales form a powerful, unified voice – a Regularly Recurring Narrative – which informs wider historical and cultural understanding.

However, it is important to note that not all stories and storytellers are uniformly positive in their recollections of the Beatles. As Cohen (1991, 2007) has argued, in Liverpool, people 'left behind' in the wake of the Beatles' success, as well as subsequent generations of Merseyside musicians, have struggled to emerge from the shadow of the Beatles and the Merseybeat era, generating in them an exceedingly ambivalent point of view in regards to the group: 'The Beatles were still spoken of a great deal and several bands admitted to being influenced by them although others were embarrassed by them and their music and resented the legacy they had left' (Cohen 1991: 14).

More, current events and news stories can also have an impact on how and which narratives are told about the Beatles. In one quite recent example, after being invited to perform for the city of Liverpool's 2008 European Capital of Culture opening celebrations, Ringo Starr angered city residents through a comment made during a subsequent chat show appearance. In January, 2008, on the BBC1 programme *Friday Night with Jonathan Ross*, the host asked Starr, 'Are there any things you miss about not being in Liverpool anymore?' On first hearing the question, Starr laughed. Ross repeated the question a second time, at which point Starr flatly replied, 'Erm, no.' (BBC-1 TV: 18 January 2008). Several weeks after the interview, a topiary display of the Beatles alongside the Merseyside South transport interchange in Liverpool was vandalised, with Starr's shrubbery 'head' being 'decapitated' while none of the other Beatle figures were damaged (UPI.com accessed 19 September 2008a).

I mention this incident to underscore the point that there is more than one narrative thread about the Beatles, and, that not all stories, recollections and opinions about the Beatles are positive. Narratives about the Beatles are not fixed in culture and history and can and will continue to evolve. The stories which comprise the Regularly Recurring Narratives discussed above, are just representative strands, indicative versions, of accounts of the Beatles in a much larger field with tremendous breadth and scope. Thus, individual stories, various RRNs and all other narrative types and forms mesh together in an ongoing interaction between memory and countermemory, defined by Thompson and Tian (2008: 596) as recollections of historical events, 'understood from the perspective of subordinated groups'[8]

[8] See also Foucault 1977; Lipsitz 1990.

competing to inform wider understanding of 'the Beatles' as both the subject and object of historical, musical and cultural thought.

Beatle storytelling and popular memory

In this regard, storytelling plays a more significant theoretical role than only that of collective memory. As multiple layers and multiple strands of storytelling coexist about the Beatles, inevitably, there will be struggles for power and hegemony between them. Following on from Halbwach, subsequent researchers (cf. Fowler 2005; Lipsitz 1988; Anderson 2000) have broadened out the concept of collective memory to one they have termed popular memory, 'a mass-mediated, dynamic and heterogeneous' theorisation which binds, 'different social groups together in a national identity' where, 'dominant groups have a more powerful voice in this cultural cacophony of collective memories and thereby, are able to frame national identity, and related socioeconomic and political conversations, in meanings that favour their interests' (Thompson and Tian 2008: 596).

Implicit within the universe of corresponding, competing and even countervailing versions of narratives about the Beatles is the notion of the value of storytelling. As the rest of this thesis will demonstrate, 'the Beatles' has since 1970, the year of the group's disbanding, become an increasingly important popular memory, especially within the context of British historic and popular culture. Having the ability as well as the opportunity to tell a story about the Beatles has proven to be valuable material and ideological currency to a number of individuals, firms and organisations around the world, but particularly so in Britain and Liverpool.

By materially valuable, I mean that there are enterprises in fields like tourism, 'high culture,' memorabilia and collecting, mass media, festivals, the music, recording and cultural industries amongst others that have all profited financially from telling or utilising stories about the Beatles. For instance, there have been many studies (c.f. Connell and Gibson 2003; Cohen 1991, 2007; Tessler 2006) detailing how the Beatles have become a 'multi-million dollar industry' (Connell and Gibson 2003: 226) in Liverpool and the UK. Beatles fans numbering in the hundreds of thousands will come to Britain and Liverpool each year in 'pilgrimages' (Connell and Gibson 2003) and celebrations of the group looking to share in and identify with collective memories of local storytellers. More, all of these visitors will need accommodation, food and drink. They will likely purchase souvenirs, participate in

tours and visit other non-Beatle related attractions, spurring a significant secondary market for the general leisure and hospitality industries in these places. Further:

> Beatles 'sites' are [being] incorporated into an international tourism market that has already become a major income-earner in the capital [London], thus being absorbed as part of the unofficial 'circuit' traversed by tourists, along with the Tower of London, Big Ben and Piccadilly Circus. Abbey Road studios, made famous through the Beatles' album of the same name (and the image of the four band members using a nearby zebra crossing), is now celebrated on postcards, T-shirts and replica street signs. In other less obvious places, the music of the Beatles has also been incorporated into tourism strategies, despite the absence of evident links to the band's career or the members' personal lives (Connell and Gibson 2003: 227).

Thus, this global diffusion of 'the Beatles' has meant that where once storytelling about the group was the nearly exclusive demesne of former associates in Liverpool and Hamburg, other entrepreneurs around the world have sought to capitalise on the power of the Beatles' story and their music in myriad different ways.

Accordingly, there is also a significant level of ideological value embedded within articulations of various Beatle narratives. Beyond the many public tributes and displays to the Beatles in Liverpool and Britain, places like Prague and Cuba have overtly used images, stories as well as the words and the music of the Beatles (and also individually John Lennon) as emblems of revolution and overthrow. In 2007, on Viðey Island in Reykjavik Harbour, Iceland, Yoko Ono unveiled the John Lennon Imagine Peace Tower. The 'tower' is a beam of brilliant white-blue light radiating several hundred metres upwards, to dramatic effect against the cold, clear Icelandic night sky. The tower will be lit each year between 9 October and 8 December (the dates of Lennon's birth and death, respectively) (imaginepeace.com 2008). While there is no overt Beatle/Lennon connection to Iceland, Ono selected Reykjavik as the tower's site in endorsement of its 'green,' or environmentally friendly, practices (imaginepeace.com 2008). Hence, through the tower, narratives of Lennon have transcended exclusively Beatle-related spheres and are tied now to wider ideologies of peace and environmentalism.

<u>Beatle storytelling and cultural-commercial mythmaking</u>

Whether the Beatles are characterised in narrative form as rowdy teenagers, as art students, as lovable 'Mop Tops,' as hippie mystics or as spokesmen of their generation, all these varied iterations have inherent value to the people and firms who

promote these Beatle narratives, whether for material and/or ideological purposes. What then is significant to this study is *not* the content of these stories, but rather how they all function *collectively*, through a process Thompson and Tian (2008: 596) call commercial mythmaking: 'the efforts of advertisers, brand strategists, tourist promoters, and other marketing agents to situate their goods and services in culturally resonant stories that consumers can use to resolve salient contradictions in their lives [Holt 2004] and to construct their personal and communal identities in desired ways [Thompson 2004]'. Even though the hundreds of Beatle storytellers around the world may tell vastly different tales of the group for a variety of different purposes, they are all, invariably, reliant on a single criterion: ensuring 'the Beatles' remains a part of popular culture and history.

It would be impossible to trace the transformation of all of Beatle history and storytelling into all its many cultural-commercial guises. Instead, what I will do in the next two chapters of the thesis is to follow these (and other) storytelling threads a further step back, looking at not just how they exist in printed and recorded texts, but also as dynamically iterated through personal interviews, Beatle tours, Beatle festivals and celebrations, and the presence of the Beatles in everyday life in Liverpool. I do this with the intention of demonstrating that there is a self-evident link between the cultural and commercial functions of Beatle storytelling – that these stories do not arise, *ex nihilo*, (Thompson and Tian 2008) but are instead derived from and influenced by events within key periods of storytelling intensification and consolidation, in which demand for Beatle stories drives forward some RRNs whilst minimising others. In this way, storytellers must also become canny marketers, required to gauge their own storytelling efforts not only against other storytellers, but also, and critically, against what current story-listeners are seeking to discover about the Beatles. While facts like names, dates, places and events in Beatle history may seldom change within a single RRN, as with the above Ringo Starr example, current events, new information and breaking news stories might alter the wider contexts for that narrative strand, colouring how those facts are both presented and interpreted. Thus, the more convincingly a storyteller can position his narrative in sympathy with contemporary ideals and issues, the more dominant his stories will become. Further, the more hegemonic the narrative, the more widely it is diffused into mainstream popular culture and history. In this way, stories (and storytellers) which are overtly competitive and countervailing still comfortably co-exist simply by targeting their

narratives to different groups of story-consumers. In this way, storytelling about the Beatles becomes a bridging mechanism, spanning the real and the imagined, the present and the past, the cultural and the commercial.

Conclusion

This chapter has laid the theoretical and practical foundations for the larger thesis argument by establishing the role and significance of storytelling in the commercialisation and cultural branding of the Beatles since 1970. I first sought to explore the breadth and depth of narratives about the Beatles by extracting out of this vast history three examples of storytelling about their early years in Liverpool and Hamburg. Through a comparison of narrative content and structure, use of keywords, repetition of anecdotes and sub-stories, I demonstrated that multiple iterations of the same events in Beatle history function collectively as Regularly Recurring Narratives (RRNs).

The establishment of the existence of these narrative strands as just three of many Beatle RRNs allowed me to theorise storytelling not as something that appears *ex nihilo* but rather as a function of collective and popular memory, with corresponding material and ideological value, forged through key periods of storytelling intensification and consolidation. This understanding in turn sets up a framework for exploring how storytelling about the Beatles has circulated round the globe, to people and places with tenuous, if any, overt links to the group, its music or its heritage. Reading stories about the Beatles against this backdrop of material and ideological motivation enabled me to uncover the link between the cultural power of storytelling and its corresponding commercialisation. While facts may not change, if storytellers can, literally, get their story straight, and promote their narratives to the right audiences they can see significant cultural and economic returns.

Yet if left wholly unchecked and unmoderated, Beatle storytelling would ultimately lose its resonance. In order to sustain interest and remain impactful, stories must function not only alongside other, similar tales, but also in tandem with the contemporary cultural climate, and adapt to changes and fluctuations. Accordingly, I next turn to the limitations and boundaries of storytelling by examining the discursive and strategic practices of storytellers with an aim of further instantiating the connection between the cultural and commercial components of Beatle storytelling.

Chapter 3 – Establishing the cultural myth of the Beatles

Introduction

In Chapter 2, I looked at how in some instances storytelling about the early Beatles coalesces around particular narrative benchmarks: key names, dates, places and events. More, these texts also share a commonality in narrative language and sequencing, which, when taken collectively produce compelling and unified narrative voices, something which I have termed Regularly Recurring Narratives (RRNs). By following three case study RRNs through a number of examples, I was able to determine that inherent within stories about the Beatles are issues of power and prestige, attributable to not only the Beatles as the subject of these narratives, but also accorded to the storytellers, through implicit association with the world's most successful pop act. Consequently, stories about the Beatles are told around the globe, sometimes in places with no evident links to the Beatles or their music. By looking at storytelling as a *product*, a (comparatively) fixed narrative form, I concluded that RRNs about the Beatles persist, and indeed, appear still to be growing in number, which suggests there is value, either material or ideological, to be gained in engaging in Beatle storytelling practices.

In this chapter, I wish to investigate Beatle storytelling as a *process*, or, more correctly, as a *multiplicity of processes* where narrativising is dynamic and relatively unfixed. As stated in Chapter 2, my original aim in speaking to Beatle storytellers was to 'uncover' a 'hidden' history – to ask a different set of questions with the intention of discovering new information about the group – which, to a degree, I was able to do. But in contradistinction to my initial plan, what ultimately became more compelling to me was not *what* individual storytellers told me about the Beatles, but rather *how* they told it. Accordingly, the first part of the chapter details the different ways I have sought out and interacted with Beatle storytelling processes, and provides further evidence of how storytelling products and practices are imbued with material and ideological motivations. The second part of the chapter discusses how storytellers intend to achieve their desired outcomes through close examination of the specific representational practices and discursive strategies of Beatle storytellers I encountered during the fieldwork for this research.

In the final third of the chapter, I argue that Beatle storytelling involves a series of processes which are not individualised or *ad hoc* but instead highly

organised, competitive and complementary. Paralleling work by Thompson and Tian (2008: 610), my research suggests that despite the fact that individual storytellers often seek to tell stories which affirm or advance their own cultural or economic status in the wider Beatles world, there also exists a 'nexus of horizontal relationships' between Beatle storytellers, where there is shared benefit to all storytellers in working together to promote 'the Beatles,' *writ large*. What emerges out of this ongoing negotiation between individual and collective, and between the cultural and commercial is the crystallisation of a cultural mythology (Thompson and Tian 2008) about the Beatles where single storytelling acts become normalised and segmented – classed as 'specialist' knowledge – within a wider rhetorical construct of the Beatles. Understanding how storytellers utilise specific representational practices and discursive strategies to transform specialist knowledge about the Beatles into commercial enterprise is the next step in understanding the role and significance of storytelling in the cultural branding of the Beatles.

Part 1 – Defining Beatle storytelling practices

As discussed in the Introduction and in Chapter 1, storytelling is one of humanity's oldest modes of communication. In Chapter 1 I addressed the methodological issues inherent within study of storytelling practices so I will not repeat them here. However, I do feel it necessary to make a distinction between the examples of storytelling presented in Chapter 2, as fixed-text products, and storytelling as it will be presented here, as dynamic, unfixed and interactive processes. For, as Finnegan (1998: 73) notes, what is commonly termed 'storytelling' in both academic and broader cultural contexts, tends to conflate understanding of storytelling as the creation of a 'sustained single-voice text produced by one author' with that of published stories. Further, Barthes (2000) has demonstrated how storytelling in the form of cultural mythologising can occur semiotically, with no explicit narrative exchange between storyteller and story-listener, but rather through implicit, often non-verbal communication motivated through socially constructed knowledge.

Accordingly, for the purposes of this thesis, I am defining storytelling practices broadly, in consideration of all of these ideas. But as in Chapter 2, my ultimate interest lies in looking at the *collective* power of storytelling: evaluating how a number of individual stories about the Beatles appear to not only circulate around common narrative 'landmarks' (key names, dates, people, events, words and phrases)

but have also increasingly, and critically, become embedded within broader historical, cultural and commercial texts, which have a direct and powerful impact on wider perceptions of the Beatles – as a musical act and, as I will show in the remaining chapters of this research, 'the Beatles' – as a cultural brand. Thus, I intend to demonstrate that an examination of storytelling practices yields understanding of storytelling not only as a socio-cultural and political process, but also as one that is central to the marketing and commodification of popular culture, in this case, the Beatles.

Storytelling through interview

In seeking answers to how storytelling informs understanding of the Beatles, I engaged with storytelling practices (primarily but not exclusively in Liverpool) in several different forms. In the first instance, I conducted interviews with a number of different storytellers. I was fortunate to have been able to speak with a number of key 'Beatle people' – people who regularly tell stories about the Beatles and who are actively engaged in the production or the continuation of an evident narrative strand/RRN. Beyond these primary voices, however, I also interviewed a number of 'regular' people, with no personal or direct connections to the Quarrymen/Beatles as individuals, but who were extant in Liverpool before, during and after the group's success and had personal recollections of their impact on both the city and the world.

In the case of speaking to 'Beatle people,' my intention in conducting these interviews[9] was to attempt to draw the storytellers out of their RRN 'comfort zone' – to get them to consider the Beatles in a broader sense, in relation to other skiffle and/or Beat groups in Merseyside in the era. I did not expect storytellers to depart very far from the anecdotes and narratives which they have iterated to so many authors and researchers over the decades, and which so frequently appear in fixed texts. Instead, what I wanted to do was to ask slightly different questions of them, beyond what I considered 'typical' queries about the Beatles' early years, in order to elicit from them a clearer sense of the quotidian and vernacular music-making practices of the time, and a wider view of the Beatles' place in 1950s-1960s Liverpool and Britain.

[9] Where possible, interviews were open-ended and conducted in person. Where face-to-face communication was not possible, interviews were conducted by phone and in one instance via email (where the interview was conducted not as open-ended but rather as the provision of answers to a set of fixed questions forwarded by me to the interview subject).

In this regard, these interviews did yield some, if not much, new information. For instance, from Nigel Walley, a school friend and an early manager of the Quarrymen, I learned about the ways in which the Quarrymen would go about getting bookings for performances (Walley, personal communication, 08 November 2005). And Colin Hall, curator of John Lennon's Menlove Avenue home (now owned by the National Trust), spoke thoughtfully of his experiences not only as caretaker of a Beatle landmark, but also about of one of his earlier jobs as a band manager, agent and promoter across Britain, working with groups like the Ox, a late 1960s/early 1970s progressive rock act (Hall, personal communication, 13 October 2005). Similarly, in speaking to people with no direct connection to the Beatles, I had initially hoped to balance out potentially more ideological or agenda-driven accounts of the group's early years, as told by people who are financially and/or culturally invested in promoting a particular RRN, with recollections from people who seemingly stood to profit little from articulating their own memories of Liverpool and of music-making in the 1950s and 1960s. (A table of all the interviews I conducted for this thesis is below).

In all cases, I informed interviewees that I was interested in a broader history of the Beatles and wanted to hear from them something beyond the familiar narratives that recurred regularly in so many Beatle books. I explained that I wanted to learn about their own, personal life-histories, in which they and *not* the Beatles were the central subject. I began the interviewing process with the tacit assumption (soon to be proved a mistaken one) that most of the people I spoke with, in particular people who have told stories about the Beatles countless times, would embrace an opportunity to speak not as they regularly did in interviews - as people who used to know the Beatles and thus as 'eyewitnesses to history' – but rather the other way round, of their recollections of being active participants in a musical scene in a particular time and place, in which the Beatles happened to co-exist.

Yet as I conducted more and more interviews, I began to see an emerging pattern, which began to change my original expected research outcome. I discovered that just as in printed texts, storytellers would often locate their tales around specific and recurring narrative themes and benchmarks. While Beatle-specific memories would be very clear and replete with colourful detail, more often than not, any attempts to draw out discussion beyond the immediate context of these key events, even of their own lives and histories, would yield very little new or additional

information, while characterisations of the Beatles were always full and robust. More, even in instances where I did not ask any specific question about the Beatles, personal histories would often organically, regularly, conversationally drift back to the subject of the Beatles as a matter of course. After encountering this phenomenon numerous times, rather than continuing to pursue my original aim of uncovering new primary material about the Beatles, I began to grow more interested in researching how storytelling about the Beatles works as its own enterprise. I began to concentrate not only on the *content* of their stories, but also the ways in which these narratives were being told to me, as a *process*. As with printed texts, when appraised collectively, these interviews yield a number of interesting insights into the mechanisms of collective and popular memory, as well as Thompson and Tian's (2008) notion of the 'crystallisation of a cultural myth.' A full analysis of the material I collected from these interview subjects, as well as those obtained from other storytelling processes, will be discussed in Section 2, below.

Figure 3.1
List of Interview Subjects, 2002-2006

NAME	BEATLE AFFILIATION/EXPERTISE
Frankie Connor	Merseybeat musician, now Radio Merseyside DJ
Rod Davis	Member of the Quarrymen
Joe Flannery	Talent Booker, Star-Club, Merseybeat manager and promoter
Colin Hall	Curator, Mendips
Colin Hanton	Member of the Quarrymen
Bill Harry	Friend of John Lennon & Stuart Sutcliffe, founder and editor of *Mersey Beat*
Larry Kane	US radio & TV reporter, travelled with the Beatles on 1964 & 1965 North American tours
Sam Leach	Liverpool promoter
Ray O'Brien	Beatle tour guide
Mick O'Toole	Skiffle musician
Tony Sheridan	British guitarist, worked with the Beatles in Hamburg
Nigel Walley	Friend and manager of the Quarrymen

Storytelling through participant-observation

Beyond formal interviews, I additionally encountered Beatle storytelling in a less formal, less personal way, through a number of Beatle-specific events: celebrations, festivals, concerts, tours, exhibitions and other events where primary or significant emphasis was focused on the Beatles or a particular aspect of their music,

lives or careers. Unlike the interviews I conducted, in these instances information was not being transmitted person-to-person, but rather from one-to-many. Here, stories about the Beatles might be told by a tribute band performer to audience members, from a tour guide to a group of tourists or a radio broadcaster to their listeners. These public or semi-public forums inform understanding of the Beatles in significantly different ways than personal interviews. First, there is an implicit hierarchy between these kinds of storytellers and story-listeners as narrators will typically present themselves as specialists, experts or insiders with knowledge about the Beatles that story-listeners will not have. Second, there is less (if any) opportunity for interaction between storyteller and story-listener, as events like tours, exhibitions and festivals tend to have physically, temporally and socially demarcated space separating performers and attendees. Third, unlike secondary storytelling (discussion of which follows next), story-listeners here are people who are almost always deliberately seeking out Beatle-related events, often travelling some distance, paying admission, and/or looking to participate in a celebration of their Beatle fandom. This situation typically creates an environment of sympathetic and eager story-listeners with pre-existing understanding and awareness of the Beatles, or at minimum, with an interest in learning more about the group.

In some instances, as a researcher, my role in studying these kinds of storytelling processes was primarily observational and passive: I would go on tours, to concerts and performances, to museum exhibitions and music festivals where there was little opportunity to interact with storytellers or story-listeners. For instance, in May, 2008, I attended a screening of the film, *A Concert For George* (2003) held in conjunction with Liverpool's 'Beatle Weekend' as part of the European Capital of Culture celebration. While I was interested in seeing the film, my primary purpose in attending the event was to hear Olivia Harrison, widow of George Harrison, speak before the film was shown. Mrs. Harrison addressed a packed cinema house, flanked by a complement of security guards and press people, reading from a set of note cards. She spoke for just a few moments and departed as the house lights dimmed and the film began, allowing no opportunity for discussion or conversation with Mrs. Harrison or with fans.

In other situations, my participation was more active. Unlike the example above, in more relaxed environments, like guided tours or book launches, I did have the chance to talk with both storytellers and story-listeners. In 2004, I had the

opportunity to be a guest on the Roger Lyon show on BBC Radio Merseyside. At the start of the two-hour phone-in show, the host identified me as an American student in Liverpool researching the Beatles and urged callers to ring in with their stories of the Merseybeat era. Many people did call, and I had the opportunity to speak to a number of people I would not have otherwise had the chance to reach.

As with the interviews I conducted, in participating in these kinds of Beatle events, I could not help but to notice the regularities and similarities in stories told about the Beatles and their descriptive faithfulness to the RRNs found in printed texts. What made these storytelling events so interesting to me was that unlike interviews, where I was the sole story-listener, these storytelling instances were often articulated in a fashion which made it clear there were expectations of audience participation or response to the act of storytelling. By this, I mean that in telling stories about the Beatles, this group of narrators was operating in a public (or semi-public) sphere, seeking to utilise stories about the Beatles for material and/or ideological purposes: sales of a new book, additional gig bookings, a public acknowledgement of a relationship to the Beatles, ticket sales and the like. For this reason, this particular narrative process is especially important in establishing a connection between the cultural and commercial aspects of storytelling.

To underscore the point made in the methodology section of Chapter 1, in all instances, in compliance with university standards on ethical research practices, I would inform event organisers as well as any attendees or participants I spoke to, of my role as an academic researcher before the event got underway, and in all cases my active participation was encouraged by them. An indicative list of the Beatle events in which I participated/observed is below.

Figure 3.2
Indicative list of Beatle storytelling events, 2002-2008

BEATLE STORYTELLING EVENT	FURTHER DESCRIPTION
Magical Mystery Tour	Liverpool Beatle sightseeing tour, taken multiple times
The Beatles' Merseyside Tour	Merseyside Beatle sightseeing tour
Paul McCartney interview session, LIPA	July, 2004
The Beat Goes On	World Museum Liverpool exhibition celebrating popular music in Liverpool, 2008-09
The Art of Paul McCartney	The Walker Art gallery exhibition of Paul McCartney's artwork, 2002
Paperback Writer Literary Festival	A series of three book launches/interviews with Beatle authors, 2008
Beatle Week	Annual Liverpool celebration of the Beatles, featuring tribute bands
Paul McCartney concerts	Throughout the UK, 2003 and in Liverpool, 2008
Abbey Road Film Festival	A 2005 event celebrating Abbey Road recording studios' 25 years of film scoring, featuring a film screening of *A Hard Day's Night*
20 Forthlin Road and Mendips Tour	National Trust tour of the childhood homes of Paul McCartney and John Lennon
The Beatles Story Museum	Museum/attraction celebrating the Beatles
Woolton Festival	6 July 2007, Woolton Village fete celebrating the 50th anniversary of The Day John Met Paul
Liverpool Beatles film festival	Part of 2008 Capital of Culture celebrations, featuring the world premiere of *All Together Now* and a screening of *A Concert for George*.

Secondary storytelling

Included with the Beatle storytelling practices I encountered in Liverpool is something I term 'secondary storytelling,' or storytelling about the Beatles where there is no printed or spoken 'story' at all. In these cases, the Beatles' music, their image, perhaps even just their name, when contextualised within a number of various environments, positions the Beatles into extra-Beatle contexts. In a way not dissimilar to the semiotics of mythology as described by Barthes (2000), the process of secondary storytelling communicates information about 'the Beatles' not just to an individual researcher or a collective of knowledgeable and interested fans. Instead, secondary storytelling about the Beatles contextualises the group in everyday life, in ways where the Beatles are not celebrated, analysed or reified, but instead in ways where their images, likenesses and music are utilised indirectly, where meaning is not

articulated but inferred. Understanding the power of secondary Beatle storytelling is essential to understanding how storytellers and stakeholders have harnessed the power of 'the Beatles' for commercial and cultural branding purposes.

Below are a set of photographs that document of some of the ways I encountered secondary Beatle storytelling in Liverpool between the years of 2002 and 2008. In the images, plaques and signs tell (truncated) stories of the Beatles. As discussed in Chapter 2, this kind of storytelling is important first because it establishes an evidentiary link between the narrative world of the storyteller and the physical world of the Beatles: 'x marks the spot.' Beatle fans and tourists will typically have heard, for example, of the Cavern Club and Mathew Street. On arriving in Liverpool, to the Cavern Quarter, on seeing a plaque above a door or a sign commemorating the Beatles, a powerful emotional as well as cognitive connection is made between the 'story world' and the physical world (Baynham 2003).

Figure 3.3
Beatle informational signs, plaques and displays in the Cavern Quarter, Liverpool, 2002-2008

However, secondary storytelling also fortifies and encourages perceptions of the Beatles by working in the opposite fashion. That is to say for people who are *not* Beatle fans, encountering signs and signifiers of the group in everyday life – without expressly seeking them out – spurs understanding of the Beatles as significant to Liverpool, to Britain, to popular music and culture and is regularly reinforced in the mind of the observer. For just one evident example, in viewing the second set of images, below, it is clear the Beatles have become central to efforts to promote the city of Liverpool.[10] Particularly in the city's drive to be named 2008 European Capital of Culture, the Beatles' legacy and contributions to Liverpool culture have been traded on heavily, and made plain to all. Perhaps no other image more overtly articulated this connection than artwork created by Alex Corina, entitled *Mona Lennon* (2001). Superimposing an image of John Lennon's face on top of the *Mona Lisa*, the central figure of the piece is clutching a Rickenbacker guitar with a European Capital of Culture badge boldly emblazoned on the instrument's body. In addition to being printed on posters, t-shirts, postcards and other souvenir items, a giant reproduction of the *Mona Lennon* was displayed across one side of the monolithic, behemoth St. George's Hall during the final weeks of the Capital of Culture bidding competition in 2003. Thus, with no verbiage at all, the material and ideological value of the Beatles' relationship to Liverpool (and Liverpool's relationship to the Beatles) was expertly communicated.

[10] Chapter 4 will discuss how and why this has not always been the case.

Figure 3.4
Secondary Beatle Storytelling in Liverpool, 2002-2008

Artwork by Corina, 2001

http://www.liverpoolmonuments.co.uk/lennonmural001.html [Accessed 07 June 2006].

As the *Mona Lennon* suggests, secondary Beatle storytelling is also an effective tool in underscoring 'the Beatles' as a potent bridging mechanism between commerce and creativity, and between 'high' and 'low' culture. For instance, a

Liverpool gift and housewares shop was promoting its stock of 'Mersey Minis' – a set of five books written in celebration of Liverpool's 800th year, 2007. The sales copy reads:

> Don't know what to buy for your mum and dad (or other half, sister/brother etc.)?! This will keep them quiet for ages.
>
> A set of 5 fascinating books commissioned specially to celebrate Liverpool's 800th anniversary. Mersey Minis are packed full of musings from writers both famous and unknown all about their experiences of our great city.
>
> Dickens, Wordsworth, Lennon and McCartney, Nicholas Monserrat [sic], Margaret Thatcher (!), beat poet Allen Ginsberg have all had something to say about Liverpool and it's all in these beautifully illustrated little books.
>
> Only **£14.99** for all five books – how good is that??? [emphasis original] (advertising copy from *Utility* shop, Bold Street, Liverpool 2008)

In this example, Lennon and McCartney are part of a cadre of literary distinguished authors, statesmen and poets, preceded to the top of the list only by Charles Dickens and William Wordsworth. There is no mention of the Beatles or their music. Instead, the advert expects readers to know and to unquestioningly contextualise Lennon and McCartney not as popular musicians, but instead as literary thinkers, alongside other celebrated British writers and historical figures like Monsarrat and Dickens. Without a mention of the word 'Beatles,' their cultural and corresponding commercial value is presumed to be self-evident.

Thus, as a process, secondary storytelling plays a critical role in the commercialisation and cultural branding of the Beatles. Where interviews and participant-observation see the Beatles as subjects of stories told by and for 'Beatle people,' secondary storytelling injects the Beatles into the mainstream. In this way, even people unfamiliar with or not particularly interested in the Beatles are still prompted to negotiate their meaning in everyday life. It is also important to recapitulate the idea expressed in Chapter 2, which is that the process of secondary storytelling allows for the expression of the material and ideological value of 'the Beatles' in places and contexts where their presence would be otherwise incongruous. Through my engagement with Beatle storytelling, I found a number of regularities and similarities in the ways the Beatles were utilised as both subjects and objects of

these narrativising processes. The next section of the chapter evaluates these processes, which I have termed 'representational practices' and 'discursive strategies.'

Part 2 – Beatle storytelling: representational practices and discursive strategies

Having identified and discussed the kinds of storytelling processes I came across whilst researching for this thesis, I now wish to turn to attention to how these storytelling practices begin to reveal an awareness of, and interaction between, various Beatle storytellers. My research will show that the interplay between storytellers via these practices and strategies suggests an organisation and commercialising of the narrative process(es). As I will show, this idea is supported by the fact that not only has there been a steady increase in the number of Beatle storytellers, but also an increase in the number of Beatle storytelling opportunities. In turn, these increases recommend the notion that Beatle storytelling since 1970 has grown and evolved in response to shifting social, economic and political developments, which will be fully addressed in Chapter 4.

Representational practices

In the first part of this section, I am looking at key examples of the representational practices of Beatle storytellers, which I am defining as regular and frequently performed practices which are intended to communicate specific understanding of the Beatles from storyteller(s) to story-listener(s). Representational practices centre on the narrative *expression* within stories about the Beatles, where discursive strategies, below, focus on the performance of a specific narrative *technique.* As my research has shown, representational practices, implicitly, work to fix in the minds of story-listeners the credentials and/or authority of the storyteller through the expression of a self-proclaimed unique insight, expertise or association with the group. In this sense, representational practices serve as affiliative or 'positioning' tools, where storytellers ally themselves not only to the Beatles, but also with other Beatle storytellers (and perhaps also distancing themselves from others). Taken collectively, these types of practices become the cornerstone for understanding first how storytelling is at the heart of collective and popular memory-making, and second, how storytelling in this 'bloc' or networked form contributes to the commercialisation of regularly recurring narratives. The three representational practices I will discuss below are indicative of the kinds of narrative regularities and

similarities I found across a number of different storytelling events about the Beatles and their early history.

Representational storytelling practice #1 - Affiliation

In conducting interviews with Beatle storytellers, as indicated above, I began each meeting with the express notion that I was *not* looking to hear the 'same old stories' about the Beatles, but rather, their own stories and expression of their own expertise and insight into the general time period and recollections of day-to-day life and popular music-making practices in Liverpool and Britain in general. In spite of this set up, however, I found that a number of storytellers seemed unwilling or genuinely unable to divorce their own personal memories from collective and popular memories of the Beatles. Thus, even very general life-history queries took on the tone of positioning statements, which seemed to me to be intended to communicate to the listener a perceived sense of authority and *gravitas* in the storyteller, somehow transmitting the idea that the more evident the link between the storyteller and the Beatles, the more genuine, valid or impactful their stories and comments were meant to be:

> **Holly Tessler:** Tell me a little about yourself.
> **Colin Hall:** I am the custodian at the John Lennon house, as you know. It's my job to look after Mendips on behalf of the [National] Trust and Yoko Ono Lennon and to escort people round. And as part of that, I do as much research as I can about John and his early life in particular just so that I can present a fuller and better picture of him to people who come round the house and answer the questions that do get put to me. But prior to that, I grew up here in the village of Woolton until I was a teenager and then I moved to the Wirral but I stayed very connected to Liverpool because of the emerging Beat scene (Hall, personal communication, 13 October 2005).

> **Holly Tessler:** You're from Liverpool, aren't you?
> **Ray O'Brien:** Yep.
> **Holly Tessler:** Which part?
> **Ray O'Brien:** It was Newsham Park...which is Fairfield. But I went to school here. Not far from here [Liverpool's Catholic Cathedral], the Liverpool Institute school. McCartney went there. I was kind of a few years after them, but they were there when I was actually there (O'Brien, personal communication, 24 September 2004).

> **Holly Tessler:** How did you get from Norwich to London to Hamburg?

Tony Sheridan: Where I come from, Norwich…it's the boonies…nothing used to happen there. Later on, strangely enough, when I was older, 35 or something, I was looking for my father whom I'd never consciously met…I looked for him and then I found him…I knew he was Irish…but then he said, 'Did you know I was born in Liverpool?'…That sort of shocked me a bit. It sort of shook me…I'm a half-Liverpudlian, at least. So there was that connection to the Beatles. And the fact that I went to school art school too…

Holly Tessler: Because you were the first British musician in Liverpool, did you see yourself as a kind of guide or ambassador for the younger acts that came over to Hamburg?
Tony Sheridan: In a way, if you had to put a label on it. I'd been on stage with lots of Americans in Britain already…I knew what I was talking about. They passed on to me what rock and roll was about. In a way, I was already authentic. I'd been on the telly in Britain playing electric guitar. So the Beatles were sitting in Liverpool watching Tony Sheridan on the box. They were thinking, 'God, how does he do that? Look at that guitar he's got – what sort of guitar is that?'…We were in the same club, if you like (Sheridan, personal communication, 09 May 2006).

Frankie Connor: Holly, I played the Cavern more than the Beatles. Absolutely true. My group called the Hideaways. We were only kids. We played over six years. The Beatles got away and got famous. We didn't. We were there a lot longer…We didn't do Beatles songs deliberately, at all. And yet, we did one song in the Cavern in '65 which became our anthem. Which we turned around a Lennon song, 'Hey! You've got to love your Hideaway!' We did that all over the country. We did it in Glasgow, we did it in Cardiff, in London… (Connor, personal communication, 18 September 2004).

'George': We were just like the Beatles, we started off as a skiffle group… I was with a group…called the Crescents. Apparently, we were the first Liverpool group ever to make a record for a major record company which was Columbia. And the record was released on the 14th of March 1958, on Columbia, with incidentally, songs we've written ourselves… ('George', personal communication, 16 June 2004).

As mentioned in the methodology, I began each interview by explaining that although I was researching the Beatles, I was also very interested in learning about the Beatles in a wider context. Yet in the above examples, each storyteller still felt compelled to answer a direct question about their own lives and experiences by locating their responses within a Beatle-specific framework. This affiliative practice, as other researchers (c.f. Poveda 2004; Carador and Pratt 2006; Fournier 1998; Clark

and Greatbatch 2002) have noted is intended to express an act of positioning. That is to say, in these instances, by deliberately emphasising to story-listeners these unsolicited, sometimes rather tenuous personal connections to the Beatles, storytellers are simultaneously seeking to legitimate their own personal histories and identities as well as their role as storyteller. Affiliation is just one example of representational practices regularly invoked by Beatle storytellers. A second, what I term 'inside information,' is discussed next.

Representational storytelling practice #2 – 'Inside information'

Where affiliative storytelling practices aim to communicate to the story-listener a general sense of connection between the storyteller and the Beatles, I also identified a more explicit and particular regularly recurring storytelling practice: inside information. On multiple occasions, I observed that storytellers, often voluntarily and unprompted, would relate anecdotes and tales about the Beatles, and also about those people within the Beatles' immediate circle. Unlike recollections iterated within the broader practice of affiliation, these stories were often of specific encounters with the Beatles, characterised by descriptions of detailed personal meetings under a set of unique circumstances. In some instances, these anecdotes were relatively innocent and benign. Others were far more salacious. More, other storytellers, like Allan Williams, the eponymous 'Man Who Gave The Beatles Away,' and Sam Leach, a Liverpool entrepreneur who booked the Beatles for a 1961 gig in Aldershot and then produced an audience of just 18 people, have for decades happily traded on anecdotes of their managerial incompetence in exchange for remaining prominent and well-known names in wider Beatle history. Like affiliative practices, expressions of inside information were clearly meant to make an impression on the story-listener. Additionally, however, it is clear from my research experience that some storytellers also use inside information to 'stake a claim' on a particular narrative 'patch' of a Beatle RRN, which they (plan to) exploit in some form, which will be more fully discussed in Chapter 4.

For example, my first interview conducted for this thesis came not from any Liverpool connection, but rather, ironically, from my hometown of Philadelphia. Larry Kane, a local TV newsreader with 30 years in the Philadelphia market, spent part of his early career working as a journalist in Miami. Kane was in Florida for both the Beatles' 1964 and 1965 US tours, and was the only reporter allowed to travel with

the group on their North American circuits. Throughout his years in Philadelphia, Kane's Beatle connections were regularly referenced on-air. Each time there was a Beatle-related news event, Kane would be called on for commentary. Knowing this, in 2002, I contacted Kane through the local television station, and explained I was in Liverpool researching the Beatles. Several weeks later, Kane rang me, happy to contribute to my project.

According to my notes from our subsequent conversation, the first point Kane mentioned to me was that he just retired from television presenting and that his first project after stepping down would be to write a memoir of his time with the Beatles. While Kane was nothing but polite, I did comprehend a subtext to our conversation where he wanted to ensure that my work would not pose a challenge to the book he was writing. One of the ways this impression was communicated to me was through a concern he voiced that my thesis would not go into mass-market publication and was only for academic purposes. Another was that he phoned me without first agreeing an arranged time and date for the interview, the spontaneity of which left me with no opportunity to either prepare a set of questions or to record our telephone conversation. Accordingly, Kane also indicated he would rather tell me about the kinds of things he was going to include in his book, rather than for me to ask a him a series of questions.

Once I agreed to those terms, the very first piece of information Kane imparted to me was that in 1965 Brian Epstein, the Beatles' manager, made a romantic overture towards him (Kane, personal communication, 14 January 2003). He explained that as a young and naive reporter from a conservative upbringing, he had never knowingly met a homosexual and at first understood Epstein's close attention only as expression of a fraternal sense of affection through their shared religious views (both men were Jewish) (Kane, personal communication, 14 January 2003). Indeed, his accounts of the role of Judaism and occasional instances of anti-Semitism within the Beatles' organisation, as well as the encounter with Epstein, were prominent themes in Kane's subsequent book, *A Ticket To Ride* (2003). From this interview it was clear that Kane felt confident that having these two personal experiences (witnessing anti-Semitic comments and being propositioned by Epstein) would give his memoirs a unique selling proposal (USP) in the crowded Beatle book marketplace. Kane's book was apparently successful enough that he wrote a sequel carrying on these themes and others in *Lennon Revealed* (2005).

A different kind of expression of inside knowledge of the Beatles came from two interviews I conducted with Joe Flannery, an early Liverpool Beat manager, later a talent booker at Hamburg's Star-Club, and personal friend of Brian Epstein and the Beatles. However, unlike Kane, who was eager to provide details of his interactions with the Beatles and Epstein, Flannery has become but the smallest of footnotes to Beatle history, deliberately avoiding the publicising of his association with Epstein and the Beatles through what he deems an act of loyalty to his friends. During our formal interview on 25 October 2006, Flannery initially expressed misgivings about our conversation being recorded to Dictaphone. He displayed a similar amount of coyness in being asked about his career. Nevertheless, Flannery said he was happy to speak to me in general terms about Merseybeat, Hamburg and the Beatles. As the interview progressed, what seemed at first to me a steadfast, almost precious loyalty to Epstein and the Beatles unfolded instead to be a sophisticated representational storytelling practice.

By this, I mean like Kane, Flannery's storytelling was fluid and rehearsed, flowing effortlessly from one recollection to the next, with little opportunity for me to interject with questions. Upon the completion of the interview, I walked away with the distinct feeling I had been very politely and very charmingly 'managed.' Flannery had a very singular agenda about his close relationship to Epstein and the Beatles which he wanted to express to me, in a way no different than Kane. It was only Flannery's manner that was different. By keeping such a low profile for all these decades, Flannery has maintained an air of mystery surrounding the true quality of his relationship with Epstein and the Beatles. For instance, he made allusions to Beatle/Epstein documents and contracts, rare recordings and acetates in his possession, but when I asked to see them, Flannery said that he has never shown them to anyone, including friends and family members (Flannery, personal communication 25 October 2006). Similarly, he intimated to me that a number of international publishing houses were very interested in securing the rights to his full autobiography but, in typical fashion, he would not elaborate when I asked for further details (Flannery, personal communication 25 October 2006).

By never really divulging the full capacity of the interactions he had with the Beatles[11], Flannery maintains total control over his own story. Yet if he had no real interest in speaking about his time with the Beatles and Epstein, he would simply retreat into 'private' life. Instead, what Flannery has chosen to do is to selectively interact with researchers, the media and Beatle people. By controlling where and when his storytelling takes place, Flannery has generated steady demand for his views on Epstein and the Beatles by developing a USP of being the 'Ultimate Beatle Insider.' Where entrepreneurs like Kane, Allan Williams and Sam Leach take a direct approach to promoting themselves as ringside observers/participants in the early Beatles' success, Flannery takes a soft-sell approach – his impact on the Beatles career is not shouted but inferred, offered to a select few people he feels will benefit from hearing his tale.

I do not wish to imply that I doubt anything Flannery has told me. I have no reason to disbelieve he does have rare Beatles recordings and contracts hidden away. I also believe he had a warm friendship with Epstein and the Beatles. My point in detailing Flannery's seemingly paradoxical storytelling practices here is to demonstrate the representational power inherent in possessing inside information about the Beatles. Flannery has enjoyed a lifelong, successful career in entertainment management, in part because of this inferred affiliation with the Beatles, the extent of which has never been publicly documented. Through this metaphorical tapping of the side of the nose, Flannery's intimation of his role in the Beatles' success is predicated on the notion of exclusivity and while it remains so can never be challenged or scrutinised. By making reticence and protectiveness such prominent storytelling features, Flannery sets himself apart from people like Kane, Williams and Leach, making his story feel somehow more intimate, noble and genuine because it is not being (overtly) commercially exploited.

Like affiliation narratives, stories promising inside information about the Beatles are meant to communicate to the story-listener(s) the authority and legitimacy of the storyteller and his accounts of past events. Insider stories are also positioning statements, intended not just for story-listeners, but primarily for other storytellers. Insider narratives afford the storyteller to stake a claim on a part of wider Beatle

[11] Flannery's story was made semi-public through the 2000 publication of a book chapter by Mike Brocken, 'Coming out of the Rhetoric of '"Merseybeat"': Conversations with Joe Flannery' (in Inglis: 2000).

history, giving rise to potential competitive and contradictory narratives who also seek a claim of exclusivity. The final representational practice I will discuss, 'name-checking,' addresses how Beatle storytellers acknowledge and utilise other storytellers' narratives in articulating their own recollections, which has clear implications for the organisational and commercialisation of Beatle storytelling.

Representational storytelling practice #3 – 'Name-checking'

The third representational storytelling practice I am going to discuss is one I have called 'name-checking.' By this term, I mean to express the idea that in participating in and observing multiple Beatle storytelling occurrences, I began to notice how frequently storytellers would mention other stories and other storytellers in the course of their own narrations. In some examples, interjecting the name of another storyteller into an anecdote about the Beatles was intended as an act of positioning – one storyteller situating his tales amongst others which affirm his views, especially alongside those with an established reputation – forming a kind of implied narrative 'bloc' of shared information and ideas:

> **Holly Tessler:** Do you think he [Brian Epstein] was the only person in Liverpool who could have helped the Beatles [attain national success]?
> **Ray O'Brien:** I'm not saying he's the only one, but I don't know of any other. I think you could say that all those other characters...They would have still...I'm not saying they wouldn't have... This question comes up time and time again. Mark Lewisohn agrees with me, Spencer [Leigh] doesn't agree with me. Spencer will agree with me to as far as he'll say I don't think they would have been as worldwide, but they would have charted and been a national group (O'Brien, personal communication, 24 September 2004).

Here, O'Brien felt it necessary to supplement his own views with the viewpoints of other, more prominent Beatle storytellers, Spencer Leigh and Mark Lewisohn, official chronicler of the Beatles' history for both Apple and EMI. It is important to note, however, that I did not feel O'Brien was 'name-*dropping*' – trying to impress me with his connections to important people – but instead that he was only intending to demonstrate that he and other storytellers have discussed the question at length and have arrived at more or less of a consensus view, which, implicitly carried more weight than O'Brien's sole and personal opinion.

In other instances, the name-checking of other storytellers was meant as an expression of holistic and considered research into the Beatles:

> **Holly Tessler:** How do you think bands would make the next step from just playing clubs?
> **Mick O'Toole:** Getting an agent. Although in their case [the Beatles'] it was Allan Williams. But I mean, Allan Williams did the best he could. I mean, Allan Williams wrote that book called 'The Man Who Gave The Beatles Away' [sic] but he never had the Beatles in the first place to give away. He did what he could with the contacts he had. I mean to a certain extent, he couldn't have taken them any further. But then Epstein comes along...(O'Toole, personal communication 10 September 2004).
>
> **Holly Tessler:** Did you think there was any kind of system in place [to move from local performance to city centre gigs]?
> **Colin Hall:** I think in those days it was making it up as you went along. And I defy anybody, Nigel Walley or anybody, I'm sure Nigel would agree, it was 'make it up,' because there was no blueprint. I mean, there was the blueprint of Jim McCartney's generation, you know, the big bands, so there were places to play. But if you just look at any of Mark Lewisohn's articles, the Beatles and all the bands that were playing, the Quarrymen, whoever they were, were not playing special places. They were playing village halls, church halls, people's back rooms...it was gigs where you could get them, really (Hall, personal communication, 13 October 2005).
>
> **Holly Tessler:** What motivated you to get involved with skiffle?
> **Rod Davis:** ...What happened was this 'Rock Island Line' recording of Lonnie Donegan's. I'll tell you two minutes' history of that, if it's of any value. Do you know about the beginnings of Skiffle in the UK?
> **Holly Tessler:** Yes, I do.
> **Rod Davis:** Have you read Chas McDevitt's book on skiffle, *Skiffle: The Inside Story*?
> **Holly Tessler:** No, I'm afraid I haven't come across that one.
> **Rod Davis:** That's from the horse's mouth, really. Anyway, this guy called Ken Collier... (Davis, personal communication, 28 September 2005).

Here, each storyteller was not only personally enthused about this subject area, but also motivated enough to seek out books and articles on the Beatles, Merseybeat and Skiffle to help make sense of their own memories and understanding of this time period and its musics in a way that has self-evident implications for the formation and advancement of collective and popular memories of 1950s and 1960s British youth culture and popular music. For storytellers, providing this kind of narrative provenance fortifies their own memories and recollections of past events creating a

context which makes them appear more legitimate, reliable and accurate than perhaps they would have seemed on their own. Additionally, in their role as Beatle storytellers, contextualising their own narratives against a backdrop of other research is again contributory to the development of a narrative bloc of information for the story-listener, where s/he will encounter similar (or sympathetic) accounts from multiple sources.

Similarly, in situations where I, as interviewer, would ask questions the storyteller could not answer, he would mention other storytellers I could contact for further information:

> **Holly Tessler:** How would you go about moving ahead from having the idea [to organise a gig] and then finding a place to hold it?
> **Colin Hall:** I think a good person to contact about that would be Spencer Leigh. Spencer Leigh would put you in touch with a lot of people who...the one show of his that I was on...I can't remember the chap's name now, but he was just a young lad, not much older than the Beatles...I can't remember his name...he showed me, he's still got his accounts, he's got his diaries where he's got the Beatles playing and...the figures involved tell the tale. But talk to Spencer, Spencer can put you in contact (Hall, personal communication, 13 October 2005).
>
> **Holly Tessler:** [showing a photocopied map of Merseyside Beat venues to O'Brien]: You can't really see it on this, but is there a connection between these venues and local promoters?
> **Ray O'Brien:** ...So they go on there [New Brighton Tower Ballroom] and they give this stupendous show. People said, 'we can't believe these are the same people that were there [Hamburg] and now they're here'. And into their dressing room – and you probably know this story – in comes Brian Kelly who was another promoter but he wasn't...he was a North Liverpool promoter...He was only young. Some of these promoters, you know, you look at people like Sam Leach and Allan Williams, they were not very youngish men. But this Brian Kelly, he was younger than the Beatles. He was only a 17-18 year old kid.
> **Holly Tessler:** Is he still around?
> **Ray O'Brien:** He is around, but he's strictly incognito. But he's still around. Spencer Leigh will tell you if you speak to him later. And Dave Forshaw, you need to speak to him and he *is* still around. And he's quite easy to talk to. They were young promoters in the Bootle area of Merseyside... (O'Brien, personal communication, 24 September 2004).

In instances like this, I believe these storytellers were genuinely trying to help the research process along by providing the names of other people who have further

information. Yet I additionally believe that there was also a subtext of storytelling authority unfolding. By this, I mean that I feel in some instances storytellers were trying to express to me the universality of their knowledge in a particular area of Beatle history: if they could not provide the answers I was looking for, they wanted to ensure they expressed to me they had sufficient knowledge and contacts to put me in touch with the appropriate sources.

Additionally, whilst I was conducting this fieldwork, the name-checking process in some instances allowed me to contact storytellers I otherwise would not have been able to reach. For example, I initially contacted Rod Davis through the Quarrymen's official website. Davis replied to my original email and eventually we conducted the interview. Davis then put me in touch with Colin Hanton, the Quarrymen drummer, whom he characterised as being far more reticent to speak to interviewers (Davis, personal communication, 28 September 2005). Similarly, it was through Davis that I interviewed Nigel Walley, friend and first manager of the Quarrymen, of whom Davis said avoided interviews about his experiences with the group (Davis, personal communication, 28 September 2005). Yet Davis provided me with Walley's phone number and instructed me to mention to him that I had Davis' 'OK,' which, he said, would likely convince Walley it was acceptable to speak to me (Davis, personal communication, 28 September 2005). In the same way, while I was never able to formally interview Spencer Leigh, I did run into him at Beatle events on multiple occasions. Through these meetings, I was able to contact Frankie Connor, as well as appear as a guest on BBC Radio Merseyside, where Leigh and Connor both work as radio presenters.

At the time of my fieldwork, I believed this practice of name-checking only to be a narrative one, based on friendships and acquaintances which have developed or have been maintained over the decades. But as I would discover in subsequent research, in some instances, the storytellers who expressed knowledge of and shared views with other Beatle storytellers were also partnered with them in some kind of Beatle storytelling enterprise. I will more fully discuss this development in Chapter 4. For the moment, however, it is sufficient to say that the name-checking practice of many Beatle storytellers belies in them a much more significant understanding and negotiation of a contemporary web, or network, of Beatle storytellers, based on decades of competitive and complementary storytelling practices.

Taken together, all three of these representational storytelling practices – affiliation, inside information and name-checking – begin to illuminate the relationship between storytelling, collective and popular memory and the crystallisation of a cultural myth of the Beatles. Through the practice of affiliation, storytellers seek to establish an evident connection to the Beatles to legitimate their stories to both story-listeners and other storytellers. Similarly, tales of inside information about the Beatles (and their associates) work to provide storytellers with a unique selling proposal in the very crowded universe of Beatle storytelling. In both these instances, storytellers demonstrate an understanding of the need to compete against as well as work with others in the marketplace in order to ensure their voices are heard. Accordingly, through the practice of name-checking, storytellers expressed their relationships to other narrators and Beatle historians, exhibiting an awareness of and engagement with a much wider storytelling network.

In all of these instances, these representational practices were intended to produce for story-listeners (as well as other storytellers) a snapshot image – the creation of an impression of the Beatles' world and the role of the storyteller in it. I next turn to a different kind of storytelling process, that of discursive strategising, where telling stories about the Beatles seemingly becomes a more tactical and organised practice.

Discursive strategies

In the second part of this section, I look at the discursive strategising that I encountered in my research into Beatle storytelling processes. While very similar in nature to representational practices, I differentiate discursive strategising as the demonstration of narrative *technique* rather than as narrative *expression*. After conducting a number of interviews and participating in and observing multiple storytelling events, I began to notice a pattern within the ways some storytellers would contextualise their stories and/or how they would answer (or not answer) questions put to them by me, or by other story-listeners. As I will demonstrate, it is clear that even for storytellers who do not stand to profit much from publicising affiliation with the Beatles, and even when answering questions that were not, specifically, about the Beatles, in multiple instances, I found that storytellers would regularly adopt strategies for navigating their storytelling back into more familiar, more regular narrative ground. As above, that so many storytellers remain so

entrenched in articulating very delimited and focused versions of past events suggests not only have they repeated their stories with great frequency, but also, that there is inherent personal, material and/or ideological value invested in ensuring their stories never fluctuate too far beyond established historical and narrative parameters.

Discursive strategy #1 – '...And the rest is history'

The first discursive strategy I noticed in Beatle storytelling is the phrase, '...and the rest is history.' Whilst also a common conversational phrase, in relation to the articulation of the Beatles' development and success, it carries a more significant meaning as it puts an uncritical full stop at the end of any story, anecdote and/or RRN about the Beatles, implying everything following the end of the story had a predetermined outcome:

> **Ray O'Brien:** They get to the Cavern, they get the recording contract and they do 'Love Me Do'...and the rest, as they say, is history, isn't it? (O'Brien, personal communication 24 September 2004).
>
> **Mick O'Toole:** I was running round the street chasing the girls and playing guitar...I can imagine Lennon must have had a very similar five years at Quarry Bank. I can quite understand how he'd go into art school like everyone else. I can see he'd say, 'I can blag me way through art school and see what happens'...But he didn't have to do, did he? He became a Beatle and the rest is history, of course (O'Toole, personal communication, 10 September 2004).
>
> The destiny of The Quarrymen seemed to be that of a small footnote to pop music's most famous success story. A Fifties skiffle group consisting of John Lennon and five friends, The Quarrymen first took on board Paul McCartney and then George Harrison. *The rest, as they say, is history* (Davies 2001: back cover, emphasis original).

In the first two examples, above, both storytellers frame their understanding of the Beatles within a wider context of local music-making sites in Liverpool, the Cavern Club and the art college, respectively. In one sense this alone is noteworthy because it makes another of Baynham's (2003) connections between the story-world and the tangible world. Upon hearing these and similar tales, story-listeners can physically go to places like the Cavern and the art college, see, touch and experience these sites for themselves, which will form a strong sense of affiliation between the way that they have experienced storytelling about the Beatles and, how they conceptually and symbolically comprehend Liverpool as a musical place (c.f. Cohen 1994; 1995) fundamental to the Beatles' development. This development in turn has

clear implications for local economies like those in Liverpool, London and Hamburg, all of which have seen increasing numbers of Beatle tourists in recent times (Connell and Gibson 2003; Krüger 2001).

Further, in the Davies' example, '...and the rest is history' transforms the Quarrymen/ Beatles' biography into a kind of romantic fable, in the same way the phrase 'happily ever after' punctuates the end of a fairytale. In stories or RRNs that employ this strategy, many details of the role of the years of the Beatles' hard work, agency and self-actualisation in their own success are glossed over with a single phrase: 'The Quarrymen first took on board Paul McCartney and then George Harrison. *The rest, as they say, is history'* (Davies 2001: back cover, emphasis original).

When multiplied by the thousands of story-listeners who hear these narratives, this kind of discursive strategising begins to have a normalising impact on the broader historicisation of the Beatles. Skimming over details of the Beatles' career with discourses like '...and the rest is history' may lead to a kind of narrative 'form-fixing,' where once a particular RRN is in place, it becomes very difficult to restore deleted or contrasting information, thereby advancing the RRN as a dominant narrative strand. Similarly, this kind of strategising can also impact upon the way storytellers complement and compete with each other, as each narrator attempts to ensure that his part of the Beatles' story manages to stay ahead of '...and the rest is history,' or risks being written out of the group's tale completely.

Lastly, my research has indicated that this same phrase can also serve an affirmational purpose, with story-listeners becoming complicit in advancing particular narrative strands. While doing fieldwork for this thesis, I participated in the Magical Mystery coach tour of the Beatles' Liverpool on numerous occasions. On every trip, in addition to the basic informational commentary recited from the same script, each tour guide would also use the same 'ad-libbed' jokes, anecdotes and cues. While most were comparatively harmless observations, for instance, about the coach driver being born on the same day in the same hospital as Paul McCartney, more telling was the regular use of '...and the rest is history.' As the coach moved from one point of interest to the next, the tour guide would spend a few moments engaged in the iteration of a general narrative. Without variation, every time I took the tour, at the conclusion of each stop, the tour guide would end that segment of the commentary with the phrase, '...and the rest is history.' If the people on the tour were a

particularly enthusiastic group, by the end of the three hours, they would join in, in call-and-response fashion, when prompted by the tour guide when with: 'annnnnndddd...'

This seemingly benign and amusing tactic achieves several interesting outcomes. First, it fosters a more cordial rapport between tour guide and tourists, making the trip around Liverpool seem less like a mundane coach trip and more like a unique celebration of the Beatles. Second, the friendly, active and participatory nature of this interaction implicitly encourages tourists to endorse the tour guide's truncated version of Beatle history. Hearing, or indeed, shouting along with a coach full of people, '...and the rest is history!' can powerfully reinforce the stories they have just heard. This strategy, in turn, precludes story-listeners from having much opportunity whilst on the tour to interrogate or critically question the details of the guide's version of history, again contributing to the regularisation of storytelling about the Beatles.

Discursive strategy #2 – 'Freeze-ups'

The next discursive strategy I wish to discuss is that of storytelling 'freeze-ups.' In computer parlance, when a machine's operating system, software or network server temporarily stops working, it is commonly known as a 'freeze-up.' It seemed an appropriate metaphor for one kind of storytelling strategy I encountered during my research as, in some instances, storytellers could or would not answer even very general questions about their own lives and experiences, instead responding with a simple, 'I can't remember,' 'I don't know,' or with brief one-line answers which would temporarily halt the storytelling process. I recognise that I was asking Beatle storytellers to discuss memories of half-a-century earlier, where details are invariably going to be lost through the passage of time and the progression of age:

> **Holly Tessler:** Do you remember how much you'd generally get paid?
> **Rod Davis:** I'm sorry, I have no idea. I honestly don't remember (Davis, personal communication, 28 September 2005).
>
> **Holly Tessler:** Where and when did you give out the Quarrymen's business cards?
> **Nigel Walley:** You know, I can't remember...I don't remember going along and getting them made up (Walley, personal communication 08 November 2005).

> **Holly Tessler:** Do you have any recollection about how much you'd be paid for an average gig?
> **Colin Hanton:** Ooh, that's a hard one...erm...oh, that's a hard one. I'd have to think about that one. Ring me back in a couple of days! (Hanton, personal communication, 02 November 2005).

However, in printed texts and in live storytelling events, these same narrators recall, with ease and an impressive level of detail, other moments in Beatle history, like When John Met Paul. I found this both an intriguing and also somewhat of a counterintuitive development, as I was asking what I felt were 'easier,' more direct questions, regarding their *own personal* experiences. Based on my research, the conclusion I must reach is that some storytellers so regularly tell their Beatle tales that the act of storytelling becomes routinised, done on 'auto-pilot,' even to the point where recollections of their own life-stories and preferences have been superseded by those of the Quarrymen/Beatles. Taken on its own, this practice provides little insight into Beatle storytelling processes. However, when read against the context of existing Beatle RRNs, freeze-ups become a telling narrative strategy, as it demonstrates a clear cognisance of collective and popular memories of the Beatles and of the material and social value afforded to storytellers who 'get the story straight.'

For instance, I spoke to Colin Hanton, the Quarrymen's drummer, and asked him a series of questions about his memories of performing at the Cavern Club. His short responses yielded very little information:

> **Holly Tessler:** What was the most prestigious gig you can remember doing?
> **Colin Hanton:** Hmmm...I'd have to think about that one.
> **Holly Tessler:** You've played the Cavern...what was it like?
> **Colin Hanton:** It was exciting place to be, but it was dark, damp and smelly.
> **Holly Tessler:** Do you reckon it was *the* place?
> **Colin Hanton:** Initially, the only place to go was the Cavern.
> **Holly Tessler:** You had the Cavern club, NEMS, the Kardomah [café], in that cluster down Mathew Street and Whitechapel. Did it feel like a place young musicians would go to hang out?
> **Colin Hanton:** Oh, I think so. It was probably the only place to go.
> **Holly Tessler:** It really was sort of *the* place to play, the Cavern, you reckon?
> **Colin Hanton:** Oh, it was. Certainly. Definitely the place to play.
> **Holly Tessler:** What were the Cavern crowds like?
> **Colin Hanton:** Mostly young and exciting, I think. We were playing exciting music, weren't we? (Hanton, personal communication, 02 November 2005).

As Rod Davis had warned me that Hanton was often reticent about speaking to interviewers, I was disappointed but not surprised that he 'froze-up' during our conversations. While he answered all my questions, there was little reflexivity or introspection to his answers, no embellishment beyond a very cursory initial response.

If that had been the only act of storytelling I had seen from Hanton, I would have simply attributed his responses to someone not very interested in publicising a former affiliation with the group that would go on to become the Beatles. However, about a year after speaking with me, Hanton made a guest appearance on a documentary DVD called *The Beatles Liverpool* produced and hosted by Spencer Leigh and Ray O'Brien (Artsmagic 2006). Whilst being filmed outside the McCartney family home in Forthlin Road, Liverpool, O'Brien and Leigh ask Hanton to speak about an early Quarrymen performance at the Cavern where they were chastised for playing rock and roll music during a Skiffle/Jazz session. Hanton obligingly repeated that story and, then, wholly unprompted added:

> **Colin Hanton:** The main part of the Cavern was full of chairs, wasn't it, where they'd used to sit in an audience. And people were getting up and moving off and just disappearing. It was so dark around the sides we didn't know where they were going. In between songs John was saying, 'Oh, they're all gettin' up, they're all moving out. They're all moving, they're all leaving.' So by the time we'd finished our set, I mean the whole centre section was empty. And John was distraught, he couldn't believe this. We came off into the little side room and John said, 'I can't believe everybody walked out on us!' and then the door burst open and Pete Shotton and Nige [Walley] came in and Pete Shotton was saying, 'That's the best show you've ever done!' And John said, 'But they all got up and walked out, Pete.' And he said, 'No, no!' He said, 'They were all jiving in the side!' He said, 'It's the first time I've seen everybody jiving in the Cavern!' So it was a good night. [Laughs]. (Artsmagic 2006).

This anecdote is a clear departure from the type of responses Hanton had provided during my interview with him. Hanton, whilst speaking to me, did not tell this story, even after *six* consecutive questions about playing in the Cavern Club. While any discussion of Hanton's storytelling transformation between our interview in 2005 and his appearance on this 2006 DVD could only be speculative, this research suggests Hanton, like Joe Flannery, selectively tells his stories to story-listeners of his choosing. Hanton was quiet in our interview, but seems to be far more forthcoming in commercial ventures. Beyond the Leigh/O'Brien DVD Hanton was also interviewed extensively and provided many colourful recollections for Hunter Davies' Quarrymen

biography (2001) and also appears regularly on other Beatle documentaries[12]. As a discursive strategy, storytelling freeze-ups work to keep narratives within particular parameters, thus indirectly affirming existing Beatle RRNs. I next turn to a correlated strand of narrative strategising, storytelling 're-routes.'

Discursive strategy #3 – 'Re-routes'

Returning to the computer metaphor above, in cases where there is a network breakdown in the flow of information and data, network administrators must find a work-around to the problem to get the system operational again, and this is typically called a 're-route.' Throughout my research I noticed that, like computer network administrators, many storytellers also adopted a strategy of re-routing their narratives when the storytelling process began to drift from the pertinent RRN, or otherwise intended storytelling agenda.

The two most active 're-routers' in my research experience were undoubtedly Rod Davis and Joe Flannery. Davis seems to be so genuinely enthusiastic about the subject of the Quarrymen/Beatles, his re-routing tendencies could easily be dismissed as little more than expression of a natural ebullience about the subject. Indeed, Davis seems truly interested in gathering as much information about the Quarrymen's existence and history as possible. Within the course of several conversations and a formal interview with him, Davis always seemed unhappy about leaving a question unanswered or without embellishment of some sort. To revisit an example from Chapter 2:

> **Holly Tessler:** Could you play [skiffle melodies] by ear?
> **Rod Davis:** I was lucky enough that I obviously had an ear for it and very quickly learned to pick things up by ear. In fact, I still play by ear today...So we'd play by ear. And if you hear something on the radio, the skiffle and basic rock and roll was only three or four chords anyway, really...There was this 'Come Go With Me' thing. I had completely forgotten about the tune. And I heard on the radio somebody playing it. And I thought, 'Hey! That was a Quarrymen tune!' (Personal communication 28 September 2005).

While Davis did very clearly answer my question, he also made a very big (and unprompted) leap to deliberately contextualising his own life-history within the 'Come Go With Me' sub-story. It is a practice I noticed Davis repeated throughout

[12] For instance, the 5-DVD box set, *The Long And Winding Road* (Koch International 2003), an unauthorised biography of the Beatles.

the interview. In another instance, I asked him a question about the impact of the Beatles' performances on audiences in the Cavern:

> **Holly Tessler:** Hunter Davies paints a picture that it was the audience's reaction to the Quarrymen's performances that eventually prompted the Cavern to switch from a jazz or skiffle policy to rock and roll. Do you think that's about right?
> **Rod Davis:** As I remember, people used to dance to jazz. You used to jive to jazz. That was the sort of thing people did. Whereas...um...For some reason, um...erm...I don't know. Maybe at the Cavern they just sat down on chairs and listened. Because a lot of the jazz business was sitting and listening rather than dancing. Erm, I'll have to...I really haven't thought enough about that. But Pete Shotton's story about, erm, you know, erm, the fact that John was playing and he thought they'd gone down really badly because everyone had disappeared out of the middle aisle of the Cavern and John thought they'd all gone away and in fact they were in the side aisles dancing (Davis, personal communication, 28 September 2005).

What I found very interesting is that Davis is familiar enough with the whole of the history of the Quarrymen/Beatles that he felt confident enough to relate this particular sub-story, despite the fact he had no direct personal involvement whatever. Where Hanton was performing on stage with the Beatles during this period, he could or would not relate this story to me, while Davis, who had departed from the group years earlier, was so *au fait* with it, it has become part of his storytelling repertoire.

A much more subtle user of the re-route strategy, in my meetings with him, Joe Flannery had a slightly different deployment of the same tactic: He would pause, appear to be considering a response to a question, then pick up an entirely new storytelling thread, moving the conversation back into an area where he was more comfortable:

> **Holly Tessler:** When you were working as the stage manager for the Star-Club, how long did acts perform for? Was it the same as the Beatles? Do you recall how much a top act would have been paid?
> **Joe Flannery:** [Pauses]...There were four or five bands a night. They would work one hour on, one hour off. Acts like Brenda Lee, the Animals, Chas Chandler played there. I got Jimi Hendrix to the Star Club through Chas Chandler, in America at that time (Flannery, personal communication 25 October 2006).

Flannery made a start at answering the question I put to him. But he either did not remember or want to disclose the details of the contractual arrangements for the acts he brought to the Star-Club. Instead, by rattling off a list of high-profile names,

Flannery masterfully steered the conversation back into an area of his career which he preferred to emphasise.

In another example, I found that some storytellers are simply so intent to promoting their own history and affiliation with the Beatles, they will not acknowledge questions or considerations beyond their immediate area of expertise:

> **Holly Tessler:** As a friend/colleague of Merseybeat bands as well as *Mersey Beat* editor, you became a kind of hub in the Liverpool music scene, among other things, being the link that brought Brian Epstein and the Beatles together. How did you see your personal career going at this point? Did you ever entertain the notion of becoming more directly involved with the bands?
> **Bill Harry:** For a start, there were no such things as Merseybeat bands. That is an anachronism. Throughout the entire period of the Mersey scene the music was referred to as the Liverpool Sound or the Mersey Sound NEVER as Merseybeat. Mersey Beat was the name of the newspaper and a phrase I coined. I had it registered as a limited company (I still do) and at the time the name of a limited company was like a trade mark and could not be used without permission. I gave permission for the Marvericks [sic] to call themselves the Mersey Beats (They later truncated it to Merseybeats), and I gave Brian Epstein permission to call a call a series of concerts Mersey Beat Showcase. The first time the sound was referred to as Mersey Beat was when I gave an introduction to an Oriole album and said '...this is Mersey Beat' and the two albums became 'This Is Mersey Beat', although the sound continued to be referred to as the Mersey Beat. Therefore it is an anachronism. The groups had previously been referred to as rock and roll groups. After Mersey Beat had been launched as we began promoting the bands, they became known as Beat groups I was involved with the groups seven days a week, not only interviewing them and publicizing them, but setting up all the photographers, giving artists names, helping them with advice and traveling round with them to gigs and socializing with them every night. For some reason, after Mersey Beat had ceased publication, people began referring to the sound as merseybeat when it had previously only been referred to as the Liverpool Sound or Mersey Sound. Daily Worker: 'The Mersey Sound is the sound of 50,000 workers on the dole!'
>
> I had been unsuccessful with piano, guitar, cornet, harmonica and accordion lessons, but loved the music scene, so I decided to do what I thought I could do best, write about it. Bob Wooler dubbed me 'the Boswell of Beat.' (Harry, email communication, 20 September 2004).

As indicated in his remarks, Harry is fiercely protective of the 'Mersey Beat' name. He wrote an extended answer about his ownership of the name and the various ways it has been used over the decades, but never directly responded to the main content of

the question I had put to him. By keeping the attention focused wholly on himself and his career, he re-routed his reply away from my original query, revealing in its place an evident agenda of ensuring regular the promotion of his own role in the history of the Liverpool Beat boom.

Thus, storytelling freeze-ups and re-routes function as oppositional storytelling strategies intended to achieve the same result. Storytelling freeze-ups keep an existing Beatle RRN intact by providing little new or useful supplemental information beyond what has already been published. Storytelling re-routes, conversely, overwhelm the story-listener with superfluous information. But rather than engaging with queries or challenges to existing information, these storytellers have become so accustomed to telling stories about the Beatles within explicit narrative parameters that all discussion about the Beatles will, inevitably, drift back within the boundaries of an existing RRN. One more discursive technique, that of storytelling projects, will be addressed next.

Discursive strategy #4 – Storytelling 'projects'

The most overtly commercial of the discursive strategies I have identified, the expression of storytelling 'projects' was also the most common. Beyond the obvious purchase of tickets for Beatle tours or exhibitions, I was surprised at just how many storytellers were involved in large and small ventures seeking to capitalise on their Beatle connections:

> **Bill Harry:** Why not ask some of your fellow students to look at the Mersey Beat [web]site? (Harry, email communication, 20 September 2004).
>
> **Tony Sheridan:** I've just gotten involved with this book project to tell my autobiography (Sheridan, personal communication, 09 May 2006).
>
> **Rod Davis:** We're talking about whether we're going to be playing at John's birthday bash at the Cavern or not…on the 8th of October. We've got something pencilled in at the convention in August… (Davis, personal communication, 28 September 2005).
>
> **Nigel Walley:** I've just been helping Julia Baird…she's just finishing a book. I've just written a couple of chapters in that one…It's hard to spend a chapter on somebody you meet outside John's house and you walk to the bus stop. It was a very poignant day in my life that I'll never, ever forget (Walley, personal communication, 08 November 2005).

Indeed, I had occasion to speak briefly to Julia Baird, the half-sister of John Lennon, at the Paperback Writer literary festival held at the Beatles Story Museum in Liverpool in May, 2008. Baird participated in the event to discuss a recently published memoir of her early family life in which she says she attempted to, 'tell the truth about John's childhood' (in Bowman 2008). After her talk, Baird stayed behind to greet festival attendees. As I reached the front of the queue, I introduced myself and mentioned I was a doctoral candidate researching the early Beatles. She replied, 'Really?' and indicated to me that her book would probably be helpful to my research. I responded that I had already read her book and also interviewed Nigel Walley, a contributor to her work. I asked if she would be willing to speak with me as well to which she said, 'There's nothing I could tell you that isn't in the book. Just buy the book' (Baird, personal communication, 21 May 2008).

Earlier in the research process, I had a similar experience with Sam Leach, the 1960s Merseybeat promoter. I first introduced myself to Leach on 30 November 2003 at a gathering organised by the British Beatles fan club. As the guest speaker, Leach was signing autographs at a table before his presentation later that afternoon. As I reached the front of the queue, I indicated to Leach that I was in Liverpool researching the Beatles and asked if would he be willing to talk to me of his experiences. Before answering my query, he told me that I was standing in a line for autographs, and if I wanted to speak to him, I would need to purchase either a copy of his book (for £12) or a poster-sized print of himself, John Lennon and George Harrison, taken by Paul McCartney in 1961 (for £3) (Leach, personal communication, 30 November 2003). I opted to purchase the poster and as I did, Leach autographed it and said he would be glad to speak to me at a later date about my research. He then added that before our meeting, I should provide him an advance list of questions – that he would not discuss with me any subject written about in his book (Leach, personal communication 30 November 2003). I tried to organise a day and time for the interview, but it soon became obvious to me Leach had no intention of speaking to me until I did buy his book (in addition to the poster), which I eventually did. Upon my purchase of the volume, he furnished me with a business card and instructed me to email him to set up a meeting for the following week. I sent a follow-up email to Leach several days later, reminding him of our conversation at the Beatle fan event. In his reply he indicated he did not recall meeting me the week before, but would be happy to speak to me. He added that before we finalised a meeting however, I should

buy a copy of his book *The Rocking City*, which was available for purchase from his website for £12 (Leach, e-mail communication, 2 December 2003). We agreed a day and time for an interview the following week. As Leach arrived, I paid him for a *second* copy of his book and as I handed him the cash, he told me he just realised he left his car illegally parked and would need to move it straight away (Leach, personal communication, 12 December 2003). Leach departed and I never heard anything further from him.

I include discussion of these two meetings to underscore the ways in which some Beatle storytellers seek to commercially exploit their projects. While some of the interviewees I spoke with only engage in storytelling practices on an *ad hoc* basis, many others work at Beatle storytelling as their sole means of income. More than risking just the loss of social capital in being 'written out' of the Beatles' story, through entrepreneurial activities like the self-publishing of a book, many narrators have invested large amounts of money in exploiting a connection with the Beatles. Additionally, through the course of this fieldwork I also learned of partnerships and collaborative projects between storytellers. I have already made mention of the DVD project, *The Beatles Liverpool* (2006) produced by Spencer Leigh and Ray O'Brien and of the role of Nigel Walley, in aiding Julia Baird in the creation of her latest book about John Lennon.

Taken collectively, all of the representational practices and discursive strategies discussed in this section of the chapter become significant in understanding the evolution of the cultural mythology of Beatles. Through practices like affiliation, inside information and name-checking, storytellers demonstrate a cognisance of the need to establish a unique identity in the (over-) crowded Beatle storytelling marketplace. The discursive strategising shown by some Beatle storytellers exhibit an alertness to the co-operation and competitiveness which exists between various 'blocs' of storytellers.

My research indicates that even though there are a multiplicity of Beatle storytellers across a number of different planes, effective utilisation of these narrative strategies and practices have served to regularise storytelling about and understanding of the Beatles to a degree sufficient enough to sustain a variety of Beatle-based commercial enterprises around the world. The discussion which follows focuses on how representational practices and discursive strategies work *collectively* not only to further understanding of the Beatles within specific narrative parameters but also, and

critically, as the basis for an emerging cultural mythology (Thompson and Tian 2008) about the group, which is itself, the basis for the commercialisation and cultural branding of the Beatles.

Part 3 – Discussion

To say that I have identified a number of storytelling representational practices and discursive strategies does not mean to imply that all storytellers utilise these processes nor that all storytellers have come together in harmonious agreement to promote a single monolithic version of Beatle history. Indeed, while storytellers do regularly articulate very similar accounts of micro-narratives and sub-stories about the group, there is a depth and scope and multiplicity of voices which continue to articulate stories about the Beatles across the world. Following research from Peñaloza (2000), my argument instead is that emerging from these multiplicity of voices is a broader and more general understanding of the Beatles which has inherent cultural meaning and value ascribed to it through the shared discourses and practices of Beatle storytellers. My research has shown that while there is clear competition between Beatle storytellers to find a unique selling proposition, and with it the accordant material and cultural capital gains of successfully entering the Beatle storytelling marketplace, there is no evidence to support the suggestion that this competition has what Thompson and Tian (2008: 610) call 'hegemonizing intent.' That is to say that despite rhetoric of many stories being 'previously untold,' 'the truth' or 'behind-the-scenes,' Beatle storytelling is actually, 'structured by a heterogeneous mix of historical influences, ideological and competitive goals, and multiple and contextually shifting countermemories' (Thompson and Tian 2008: 610).

Throughout their career, the Beatles were undeniably iconic figures, extending a global influence on politics, religion, arts, youth culture and fashion, as well as popular music (c.f. MacDonald 1995; Inglis 2000; Stark 2006; Womack and Davis 2006; Gould 2007). Yet following their acrimonious 1970 disbanding, and despite worldwide interest in the group remaining high, individual band members sought to distance themselves from their musical and cultural legacy rather than reflect upon it. It was not until 1995 that the Beatles, as a collective unit, jointly produced a memoir of their time together, the documentary series and subsequent printed volume,

Anthology[13]. Thus, between the period of 1970-1995, in the absence of regular contributions, responses or corrections from John, Paul, George and Ringo, Beatle storytellers became the *de facto* historical authorities on the Beatles and their career. In this regard, through the deployment of the kinds representational practices and discursive strategies discussed above, Beatle storytellers have come to have tremendous influence over popular and collective memories of the Beatles.

Accordingly, while there is material, ideological or cultural value for individual storytellers in developing and promoting their own, unique contributions to one or more Beatle RRNs, these single narrative strands, these 'selective representations of popular memory,' only achieve practicable utility when deployed against and alongside a context of other Beatle narratives, where collectively storytellers shape collective and popular memories of the Beatles (c.f. Barthes 2000; Lipsitz 1988, 1990; Peñaloza 2000; Sperb 2005; Wallace 1996, in Thompson and Tian 2008: 610). Ultimately then, through representational practices and discursive strategies, storytelling, as a multiplicity of processes, becomes central to the crystallisation of the Beatles as a cultural myth, defined by Thompson and Tian (2008: 610-611) as, 'the creative and conflictual ferment of collective memories and countermemories, as different social groups ideologically struggle to maintain or change their relative positions in the socio-economic and cultural order.' Thompson and Tian's investigation into storytelling about the American South has resonance here as it helps to support my position that collectively, storytellers are at the heart of the commercialisation and cultural branding of the Beatles.

The concept of cultural mythologising provides a means for understanding the relationship between storytelling as *product* and storytelling as a *multiplicity of processes*. In Chapter 2, I identified three examples of micro-narratives and sub-stories which contribute to Regularly Recurring Narratives about the Beatles' early years in Liverpool and Hamburg. Through the frequent repetition of names, dates, places and similar facts these anecdotes form a kind of narrative perimeter or boundary around which other, sometimes even antecedent stories must reside:

> I have to admit, with a shamed face, that in my so-called authorised biography of 1968, I gave the date of this momentous event [The Day

[13] The individual Beatles have all, independently of each other, written autobiographies or contributed to authorised volumes about their lives, for instance, Wenner 1971; Miles 1997; Harrison 1980; Starr 2004. However, the *Anthology* text (Beatles 2000) remains the only retrospective autobiography of the group attributed jointly to all four members.

> John Met Paul] as June 15, 1956. A whole year and three weeks out. Shows the quality of my research, though I did get that date from The Beatles themselves, and they read the final manuscript (Davies 2001: 55).

Thus, by exhibiting an awareness of and an engagement with other stories and other storytellers, Beatle narrators also demonstrate an understanding of the social and the commercial value of getting their story straight. In my research, I found that interactions between storytellers involved fewer attempts at the kind of holistic tactical effacement of competing narratives described by Thompson and Tian and more of a complementary practice of identifying and then exploiting a particular narrative niche of Beatle expertise. Even in texts where authors have attempted to tell the whole of the Beatles' history (c.f. Spitz 2005; Norman 2004; Kozinn 1995) there is still acknowledgement and use of other, secondary voices within these texts to supplement or validate specific sub-histories or micro-narratives. In this way, storytellers form blocs or networks in which complementary and corresponding areas of expertise work to support and advance particular collective and popular memories of the Beatles to mutual benefit. Multiple strands of collective and popular memories of the Beatles then work together, to share in the creation of a wider cultural mythology about the Beatles, which competes against other non-Beatle cultural mythologies for prominence in broader historical, cultural and social contexts[14].

Accordingly, the success and indeed the continued existence of a cultural mythology of the Beatles is dependent on storytelling products and processes evolving and adapting to fit changing political, economic and social climates. Where RRNs provide a fixed-form frame of narrative facts which will very rarely change, storytellers must continually adapt their *interpretations* of these facts to fit the expectations of contemporary story-listeners. Failure to do so would not only risk their individual status as Beatle storytellers, but would also risk the cultural mythology of the Beatles, *writ large,* slipping into obscurity. As I will show in the following chapter, in key historical moments, where wider musical, social and cultural understanding of the Beatles underwent substantive revision, storytellers formed alliances, partnerships and endeavours intended to personally, culturally and financially capitalise on these periods of renewed interest in the Beatles.

[14] Narratives in and of professional sport, in particular football, is one example of a cultural mythology competing with that of the Beatles for prominence in popular history and culture.

Consequently, the ongoing production of (and revisions to) a cultural mythology of the Beatles can also be understood to function as a bridging mechanism between the inherent cultural and commercial values of storytelling. Understanding cultural mythology not only as a *process* between storytellers and story-listeners, but also as a *negotiation* lays the foundation for the exploration of the commercialisation and cultural branding of the Beatles, to be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Conclusion

In the first section of this chapter, I detailed some of the ways I discovered, observed and interacted with storytelling about the Beatles. My intention was to underscore the point that in addition to the stories told in hundreds of fixed-form texts about the group, storytelling about the Beatles also occurs dynamically, as a multiplicity of processes: in interviews, in storytelling events like festivals, coach tours and museum exhibitions, and in what I termed secondary storytelling practices, where understanding about the Beatles is communicated indirectly, through sentient and considered use of the group's likeness, music, or name. Secondary storytelling is especially significant as a narrative form as it affords exploration of the ways in which stories of the Beatles have extended beyond the bounds of popular music and fandom to circulate also within quotidian and non-Beatle environments.

The second section of the chapter centred on the unpicking of these many storytelling processes, with the aim of understanding how and why the Beatles are still, nearly 40 years after their breakup, the subject and object of so many polysemic narratives. In participating in and observing a number of different storytelling events, and in speaking to a variety of 'Beatle people,' I began to notice emergent narrative patterns. Beyond the repetition of the sub-stories that comprise Beatle RRNs, many storytellers also demonstrated a clear awareness of and engagement with other Beatle stories and other Beatle storytellers. I concluded that the interactions of these storytellers occur with enough frequency and regularity to suggest the existence of a kind of informal, auto-referential network, where individual narrators worked in competitive and complementary ways to establish storytelling niches or 'blocs' of expertise based on shared ideological and material investment in promoting and furthering stories about the Beatles.

Through the observation of the representational practices and discursive strategies employed by many storytellers, I concluded that like the fixed-form

narratives to which they contribute, storytelling processes work collectively in crystallising the Beatles as a cultural myth, where collective and popular memories of the Beatles are infused with cultural meaning derived from and targeted to particular groups of story-listeners and story-consumers. The role and significance of storytelling in the transformation of the Beatles from band to cultural brand is discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 – Commercialising Beatle storytelling

Introduction

In Chapter 3, I evaluated a number of representational practices and discursive strategies I encountered observing and participating in various instances of Beatle storytelling. I argued that what emerges from holistic analysis of these complementary and competing storytelling practices and strategies is evidence of a 'nexus of horizontal relationships' (Thompson and Tian 2008: 610) amongst and between individual storytellers who regularly seek to establish (or affirm) their own particular area of Beatle expertise and authority, but do so within the rhetorical boundaries established by hegemonic collective and popular memories of the Beatles. Interviews with storytellers revealed their implicit comprehension of the idea that there is shared benefit to all storytellers in working together to promote 'the Beatles,' *writ large*. I concluded that these storytelling practices work collectively in crystallising the Beatles as a cultural myth.

In this chapter I consider the wider implications of these collective practices. In the first section of the chapter I explore the notion of 'commercialisation' in relation to Beatle storytelling by setting out the terms, definitions and methodologies I utilised in researching this portion of the thesis. Through this kind of critical interrogation, I arrive at several key observations. Central to this discussion is first the notion of value, which I argue is neither a fixed economic object nor a purely cultural form, but rather a transitory outcome of a series of intra- and extra-market value negotiations. A second related concept to evidencing the connection between Beatle storytelling and commercialisation is that of entrepreneurship. By entrepreneurship I mean the key strategies, methods and tactics employed by Beatle storytellers to capitalise on the outcomes of these value negotiations. As shown in Chapters 2 and 3, analysis of the actions and activities of Beatle storytellers demonstrate an evident level of narrative and cultural/political intertextuality. Here, I make the argument that storytellers' awareness of these collective and reflexive activities can additionally be read as market-making or market-shaping practices, where stories about the Beatles transform from the narrative-cultural to the cultural-commercial, forming the basis of profit-making storytelling ventures (where profit need not be solely financial). Lastly, using a method derived from Holt's concept of 'brand genealogy' (2004), I show that read against the historical actions and activities

of the Beatles[15] themselves, against mediated representations and discourses of the Beatles in popular music and culture and also against significant incidents of wider social, political and economic upheaval since 1970 Beatle storytelling enterprises did not simply evolve organically over time, but rather in response to a series of what Holt terms 'cultural disruptions' (2004), prompting ongoing cycles of renegotiation and reassessment of the Beatles' place in popular music and culture.

In the second section of the chapter, I apply these criteria to demonstrate specifically how storytelling about the Beatles can be read as an ongoing commercialised and commercialising process by looking at three periods of storytelling intensification and consolidation since 1970. By storytelling *intensification*, I mean to show that three cultural disruptions: the 1970 breakup, John Lennon's murder in 1980 and the release of the *Anthology* television documentary in 1995 can be understood as catalysts motivating an ever-expanding field of Beatle storytellers to not only exploit these periods of resurgence in the group's popularity, but also, and critically, to recontextualise stories of the group to more sympathetically reflect ongoing (re-) negotiations of the meaning and relevance of the Beatles in contemporary national and global discourses. By storytelling *consolidation*, I mean that, as paralleled by arguments presented in Chapters 2 and 3, critical evaluation of the commercialisation of Beatle storytelling over time reveals a progression from a series of individual, 'ad-hoc' storytelling ventures in the early 1970s to something that, today, can be understood as a regular and regularised auto-referential network of Beatle storytelling enterprises. The intention behind this extended analysis is to show the scope and breadth of Beatle storytelling as implicated with and not apart from wider socio-cultural changes.

In the final third of the chapter, I bring together the theoretical and the applied to discuss the role and significance of storytelling in the commercialisation of 'the Beatles.' Drawing on research by Holt (2004) as well as by Ravasi and Rindova (2004), I argue that Beatle storytelling can be understood as commercially significant in three separate but cumulative forms: as a cultural object; as a metaphor/symbolic good; and as a 'co-author' of the Beatle brand (Holt 2004). Through this analysis, I

[15]By 'the Beatles,' I mean here a collective term for the individual musicians (and estates of) John Lennon and George Harrison, Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr, as well as their shared management company Apple, their US/UK record labels Capitol/EMI and Sony-ATV, the primary owners of the Lennon-McCartney publishing catalogue.

show that since 1970, storytelling about the Beatles has evolved along two separate but interrelated commercial trajectories. The first of these I term a 'commercialised storytelling infrastructure' where storytellers with no direct access to the Beatles (or their intellectual property (IP)) have nevertheless produced a network of sustainable Beatle-related enterprises increasingly working with local, regional and, on occasion, national and international firms and organisations in the tourism, heritage and culture industries promoting the Beatles cultural mythology as part of broader British popular history. The second of these two strands of storytelling is what I term the cultural branding of the Beatles (Holt 2004), where individuals and firms who *are* direct agents of and stakeholders in the group's intellectual property, seek to deploy narratives of the Beatles in ways which will afford them opportunities to (continue to) exploit and extend the Beatle brand. Discussion of the shared benefits and challenges faced by the Beatles in co-existing alongside these autonomous commercialised storytelling enterprises sets up the core argument of Chapter 5, which looks at the extension of the Beatle brand since *Anthology*'s release.

Part 1 – Defining commercialisation

In this portion of the chapter, I want to define how I am using the word 'commercialisation.' Chiefly, I mean that in addition to its cultural value (as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3), storytelling about the Beatles also has considerable material value. However, a risk to this kind of argument is that it can lead to the implication that any commercial value in storytelling will develop in a vacuum and under a set of circumstances and criteria wholly apart from its cultural significance. Even more significantly, this perceived 'cultural-commercial' dichotomy obscures a more fundamental division: between stakeholders of intellectual property (IP) and non-stakeholders. Thus, by the term commercialisation I do not seek to recapitulate the somewhat self-evident point that there is both material and cultural value within Beatle storytelling; rather, my intention is to show how the commercial and cultural values of storytelling work, *collectively*, to support a series of storytelling enterprises that have developed apart from those of the Beatles themselves. Because Beatle storytellers (with only few notable exceptions) are neither employees nor agents of the Beatles, nor are they direct beneficiaries of ownership in the Beatles' intellectual property – their words and music, their sound recordings, their images and so on – they cannot, definitionally, be classed as Beatle marketing/branding consultants.

Their storytelling endeavours are not directed by the Beatles, nor, conversely are the Beatles (directly) involved in the creation or 'diffusion' (Bourdieu 1984) of these storytelling enterprises. Yet that these storytelling enterprises cannot be termed branding or marketing strategies does not diminish their power or significance.

I do not wish to imply that the commercialised storytelling of non-stakeholders exists in a world removed and untouched by the cultural branding efforts of the Beatles and Apple. Their interactions, both competitive and complementary, are the focus of Chapter 5. For the moment though, it is enough to say contemporary commercialised Beatle storytelling enterprises formed from and react to wider cultural stimuli in ways that are systemically and substantially different than those of the Beatles themselves. Discussion of these wider cultural changes and the resultant effect on stories about the Beatles over time is the subject of Part 2, below. What follows immediately is a discussion and critical analysis of the three key components of commercialisation as evidenced in Beatle storytelling: value, entrepreneurship and multi-tiered discourse analysis.

Defining value

By the term 'cultural value' I mean that Beatle storytelling affords narrators the opportunity to contribute to the ongoing processes of collective and popular memory-making of the group. Moreover, storytelling creates cultural value for story-listeners by providing a medium for study, recollection, even celebration of the group, and the accordant series of ideals and beliefs attributed to the Beatles via these stories. Lastly, the cultural value inherent in Beatle storytelling manifests itself at a 'supra-Beatle' level, as stories about the Beatles extend into wider narratives of British hegemony in popular culture and music. Cultural value in storytelling is neither self-evident nor spontaneously created. As argued in Chapters 2 and 3, the cultural value of storytelling about the Beatles derives from the deliberate and considered strategies and practices of storytellers, intermediaries and story-listeners. Similarly, by 'commercial value,' I do not intend a meaning defined exclusively by financial worth. As I demonstrate below, while Beatle storytelling can be a profit-making endeavour, it is nevertheless reliant on the exploitation of some personal connection to or expert knowledge of the Beatles. In this way, Beatle storytelling enterprises are substantively different than enterprises that sell bottled water, athletic shoes or

computers, competing in a market in which goods are services are *not* substitutable, but dependent instead on (perceptions of) uniqueness of form and function.

I articulate this interdependence of the cultural and the commercial values of Beatle storytelling only to make the point that it would be unproductive to discuss the relative merits (and shortcomings) of one in isolation from the other. A more complete understanding of value in Beatle storytelling comes from looking at composite 'cultural-commercial' changes over time, examining the ways and means through which stories about the Beatles have circulated through popular culture. Thus, I define value here as not what Marxian economists would call 'use-value' and/or 'exchange-value,' but instead as a subjective term, influenced and driven by factors both within and without the value negotiation itself. I draw on theorisations of the culture industries (c.f. Lash and Urry 1994; Hesmondhalgh 2002; Negus 2002; duGay and Pryke 2003; Caves 2000), popular music (c.f. Frith and Goodwin 1990; Longhurst 2007) and economic sociology (c.f. Callon 1998; Kjellberg and Helgesson 2006; Loasby 2000) to argue that value, like storytelling itself, is not fixed and monolithic, but instead dynamic and variable; significant not only as a narrative form, but also as an impermanent outcome of a series of ongoing negotiations between storytellers, story-listeners and a number of intermediaries over time.

Defining entrepreneurship

As discussed, I have made a case in support of the idea that Beatle storytelling as a commercialised process is best understood not as a series of explicit transactions between producer, intermediary and consumer, but rather as a series of negotiations between storytellers, story-listeners and story-intermediaries. Yet there are two limitations to this concept. First, there is a boundary to how much storytelling activity can be reasonably classed in these unfixed terms. Callon (1998) points out that a theoretical framework that is too porous is as analytically unhelpful as one that is too rigid. To take too broad a perspective would be to have no limits at all, with the implication that the whole of humanity, history and society are, in some way, woven through the fabric of the Beatle storytelling. Second, I do not wish to imply that Beatle storytellers would ever expressly articulate or even conceive of their activities as a series of ongoing cultural-commercial negotiations. Thus, in order to mitigate the potential implications of these two issues, I use the concept of storytelling entrepreneurship to establish a meaningful but not overly deterministic way of

evaluating the value negotiations inherent within commercialised Beatle storytelling. Lounsbury and Glynn (2001: 545), citing Venkataraman (1997: 120) assert that entrepreneurship is concerned with, 'how opportunities to bring into existence "future" goods and services are discovered, created, and exploited, by whom, and with what consequences.' Accordingly, by Beatle storytelling entrepreneurship I mean the commercial opportunities which have been 'discovered, created, and exploited' by 'Beatle people' through the value negotiations they conduct.

In this way, the notion of entrepreneurship is an effective vehicle for moving between conceptions of storytelling as a theoretical construct of value negotiation and storytelling as a series of increasingly forward-looking and market-making/market-shaping actions and activities. Entrepreneurship is a way of making meaningful both the individual and collective movements of people and firms engaged in Beatle storytelling practices and processes that is not overly mechanical or prescribed. Furthermore, as I will show, this characterisation of entrepreneurship suggests that there has been a progression in Beatle storytelling efforts from the 1970s forward, from a series of individual, isolated, one-time ventures to something which today has extended the cultural mythology of the Beatles into the 'supra-Beatle' mainstream through partnerships and affiliations with regional and national 'high culture' firms and organisations like the National Trust, the BBC and the Liverpool Culture Company.

Defining 'storytelling genealogy'

The third pillar of storytelling commercialisation is what I am terming 'storytelling genealogy,' a multi-tiered discourse analysis. I first argued that value in Beatle storytelling cannot be determined through isolated analysis characterised as individual producer-consumer transactions. Conceiving of Beatle storytelling in purely theoretical terms would be to under-represent or even misrepresent the efforts and actions of many Beatles storytellers who, since 1970, have worked to keep the group (and their own associations with the group) prominent in popular consciousness. Here, I wish to take this argument one step further by contending that commercialisation in Beatle storytelling cannot be recognised through 'snapshot' analysis undertaken at a single point in time. Instead, changes in value and entrepreneurship can and must be measured in two ways: over time and in wider context.

In building towards his theory of cultural branding, Holt studied a number of television advertisements seeking to explain, 'why particular stories generate extraordinary resonance whereas the vast majority fall flat and some are veritable disasters' (2004: 227). He concluded that the relative success or failure of an advertising campaign could not be adequately determined through evaluation of the ads alone. Instead, he reasoned that, 'tracing the fit between the text [advertisement] and changes in American society and culture and by following how these resonances ebb and flow over time, these analyses explain why important cultural products... resonate in the culture at a particular historical juncture' (Holt 2004: 226). Although my research aims differ from those of Holt, I strive to answer a very similar question in determining the role and significance of storytelling in the commercialisation of the Beatles since 1970. Accordingly, I use Holt's methodology of multi-layered discourse analysis, which he terms 'brand genealogy,' in the same general spirit, but adapt its principles and ideas to better evaluate and more specifically examine the changes in Beatle storytelling over time and throughout popular culture. Thus, I show a steady general quantitative increase in the number of Beatle stories and opportunities for Beatle storytelling, punctuated by several periods of intense/renewed interest in the group in wider popular culture. Simultaneously, what also emerges is evidence of a series of narrative shifts, in which various threads of the Beatles' general history are either collectively emphasised or de-emphasised across multiple instances of storytelling, triggering the emergence of a number of Beatle Regularly Recurring Narratives (RRNs).

The natural question raised by the appearance of these RRNs at certain junctures is to ask why some stories about the Beatles remain so popular where others are nearly forgotten and others still are appropriated into contexts far beyond the Beatle-centric. To answer that query it is necessary to supplement a chronological analysis with a broader consideration of the economic, social, cultural, political and even musical upheaval extant outside the Beatle storytelling marketplace that influences its products and processes. To reiterate Callon's sentiment above, to draw too wide a circle around Beatle storytelling would ultimately be to devalue it. Instead, I establish a 'semi-porous' chronological framework against which Beatle storytelling is measured in three tiers of discourse analysis: records of the actions and activities of the Beatles and their IP stakeholders, mediated representations of the Beatles and key incidents of change in wider culture and society. I show that Beatle storytelling did

not develop in isolation but rather in response to these extra-market stimuli; and that Beatle storytelling continues to grow and evolve as intra- and extra-market conditions continue to change. Cross-level analysis between these various strata reveals that changes in Beatle storytelling since 1970 have been catalysed through a series of what Holt (2004: 23) calls 'cultural disruptions,' significant and unanticipated changes in the cultural *status quo* emerging from, 'tensions in the national culture.' Since 1970, there have been three cultural disruptions pertinent to the evolution of Beatle storytelling: the group's 1970 breakup; the assassination of John Lennon in 1980; and the release of the *Anthology* documentary in 1995. These cultural disruptions demarcate three distinct periods of storytelling intensification and consolidation, which, when read against chronological and popular culture discourse analyses, reveal how Beatle storytelling since 1970 has been both a commercialised and commercialising process.

Part 2 – Three periods of Beatle storytelling intensification and consolidation

In this portion of the chapter I show that Beatle storytelling is, or has become, a commercialised process significantly contributing to the enduring influence of 'the Beatles' as a cultural brand. Above, I argued that commercialisation, understood as a process of ongoing value negotiation and entrepreneurial activity, is best evaluated through multi-tiered discourse analysis. Accordingly, what follows is evidence of the evolution of the commercialisation of Beatle storytelling in three distinct periods.[16] Moving chronologically, the first of these storytelling periods extends from April, 1970, the first official public announcement of the Beatles' breakup, to early December, 1980, just prior to John Lennon's assassination. The second key period of Beatle storytelling intensification and consolidation follows on from Lennon's death in December 1980 to November, 1995, with the release of *Anthology*, and the last period I will address here spans from November 1995 to the present day.

Each storytelling period is organised in the same way: I begin with discussion of the cultural disruption that triggered a substantive change in contemporary thinking about the Beatles. Following on from this will be the first tier of discourse analysis, evaluation of the interactions between Beatle storytellers and the Beatles and their primary IP stakeholders, chiefly Apple, Capitol/EMI and Sony-ATV in the wake of

[16] This analysis will centre on developments in the US and UK, the Beatles' two primary markets, noting developments in other countries only where necessary.

this disruption. In Chapter 5, specific convergences and conflicts between various Beatle IP stakeholder entities will become significant, but here, it is necessary only to make a distinction between stakeholders (as Beatle brand agents) and non-stakeholders (with no juridical Beatle claims or connections). The second layer of discourse analysis concerns mediated coverage of the Beatles. By the term 'mediated coverage' I intend the idea of looking at which elements of the Beatles' lives and careers were being publicised in 'real time,' as current news and features. Stories that I term 'mediated coverage' are normally one-time or 'featured' reports or broadcasts, typically, but not always, likely to appear in outlets which are not dedicated exclusively to the Beatles. Through this kind of discussion my aim is to show that despite peaks and troughs, general popular music and cultural interest in the Beatles has been ongoing since (and despite) their breakup. Additionally, I will show that over time, value (re-)negotiations between media and storytellers have jointly shaped and reframed popular perceptions of the Beatles locally, nationally and globally. The third tier of analysis I provide concerns what I call the 'wider developments' affecting Beatle storytelling. By this very general phrase I intend a way of addressing how events and developments that occur far removed from the Beatles themselves have nevertheless had measurable impact on the development and advancement of specific, individual Beatle stories, RRNs and at times on the whole of the Beatles cultural mythology.

It is against these three strata of analysis that I chart the commercialisation of and in Beatle storytelling. However, the sheer scale and variety of Beatle storytelling enterprises undertaken since 1970 necessarily compels me to summarise my findings. My goal in doing so is to affirm through example that storytelling about the Beatles informs and is informed by both intra- and extra-market influences. While there is certainly no definitive line between layers of discourse analysis, and while it would have clearly been more expedient to simply list a series of Beatle storytelling endeavours undertaken since 1970, what this kind of uncritical quantitative survey would miss out would be the bi-directional ebb and flow of storytelling, in its narrative and cultural-commercial forms. Thus, rather than conceiving of storytelling as an industrialised process, moving through horizontal and vertical flows of production, distribution and consumption, my research suggests that in each discrete period of intensification and consolidation, Beatle storytelling is better understood as a series of entrepreneurial ventures, designed to mobilise resources at hand into

cultural objects desired by Beatle story-listeners in a given moment. Read cumulatively, each Beatle storytelling period demonstrates an upward spiral of fixity, progressing from a small series of unrelated one-time ventures to regular and recurring events like Beatle conventions, fan-fests and museum exhibitions to more permanent Beatle-themed attractions like tours, pubs and hotels. The increasing durability of and diversification in the types of Beatle storytelling enterprises extant since 1970 reveals an ability to extend the relevance of the Beatles to successive generations of popular culture story-listeners.

Storytelling Period 1: 1970-1980

Cultural disruption: the Beatles break up

Beatle storytelling is, self-evidently, not a phenomenon that only emerged after the group's breakup. In 1964, Brian Epstein, the Beatles' manager, penned an autobiography detailing his recollections of the Beatles' early years in Liverpool, *A Cellarful of Noise*. In 1968, Hunter Davies published *The Beatles*, the first (and only) authorised biography of the group released whilst they were still together. Further, John Lennon authored two books, 1964's *In His Own Write* and *A Spaniard In The Works* (1965). While they are not autobiographies or histories in the strictest sense, and despite Lennon's heavy use of free-form word association and whimsical language, each volume still provided some indirect commentary on the group's early years. For instance, the introduction to *In His Own Write* (written by Paul McCartney) states:

> At Woolton village fete I met him. I was a fat schoolboy and, as he leaned an arm on my shoulder, I realised that he was drunk. We were twelve then, but, in spite of his sideboards, we went on to become teenage pals. Aunt Mimi, who had looked after him since he was so high, used to tell me how he was cleverer than he pretended, and things like that. He had written a poem for the school magazine about a hermit who said: 'as breathing is my life, to stop I dare not dare.' This made me wonder right away – 'Is he deep?' He wore glasses so it was possible, and even without them there was no holding him. 'What 'bus?' he would say to howls of appreciative laughter. He went to Quarry Bank High School for Boys and later attended to the Liverpool Art College. He left school and played with a group called the Beatles, and, here he is with a book. Again I think – 'Is he deep?' 'Is he arty, with it or cultured?' There are bound to be thickheads who will wonder why some of it doesn't make sense, and others who will search for hidden meanings. 'What's a Brummer?' 'There's more to 'dubb

owld boot' than meets the eye.' None of it has to make sense and if it seems funny then that's enough (McCartney, in Lennon 1964: 14).

Additionally, beyond the Beatles' immediate inner circle, there were also a number of people seeking to exploit a past or personal connection to the Beatles in the 1960s. For example, John Lennon's estranged father, Alf 'Freddie' Lennon, whom John had not seen in almost 20 years, achieved momentary notoriety in 1965 with the recording of an autobiographical single, 'That's My Life,' with overt titular and lyrical allusions to the Beatles' recent introspective release 'In My Life.'[17]

Nevertheless, when taken in consideration of the group's immense popularity at the time, the number of storytellers contemporary with the Beatles' 1960s success appears disproportionately smaller than would be expected. This apparent lack of interest in telling (and hearing) stories about the Beatles whilst they were still together, may, in part, be attributed to the fact the Beatles themselves were such prominent contemporary musical and cultural figures (c.f. Inglis 2000; Gould 2007; Womack and Davis 2006) little narrative or cultural space remained for other storytellers to supplement the Beatles' own dominant voice. Another reason why there were so few narratives about the Beatles contemporaneous with their time together may be that, as Strachan (2003a) contends, popular music biography, as a literary sub-genre, did not become a widely accepted narrative form until the 1970s, almost in tandem with (and perhaps, in part, because of) the Beatles' disbandment. Accordingly, in the 1960s publishers would see very little benefit to commissioning a work on a teenage fad with a presumptively short 'shelf life' (Strachan 2003a: 11). Similarly, even had such texts been published, there would likely have been negligible consumer demand from 1960s teenagers who would have had little experience of biographies and histories of pop acts and popular music.

Furthermore, if storytelling can be considered as part of the branding and marketing strategies of popular music acts, while critical in contemporary industrial practice, awareness of these types of activities largely did not exist at the time of the Beatles' success. In fact, Klein asserts that until the 1980s, 'although it was understood in the corporate world that bolstering one's brand name was important, the primary concern of every solid manufacturer was the production of goods' (2002: 3).

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[17] The B-side to Freddie Lennon's single, 'The Next Time You Feel Important,' was an embittered commentary on his son's success and included the lyrics: 'The next time you feel important/get down upon your knees and pray/and when you think of who/will be listening to you/your glory will fade away' (Pye Records 1965).

Put another way, in the case of the Beatles, and indeed of most of 1960s popular music in general, industry personnel had comparatively little understanding of or regard for the considerable long-term potential of ancillary revenue streams generated by popular music acts (c.f. Frith, et. al. 2001; Burnett 1996; Longhurst 2007). Thus, both Epstein and the Beatles' focus was primarily attuned to the production of records and songs and not on cohesive and deliberate marketing and promotion of the Beatle brand (Blaney 2008; Southall and Perry 2007).[18]

In other words, there is little in the way of evidence to suggest that the Beatles, (potential) storytellers apart from the Beatles' organisation, or publishers, saw much to be gained, culturally or financially, from engaging in regular storytelling about the Beatles in the 1960s. However, as Barry Miles has noted, 'When the band broke up there were only one or two books available about them. Now there are more than 400 and new ones are published on an average of one every two weeks' (in Badman 2001: i). Inherent in this observation is the tacit assumption that something changed – that the Beatles' breakup must have functioned as a kind of cultural catalyst, a 'cultural disruption,' (Holt 2004) forcing an inter/national re-contextualisation and reconsideration of the place and role of the Beatles and their music. Accordingly, the question I wish to consider in this portion of the chapter is how did the Beatles' split affect and influence the development of Beatle storytelling as a commercialised process?

Beatle Storytellers and Beatle stakeholders

On Friday, 10 April 1970, included with advance promotional copies of Paul McCartney's first solo album, *McCartney*, was a press release, a 'self-interview,' declaring his departure from the Beatles (Badman 2001). In it, he cites the cause of the split to be, '"business and music differences, but most of all, because I have a better time with my family"' (in Badman 2001: 4). For fans, awareness of the split may have been cognitive, but there was at the moment of the announcement little tangible evidence of the group's demise. *Let It Be* (1970) in both its album and filmic forms, was rolled out in the UK and US markets over the next six weeks, in much the same fashion as other Beatles releases.

[18] While there was self-evidently a tremendous amount of Beatle-branded goods released in the 1960s, particularly in America, these resulted from a series of individual merchandising and licensing deals rather than through a unified and deliberate marketing or branding plan (c.f. Blaney 2008).

For the Beatles themselves, however, implications of the breakup were far more immediate. Numerous accounts of Beatle history detail how personal relationships within the group had been disintegrating for months, if not years (c.f. Norman 2004; Spitz 2005; Miles 1997, 2001), so while the timing of McCartney's press release may have been somewhat unexpected, its contents likely were not. Particularly in the months and years directly following the split, the actions and comments of the now former Beatles indicated a strong desire to distance themselves from the personal and artistic constraints which the concept of the Beatles now represented to them, in a practice similar to one Thompson and Tian (2008) call tactical effacement. But rather than attempting to circulate four competing versions of their shared history and collective career, my research suggests instead the Beatles at this point were not thinking holistically about their past, but instead simply trying to distance themselves from it.

For instance, in the months immediately following the split, McCartney, Harrison and especially Lennon articulated their current thoughts about the Beatles through song lyrics. Paul McCartney's 'Dear Boy'(1970), George Harrison's 'Isn't It A Pity,' 'Wah-Wah,' 'All Things Must Pass' and 'Run Of The Mill' (all 1970) all express sentiments that spoke directly to the breakup and/or to specific relationships between individual ex-Beatles. Yet two songs by John Lennon, 'God' (1970) and 'How Do You Sleep?' (1970)[19] stand out as being overtly hostile and cynical towards the Beatles in general and Paul McCartney in particular. Even more explicitly than song lyrics, another effacement tactic undertaken by the ex-Beatles in this period was to distance themselves from their former group through interviews. For instance, in a 1971 interview with *Melody Maker*, Ringo responds to a question about the *McCartney* album with the comment:

> I feel sad with Paul's albums because I believe he's a great artist, incredibly creative, incredibly clever but he disappoints me on his albums. I don't think there's one tune on the last one *Ram*...I just feel he's wasted his time, it's just the way I feel...he seems to be going strange (in Badman 2001: 39).

It is Lennon again, however, who most directly expresses his unhappiness with his former bandmates. In a December, 1970 interview with Jann Wenner of *Rolling Stone* Lennon is quoted as saying, "'Big bastards, that's that The Beatles were. You

[19] See Appendix B for full song lyrics

have to be a bastard to make it, that's a fact and The Beatles are the biggest bastards on earth'" (in Badman 2001: 16). While over the next decade hostilities between the former Beatles would, to a degree, abate and, while they would in various partial configurations collaborate in both live performances and studio recordings, it still remains the Beatles – as John, Paul, George and Ringo – would never again perform together.

For their part, EMI (and it US subsidiary Capitol Records) demonstrated little appreciation for the potential 'long tail' of the Beatles' back catalogue (Anderson 2004). Through a contract negotiated originally by Brian Epstein in 1966 and twice subsequently renegotiated by Allen Klein in 1969 and 1971, respectively, the Beatles were, as both a group and solo performers, tied to EMI through January, 1976 (Blaney 2008). Accordingly, the label's focus was at first primarily on promoting the ex-Beatles' new solo releases. Following the expiration of the Beatles' contract, and undoubtedly influenced in part by ongoing and costly US and UK litigation with the Beatles[20], EMI seemingly desired to purge itself of dealings with the former group. In March, 1976 the label *simultaneously* re-released all 22 of the Beatles singles. Indeed, by 1980, MFP (Music For Pleasure), EMI's budget imprint, began releasing cut-price Beatles records. *Rock 'N' Roll Music* Volumes 1 & 2, Ringo's 1973 album *Ringo*, John's *Mind Games* and George's *Dark Horse* all retailed in UK shops for a suggested price of just £1.99 (Badman 2001).

By 1969, through a series of byzantine corporate machinations, the majority stakeholders in Northern Songs, the umbrella publishing entity covering almost all Lennon-McCartney compositions, was now ATV. Ironically then, while the increasingly poor-quality Beatles albums released by EMI brought condemnation from fans and critics, ATV were reaping substantial financial rewards from them, as each Lennon-McCartney song on these albums generated for the company new mechanical songwriting royalties. However, ATV faced two challenges in the 1970s that saw their income, derived significantly from Northern Songs alone, dwindle. First, the Beatles' breakup meant for ATV that Lennon-McCartney songs were now also a finite quantity, and no longer an ongoing source of new income generation. Second, Lennon and McCartney, via Apple, placed substantial moral pressure on

[20] The Beatles and EMI have been engaged in various lawsuits since 1969, chiefly though not exclusively centred on royalty payments. The most recent round of UK litigation concluded only in 2007.

ATV to keep Beatles songs from being unduly exploited and remarkably, ATV largely complied, despite a resulting and substantive loss of profit (Southall and Perry 2007). Peter Philips, the ATV executive implementing the Lennon-McCartney catalogue in the mid-1970s has commented: "'We took it on ourselves not to issue licences for Beatles songs. They never complained or called up about it so we did what we thought was the sensible thing to do...I thought we should hold back The Beatles' songs and use them at a later date'" (in Southall and Perry 2007: 117-118). The table below makes the financial implications of these two issues self-evident:

Figure 4.1
ATV Income and Profits, 1971-1975

Year	**Net Income (Royalties, performance & licence fees)**	**Net Profit (After tax)**
1971	£1,100,000	£742,000
1972	£973,000	£614,000
1973	£746,000	£474,000
1974	£795,000	£385,000
1975	£796,000	£390,000

(Southall and Perry 2007: 107)

Thus, for storytellers without vested legal and/or financial interest in the Beatles or their associated firms, a market opportunity opened. When the former Beatles, EMI and ATV all, to varying degrees, sought to distance themselves from the group's music, songs and history, what they each were unwilling to acknowledge or capitalise on was the still-extant and still-substantial market demand for Beatle product. For Beatle storytellers, one layer of value-negotiation came in the form of identifying, expanding and redefining the market for Beatle goods and services. As Apple, EMI and ATV controlled almost all elements of the Beatles' IP, storytellers had to innovate new ways of commercialising the Beatles' story. Accordingly, in this period, two distinct strands of storytelling commercialisation emerged in response to the Beatles IP stakeholders' inaction: Beatle bootlegs/collectables and Beatle-themed stage and film musicals.

A first emergent entrepreneurial strategy for early storytellers was to simply bypass the issue of IP entirely, and issue and sell bootleg recordings, collectables and other various items of ephemera with little regard for legal ownership or licensing. For example, in 1976 Allan Williams, the Beatles' early former manager, acquired a

pair of Paul's leather trousers which McCartney wore during the group's one of the group's Hamburg residencies in 1962. Williams then took the trousers to America where they were purchased at auction for an undisclosed sum (Badman 2001). From this point forward, the trading, selling and collecting of Beatle ephemera becomes a significant strand of commercialised Beatle storytelling. More substantially however, following the breakup, the number of Beatle bootleg albums in circulation rises sharply. Where many of these early releases were poorly made recordings of live performances (for instance, *Live at Shea Stadium '65)*, following the Beatles' disbandment, a number of more rare and better quality studio recordings begin to circulate (c.f. Castleman and Podrazik 1976). While neither Beatle collectables nor bootleg recordings are 'stories' in the narrative sense, I include them here because their symbolic value, what Holt (2004) terms their 'identity value' becomes significant for Beatle fans left disenfranchised by the breakup.[21]

A second form of storytelling that emerges in response to the Beatles' effacement tactics is in the production of Beatle-related stage and film musicals. In the period 1970-1980 there were a number of prominent Beatle-themed musical and theatrical projects: Tom O'Horgan's 1974 stage and Robert Stigwood's 1978 film adaptations of *Sgt. Pepper Lonely Hearts Club Band*, Willy Russell's 1974 stage drama *John, Paul, George, Ringo and Bert*, *Beatlemania!* in 1977 and the Monty Python-produced *The Rutles* (1978). As storytelling enterprises, these productions reframed the music, lyrics and public personae of the Beatles again filling the gap left by the group's breakup. As the outcome of value-negotiations, Beatle-themed film and theatrical performances created new opportunities to explore aspects of 'the Beatles' apart from John, Paul, George and Ringo themselves. For instance, for fans too young to have seen the Beatles play live, or for people wishing to celebrate their Beatle fandom, a tribute-act performance like *Beatlemania!* would be a 'next-best' opportunity (c.f. Homan 2006). These musicals and plays afforded performers and directors a means to re-deploy Beatle songs in innovative new contexts, creating opportunities for fans and, critically, also for people who were not originally fans of the group, to experience the Beatles' music in entirely new ways. More, as a narrative form, films, plays and musicals all communicated a representation of aspects of the Beatles' history, lives and career, keeping the Beatles generally prominent in popular

[21] See Marshall (2004) for a study on the interrelationships between bootleg recordings, fans and the recording industry.

culture. Thus, as commercialised storytelling both bootlegs/collectables and film/theatre productions each renegotiated the value of 'the Beatles' through broadening the field for Beatle 'product.' As entrepreneurial strategies, these practices enabled storytellers to identify and exploit the gap between the Beatles/EMI/ATV's activities and the still-extant demands of fans for Beatle goods and products.

Beatle storytellers and Media

While they were together, the Beatles were at the centre of unrelenting and global media focus. This is perhaps another reason why there were so comparatively few 1960s Beatle storytellers – elements and aspects of their career and day-to-day lives were played out daily in articles and feature stories. Immediately following the split, media coverage of the now former Beatles remained intense. As discussed above, the former Beatles utilised the media – in particular, the UK music press – to both promote their solo projects and, at times, also to politick against each other. For the media, stories about the Beatles and ex-Beatles commanded much public interest, in both specialist music outlets and more generally. For considerations of both space and pragmatism, rather than attempt to synthesise the whole of media coverage of the Beatles between 1970-1980, instead I focus on two specific emergent strands of 1970s media treatment of the Beatles that had a direct bearing on the commercialisation of Beatle storytelling: Beatle 'retrospectives' and coverage of a Beatles 'reunion.'

By retrospectives, I mean that as early as 1970, there is evidence to demonstrate the media were already seeking to contextualise the Beatles in a wider historical and cultural framework. For instance, between 1970-1975, the BBC produced an annual 'Boxing Day With the Beatles' event, showing various films and television performances from the group. Similarly, in May, 1971, BBC Radio One began a multi-part documentary series titled *The Beatles Story*, an in-depth and critical study of the group, its origins and its music. In America, post-breakup interest in the Beatles also remained high. There, rather than documentary, Beatle-related media output emphasised dramatic recreations, 'biopics,' of the group's early years. Two such examples are a made-for-TV film, the Dick Clark-produced *Birth of the Beatles* (1979), shot in part on location in Liverpool, Hamburg and London, which sought to tell the story of the group's origins, and *I Wanna Hold Your Hand*, an

October, 1978 theatrical release that nostalgically depicted the lives of New York City teenagers caught up in the first wave of Beatlemania in February, 1964.

For Beatle storytellers, these and similar productions became significant for two reasons. First, as researchers and producers came to places like Liverpool and Hamburg to investigate the Beatles' history, they encountered people like Allan Williams, Sam Leach, members of the Quarrymen and Astrid Kirchherr. Where the ex-Beatles themselves were normally unavailable or unwilling to participate in these kinds of productions, a number of their family, former friends and associates often were, thus sparking the origination of some RRNs. Second, in contributing to other people's Beatle stories, these early Beatle insiders realised the potential market in their connections to the group. Three Beatle associates, Allan Williams (1975), Cynthia Lennon (1978) and Richard DiLello, Apple's 'House Hippie' (1973), were amongst the first people to publish 'tell-all' Beatle memoirs. These and other early Beatle books set a precedent for hundreds of future Beatle authors by personalising the Beatles' story, significant in their tone and consideration of the Beatles as flawed and fallible individuals. For instance, in the final page of her first autobiography, Cynthia Lennon (1978: 189) writes:

> There were many sacrifices during the heady, frenzied Beatle years. Stuart, Brian, many were hurt, used and discarded. You had to be strong to keep up with the madness and unreality...I can only sum up my story by appealing to people's understanding when judging the actions, feelings, successes and inevitable mistakes which were made by four very young men, who, at an age when they would have been learning how to cope with life and learning a trade, found themselves with the world at their feet. To me it is in their favour that they are still sane and coherent. I still feel very proud of the Beatles and their accomplishments. My life during that period was an education, an education I wouldn't have missed. It has left me feeling enriched, not embittered, enlightened, not blinded. All I can think of to conclude my story is to say, 'Thanks for the memories, and in the words of the I-Ching, No blame.'

Complementing these accounts of the Beatles' past was a second strand of media coverage, that of a Beatles reunion. Within days of McCartney's 1970 announcement of the Beatles' disbanding, stories speculating on if, how and when the group would reunite began to circulate. While never really diminishing, speculation about a Beatles reunion came to a climax in February, 1976 when Bill Sargent, a Los Angeles pop promoter offered the Beatles $50 million to perform one reunion concert lasting a minimum of 20 minutes. With the Beatles slow to respond to Sargent's

proposal, in March 1976, the promoter now doubled his initial offer to $100 million. The Sargent deal was soon parodied on the American late-night comedy sketch show *Saturday Night Live* (SNL), with producer Lorne Michaels offering the group a cheque for $3000 if they were to reunite on the show:

> All you have to do is sing three Beatle tunes. 'She Loves You, Yeah, Yeah, Yeah,' that's $1000 right there. You know the words, and it'll be easy. Like I said, this cheque is made out to "The Beatles." You divide it anyway you want. If you want to give Ringo less that's up to you. I'd rather not get involved. I'm sincere about this. If it helps you reach a decision to reunite, well, it's a worthwhile investment (in Badman 2001: 182).

In this way, media coverage, when coupled with EMI's simultaneous re-release of all 22 Beatles singles, created in the UK what in 1976 *Reveille* magazine dubbed a 'Beatles Boom.' In one article, the paper quoted an EMI spokesman who observed that, 'The nostalgia boom is one thing, but The Beatles are recent history. Kids of 13 and 14 who never knew the group in its heyday, are now being wowed by the Beatle sound' (in Badman 2001: 181). For Beatle storytellers then, new and renewed opportunities for sharing anecdotes about the group's history multiplied. For instance, in 1976, the once-defunct fan publication *Beatles Book Monthly* re-emerges, tapping into this 'neo-Beatle fan' market, by sequentially reprinting all of its back issues, dating back to August, 1963 (Badman 2001).

Thus, media coverage of the Beatles is an important aspect of storytelling commercialisation because it first sparked an intensification and renegotiation of the value of the Beatles' contributions to popular music and culture, inclusive not only of the views of the original generation of Beatle fans, but also those of younger people and of people who came to the Beatles and their music indirectly, through alternative and secondary channels like television 'Beatle seasons' and documentary programmes. Additionally, however, through their interactions, media and Beatle storytellers also began to reframe what was inherently valuable about the Beatles. Where the Beatles, EMI, and ATV were all chiefly focussed on forward-looking, post-breakup projects, the media and storytellers were looking holistically and retrospectively at the Beatles, as an *oeuvre*, initiating a first wave of serious artistic and cultural consideration of the Beatles. In translating the output of these value negotiations, storytellers-as-entrepreneurs, like Williams, DiLello and Cynthia Lennon were able to transform past associations with the Beatles into tangible

business endeavours, made manifest both in the primary form of autobiographies and 'tell-all' books, and in the secondary form as 'insider' sources of Beatle information utilised by researchers, writers, actors and producers interested in learning more about the group. I turn next to discussion of the progression of Beatle storytelling as read against wider socio-cultural developments in the US and UK in the 1970s.

Beatle storytellers and wider developments

By the time of the Beatles' disbanding, both the US and the UK were entering into a period characterised by a series of severe political, social and economic crises. In America, the nation was deeply divided over Vietnam and issues of race and gender equality. The Watergate scandal dominated media, political and cultural discourse, culminating in the resignation of President Nixon in the summer of 1974. In the UK, a series of trade union strikes brought workers into conflict with the national government, aggravating what was already an era of declining industrial and personal prosperity. Further, the civil rights disputes in Northern Ireland deeply divided the nation, politically and socially, resulting in violent military and paramilitary conflict. Beyond its domestic troubles, the UK was also in the 1970s struggling for equilibrium following its entry into the EEC. When read against this wider socio-cultural background, evidence of another strand of commercialisation comes into view, chiefly that of Beatle storytelling as part of emergent community-building and local enterprise.

By 'community-building' I mean that amid the turbulent social and political upheaval of the 1970s, self-identification as a Beatles fan, despite the group's breakup years earlier, became a largely symbolic act, a public expression of affiliation with the group and its 1960s idealism, which by the mid-'70s had been superseded in popular music consciousness by both punk and by disco (c.f. Laing 1985). In this way, organisation of and participation in two forms of fandom, conventions and fanzines, created both the physical and social spaces for post-breakup Beatle fandom to develop as a cultural/subcultural community (c.f. Hebdige 1979; Thornton 1996), fostering a sense of identity and belonging in the face of wider social and political change. Another reason fanzines and fan fests became so popular is because they brought with them the alluring potential for personal interaction with the former Beatles. For instance, Mark Lapidos, the organiser of the first Fest For Beatles Fans recalls:

> I wasn't going to do the convention without the Beatles' permission. I didn't think that would be right. **On April 28th, 1974, I met with John Lennon** in a New York City hotel room, told him my whole idea of a Beatles fans' convention, with films, special guests, live concerts, [an] art museum and art contest, flea market, discussions, look-alike and sound-alike contests, auctions, and a charity raffle. John's exact response was, **"I'm all for it. I'm a Beatles Fan, too!"** It is a moment I will never ever forget. He said he had a guitar in his attic that he would sign and donate for the charity raffle, which he did (John chose a drug rehab center in NYC as the charity). All the Beatles contributed signed items to that raffle and to our amazement, we made the Cover of Rolling Stone, October 24, 1974 (Lapidos 2004, emphasis original).

As a commercialising opportunity, fanfests and fanzines generated for some organisers a chance not only for financial profit, but also the potential to personally meet and interact with the former Beatles – an opportunity that would be unlikely otherwise (c.f. Atton 2001). As addressed in Chapter 3, people who have met the Beatles often enjoy elevated status amongst other fans and are ascribed with a certain amount of cultural capital often worth more to them than any short-term economic gain.[22] Thus, as the central cultural and commercial mechanism in both conventions and fanzines, Beatle storytelling in this era began to function symbolically as well as narratively, as the basis of an emergent Beatle identity myth, or 'a simple story that resolves cultural contradictions' for consumers (Holt 2004: 9).

In identifying commercialised storytelling as part of local enterprise, I mean that with the increasing popularity of fan conventions and Beatle fan activity came the need for storytellers to establish a unique selling proposal within this emerging marketplace. In this regard, many storytellers in places like London, Hamburg and Liverpool began to realise the still-latent potential of being in close proximity to places and artefacts significant within the Beatles' history. However, as Cohen (e.g., 1991, 2007) has noted, particularly in the city of Liverpool, in this period, support for the idea of publicising any local connection to the Beatles was far from universal. In her research she (2007: 171) documented, 'a strong feeling amongst locals that it would not be appropriate to promote Liverpool through the Beatles because the band had left or "deserted" the city.' Indeed, by 1977, the Liverpool city council not only rejected the idea to erect a monument to the Beatles but had in 1973 also previously

[22] For further information on fandom, community and cultural capital, see c.f., Frith 2004; Bennett 2000; Straw 1991; Cavicchi 1998.

voted to close the Cavern Club, the Liverpool venue most prominently associated with the Beatles and Merseybeat.

Thus, it was not city leaders but rather Beatle storytellers who first identified, cultivated and renegotiated the value of 'the Beatles' in a local context. As Cohen (2007) has argued, early Beatle entrepreneurs realised that in order to fully actualise the commercial potential of a local Beatle link, they would need to attract an audience beyond the local. While there was little in the way of actual Beatle storytelling enterprise in Merseyside in the 1970s – only a 1976 Beatles convention in Southport and a 1978 'Beatles Christmas Party' – critically, these events were primarily targeted to audiences of Beatles fans and *not* to local residents. Accordingly, by drawing a national, if not an international visitor base to the city, these very first Beatle-related celebrations formed the basis of what would become in the following decade a most significant and publicised strand of Liverpool's redevelopment efforts: Beatles tourism.

In summary, in the period 1970-1980, I have evidenced five distinct forms of commercialised Beatle storytelling that have emerged through the performance of a multi-levelled discourse analysis. First, by looking at Beatle storytelling in relation to the (in)actions of the Beatles, EMI and ATV, I have shown that canny storytellers identified and then exploited the still-significant demand for Beatle 'product,' redefining and culturally renegotiating the value of 'the Beatles' through the sales of bootleg recordings and various items of Beatles ephemera, soon to be called 'collectables.' Second, in a period when the Beatles and their stakeholders were not interested in revisiting the group's history and music, another collective of storytellers understood its latent potential, taking the Beatles' story to the stage and to the screen, offering fans and the public at large a new narrative and musical perspective. In examining the role of Beatle storytelling against the activities of the media, a third commercialised strand emerged: that of tell-all Beatle books. Beyond a rudimentary attempt to 'cash in' (Baxter 2003: 137) on a connection to the Beatles, auto/biographies by people like Cynthia Lennon, Richard DiLello and Allan Williams were amongst the first books to humanise the Beatles, providing first-hand and insider accounts of the group's lives and career. These texts functioned not only in their own right as cultural forms, but also and critically as a way of renegotiating contemporary understanding of the Beatles. Where the Beatles were once portrayed as lovable Moptops, these texts (and appropriations of these texts in secondary mediated forms)

established the precedent for the circulation and dissemination of Regularly Recurring Narratives about the Beatles.

Lastly, in relation to wider socio-political developments, it becomes clear locality and fan identity played substantial roles in the commercialisation of Beatle storytelling. Self-identifying as a Beatle fan in the 1970s redefined the value of 'the Beatles,' with extant fan practices being supplemented by new material and symbolic acts of fandom. Conventions and Beatle newsletters enabled Beatle fans to form (sub-)cultural communities away from popular music and culture in general, using stories about the group as a metaphor, celebrating, if not also reifying, beliefs and ideals which had since been supplanted by new genres and paradigms. The idea of a Beatles fan community becomes especially important in looking at the commercialisation of Beatle storytelling in relation to locality. In Liverpool in particular, where local politicians and many area residents expressed resentment towards the Beatles for 'abandoning' the city, it was instead Beatle storytellers, people like Allan Williams and former Cavern compere Bob Wooler who initially uncovered the powerful potential link between Beatle fans looking for a symbolic and historical understanding of the group and having access to places and artefacts significant in the Beatles' history. This discovery will, in years to come, form the core of the region's redevelopment initiatives.

Storytelling Period 2: 1980-1995

Cultural disruption: John Lennon's murder

Through the early 1970s, popular interest in the Beatles remained high. However, following the Beatles' failure to collectively acknowledge or seriously consider a $100 million offer to play a single live show, public optimism, if not also enthusiasm, for a reunion began to wane. By 1980, Paul McCartney had attained tremendous worldwide success with Wings, with only occasional and glancing nods to the music of the Beatles, now only a portion of his overall songwriting and performance repertoire. George Harrison and Ringo Starr also sustained successful solo careers and had additionally expanded into other creative ventures, with Harrison founding the production company Handmade Films and Starr booking regular acting work in film, television and commercial adverts. Lennon, following the birth of his son, Sean, had in 1975 had retired from full-time musical work to become a self-described 'house husband' (c.f. Coleman 1992).

With the expiration of the Beatles' contract in 1976, EMI seemed content to issue low-quality, poorly conceived reissues and repackages, demonstrating little awareness of any long-term value of the Beatles' material, beyond that of back-catalogue sales. Similarly, in this period ATV were still accommodating Apple's request to not exploit the Lennon-McCartney publishing catalogue. As a result, by 1980, while the world had certainly not forgotten about the Beatles, it had, undeniably, moved on. Accordingly, the news of John Lennon's murder on 8 December 1980 brought the Beatles instantly, unexpectedly and violently back to the centre of global discourse. Lennon's murder functioned as a cultural disruption on a number of levels far exceeding the scope of this thesis. As it relates to Beatle storytelling specifically, with Lennon's death, the story of the Beatles moved from present to past tense, with any vestigial hope for the group's reformation now lost. Public outpourings of grief were evidenced around the world: in Liverpool, an estimated 30,000 mourners gathered at St. George's Hall singing Lennon's 'Give Peace A Chance.' In Toronto, a crowd of 35,000 held a candlelight vigil for Lennon; and in New York City's Central Park, at a ceremony organised by Yoko Ono, an estimated 100,000 participated in a minute of silence. Emerging from this sense of collective loss (Elliott 1998) was a wave of (renewed) interest in the Beatles, in which storytelling played a central role.

On its face, Lennon's murder and with it the back-story of the Beatles was a news event. As noted in the Introduction to the thesis my own interest in the Beatles grew in response to the ceaseless media coverage of Lennon and his former group. In this way, storytelling was a primary mode of communication, repositioning current events into a wider cultural and historical framework. More substantially however, as I will show, for fans, storytelling also functioned as a kind of mourning ritual and/or catharsis. In this period, a number of 'ordinary' fans would publish memoirs of how Lennon and the Beatles had lasting influence on their lives (c.f. Schaumburg 1978; Shultz 2004; Mitchell and Munn 1999). More, visitors numbering in the thousands soon began to flock to places of significance to the Beatles, in a kind of quasi-pilgrimage (c.f. Cohen 2007; Connell and Gibson 2003; Kruse 2005). As discussed in Chapter 3, on fans' arrival to places like Liverpool, London and New York, storytellers would create for them a narrative link between the 'imagined' world of the Beatles and the physical world before them (Kruse 2005; Baynham 2003). For cities like Liverpool and Hamburg, initially resistant to the idea of associating too

closely with the Beatles, Lennon's death undeniably effected a change in local views of the group, as memorials, exhibitions, commemorations and celebrations of Lennon and the Beatles began to spring up around the world.

Beyond its immediate role in fandom, mourning and pilgrimage, storytelling also signalled a sea-change in the long-term perceptions of the group. Where prior to the 8th of December popular debate had centred around *if* the Beatles would have any lasting impact on music and culture, from this point forward their 'legacy' (Badman 2001: 295) had become self-evident. Narrative emphasis turned both introspective and retrospective. Where, for instance, just a few years previously the demand for Beatle memorabilia was, at best, considered a specialist niche, Lennon collectables with a worthy provenance were now auctioned at Sotheby's for five-figure bids (Badman 2001). The Beatles also became an increasingly ubiquitous semiotic narrative, a popular metonym for the 1960s, for peace, hope and love, for musical and creative inspiration and aspiration in wider popular culture.

As a cultural disruption in the flow of storytelling commercialisation, Lennon's assassination functioned as a fulcrum, leveraging the cultural authority of some Beatle storytellers with the political authority of others. Phrased more directly, in the 1970s Beatle storytelling was a comparatively limited and comparatively unchallenged demesne, primarily dominated by people with tenuous though legitimate links to the group. Following Lennon's assassination, the demand for Beatle stories outstripped supply, causing both significant market irruption and an intensification in Beatle storytelling activity. For (aspirant) storytellers, market success was no longer only contingent on having *a* Beatle story to tell, but having the *right* story to tell, to the right audience.

Where previously storytellers only had to negotiate with extra-market forces, in this period they had to additionally contend with intra-market competitors. In order to sustain themselves in this more hostile market environment, evidence suggests storytellers move from producing a series of independent, ad-hoc events to forming more regularised and interconnected ventures, expanding into local business and industry. I show that in this way, the legitimation of the Beatles through storytelling necessarily sustains the legitimation of Beatle storytelling itself.

Beatle Storytellers and Beatle stakeholders

In the hours immediately following news of Lennon's murder, reporters and fans converged outside the London recording studio where Paul McCartney had been working. Clearly uneasy, McCartney's brief and spontaneous reaction was punctuated by a phrase which would in itself become part of the Regularly Recurring Narrative of Lennon's death: 'It's a drag, innit?' (BBC-TV 09 December 1980). While the bombastic hostilities between Lennon and McCartney had dissipated years earlier, the former bandmates still had neither seen nor spoken to each other since 1976 (Badman 2001). Whatever his personal feelings, McCartney as well as Harrison and other pop musicians publicly expressed sentiment for the slain Lennon through song lyrics: George Harrison's 'All Those Years Ago' (1981) and 'When We Was Fab' (1988), McCartney's 'Here Today' (1982); and Elton John's 'Empty Garden' (1982) are all examples of early lyrical tributes to Lennon.

Professionally, Lennon's murder also had a number of implications for the surviving three Beatles. Security concerns kept both Starr and McCartney, who had been regularly performing live with Wings, from undertaking full-scale international tours until 1989. Harrison, most affected by Lennon's death, would never again tour either the US or UK, with his last lives dates being a 17-day tour of Japan with Eric Clapton, in December of 1991. In terms of recording, while each former Beatle enjoyed substantial solo successes following Lennon's death, the 1980s also brought, for the first time, significant failure as fans and the media had rediscovered the music of the Beatles, leaving new solo material to founder. For instance, George Harrison's 1982 album *Gone Troppo* peaked at only number 53 in the US charts. Similarly, in December, 1981, despite a major promotional push, HMV's flagship London shop reported only 30 copies of Ringo Starr's *Stop And Smell the Roses* album had sold in the weeks between its 20 November release and Christmas (Badman 2001). Even McCartney, who had regular chart successes with Wings and in subsequent solo work had his 1984 film-and-album project *Give My Regards To Broad Street*, universally panned by critics (Badman 2001). In this way, McCartney and Harrison and Starr were, as contemporary musical acts, effectively competing against themselves, challenging the Beatles for market share. It was now difficult to remain personally or professionally apart from the Beatle legacy.

When read against this context, what emerges is evidence that the former Beatles both individually and collectively through Apple, sought or were compelled

to renegotiate their understanding of the Beatles through a series of narrative and commercial projects, thus becoming Beatle storytellers for the first time since their breakup. For example, George Harrison was the first of the group to write an autobiography, entitled *I Me Mine*. Originally released in limited edition prior to Lennon's death in 1980, it was re-issued in mass-market paperback in 1981. In this period, Ringo Starr also revisited the Beatles' history, contributing his remembrances of the Beatles to a weekly syndicated US radio programme titled *Ringo's Yellow Submarine* in 1983. By acknowledging their past, the surviving Beatles were able to move forward in their post-Beatles career. Interestingly however, while each Beatle worked in a series of collaborations with other prominent musicians, they would not work with each other again until 1995 and the *Anthology* project.[23]

As discussed above, prior to Lennon's murder EMI had been slow to capitalise on public demand for the music of the Beatles. Following his death, evidence shows the label is somewhat more proactive in harnessing renewed worldwide interest in their most prominent act. For instance, on 8 December 1981, EMI UK announced that in the year following Lennon's death, 75 million Beatles records were sold worldwide (Badman 2001). Although Lennon's murder served as catalyst, EMI wisely refocused public attention to the more upbeat and nostalgic idea of celebrating the 1980s as the decade of the Beatles' 20th anniversary, re-releasing every Beatles EP and album both individually and in boxed sets (in addition to its ongoing pre-1980 strategy of releasing periodic repackages and greatest hits albums).

Beyond the anniversary commemorations, in the 1980s, EMI, as well as film companies like United Artists, saw another significant wave of renewed interest in the Beatles created through advances in technology. Cable and satellite television, music video, XDR audio tape, digital audio tape (DAT), videotape players and recorders, laser discs and most significantly the compact disc (CD) all brought opportunity for 'new' Beatle product, as fans in the millions eagerly purchased videos of the Beatles and re-purchased the whole of the now digitally re-mastered back catalogue. Thus, this period is significant to the commercialisation of the Beatles because it marks a strategic transition for EMI and Capitol. Prior to Lennon's murder, with the former

[23] In this period, McCartney collaborated with pop musicians like Michael Jackson and Elvis Costello, and Harrison with Jeff Lynne, Tom Petty, Bob Dylan and Roy Orbison as the Travelling Wilburys. In 1989 Ringo formed his 'All-Starr Band' concept, organising regular summer tours with a rotating set of musicians including Joe Walsh, Nils Lofgren, Clarence Clemons, Jim Keltner, Rick Danko, Levon Helm and Billy Preston in early band iterations.

Beatles still under contract, primary emphasis was placed on promoting their solo releases. Following 1980, this notion was upended, with attention re-focussed on promoting the music of the Beatles. It was not until the early 1990s, with the momentum of the CD-boom slowing, did EMI refocus attention for a third time, seeking to exploit all that remained of the Beatles' archive – previously unreleased music.

Like Capitol/EMI, ATV saw a significant increase in revenue following Lennon's death. Royalties not only from the sales of Beatle records, but primarily from the substantial airplay of Beatles music on radio and television saw the company, now in substantial financial trouble, sustained through the mid-decade mark (Southall and Perry 2007). Through a series of hostile takeovers and poor strategic management, the firm once controlled by Sir Lew Grade was now owned by Robert Holmes à Court. Broadly reputed as a corporate raider, Holmes à Court dismantled ATV from its parent company ACC and sold it to Michael Jackson in 1985 for $47.5 million (Southall and Perry 2007: 174).[24] Ironically, in this period McCartney was collaborating with Michael Jackson and actively encouraged Jackson to invest in music publishing. Acting on McCartney's advice, Jackson aggressively pursued ATV, edging out McCartney whom, despite his reservations, had not yet entirely walked away from recent rounds of negotiations with ACC, thereby ending the McCartney-Jackson partnership (Southall and Perry 2007).

Until Jackson's acquisition, ATV had largely kept its moral obligation to the Beatles and Apple, issuing only sporadic approval of use Lennon-McCartney songs, mainly in television advertisements. However, in 1987, Nike approached Jackson with a request to use the Beatles' song 'Revolution' in a new athletic shoe ad campaign. Jackson contacted Yoko Ono and together they approved use of the Lennon-McCartney composition *and* the Beatles recording of the song, for an estimated $250,000, much to McCartney, Harrison and Starr's great displeasure (Southall and Perry 2007: 190).[25] Jackson and Ono's dealings raise the general

[24] Despite having first-refusal rights, Paul McCartney repeatedly rebuked overtures from ATV/ACC to acquire the music publishing company. Southall and Perry (2007), Badman (2001) and Blaney (2008) all indicate it was McCartney's unwillingness to work closely with Yoko Ono, as well as an insistence on acquiring only the Lennon-McCartney library and not the whole of ATV that fuelled his determination not to buy back the Beatles songs.

[25] By granting approval, Ono had acted out of turn. Where Jackson was under no legal obligation to the Beatles or Apple, under the terms of Apple's board of directors, unanimous approval by Ono, McCartney, Harrison and Starr was needed for the licensing of any Beatles recordings. Subsequently Apple sued Capitol (who licensed the recording on Ono's command) and Nike for $15 million

question of the role of branding in the marketing of popular music. In regard to storytelling and the commercialisation of the Beatles specifically, the Nike advert met with so much public outcry, any anticipated publicity for Jackson, Ono or Nike was negated. Thus, for Beatle storytellers, with John Lennon's assassination came a number of new challenges and new opportunities.

Like EMI, bootlegging and the illegitimate recording industry was directly impacted by new technologies. In one regard, digital recording enabled bootleggers to efficiently and inexpensively reproduce and distribute virtually lossless, high-quality product. At the same time however, with EMI's CD release of the Beatles' back catalogue, market interest was, for the moment, turned back towards acquiring the group's legitimate body of work. More critically, with Lennon's murder came a renewed sense of 'specialness' for the Beatles and their music. Coupled with a 1989 Capitol Records 'assault' (Badman 2001: 421) on bootleg Beatle recordings, demand for illegitimately released music waned. Similarly, for entrepreneurs trading in Beatle collectables, a threat to current conditions arose through Apple's dealings with a US merchandiser, Determined Productions, who sought to bring officially licensed products to the American market. Thus, for Beatle storytellers in this period, emphasis shifted from the production of low-end unlicensed merchandise to trading in high-end fully provenanced items of Beatle 'memorabilia,' with that of Lennon pieces in particular earning unprecedented prices. For instance, in December, 1981, Sotheby's held a 'Rock and Pop' auction where bidders spent a combined £80,000 on Beatles-related products, with one Lennon self-portrait alone fetching £8000 (Badman 2001: 293). Again, it must be emphasised that these kind of commercial activities are not purely financial. It is the narrative, the provenance, the story that drives the value and the value that drives the enterprise.

Storytellers working with Beatle-inspired films and musicals faced a similar situation. With market interest turning back to the Beatles themselves, demand for interpretations of the Beatles' music and history diminished. For instance, in America in 1982, United Artists re-released the Beatles' first film, *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), to cinemas nationwide. Further, as indicated above, with the advent of home recording came re-issues of most of the Beatles' films on video and/or laser disc. However, as with collectables, the market did not simply evaporate but instead

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(Southall and Perry 2007: 190). However, it was a largely a redundant effort as Nike continued to run the advert for over a year whilst litigation was pending (Southall and Perry 2007).

reconfigured itself. Where in the 1970s market demand for Beatle-related musicals and films emphasised new artistic interpretations of the group, in the 1980s, one dominant strand of Beatle film and video to emerge came in the form of 'previously unseen' Beatles performances. One new entrant into this segment of the storytelling market was the 1960s musician Dave Clark. Acquiring the rights to the British pop music television show, *Ready, Steady, Go!*, in this period Clark released a number of videos compilations of rare show performances from high-profile 1960s acts, including the Beatles. These performances, not seen since their original broadcasts, reinforced, if not redefined the Beatles' contributions and influences on popular music and culture in the 1960s.

A new thread of Beatle storytelling emerging in the 1980s is best described as semiotic or secondary storytelling (see Chapter 3). In this period direct use of the Beatles' songs and recordings were met with public disapproval, though allusions to them in other cultural texts were a frequent, effective and successful storytelling strategy. For instance, the filmmaker John Hughes placed both subtle and overt Beatle references in many of his movies, targeted to the teen market. Most notably, his film *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1987) featured the title character dancing on a parade float through downtown Chicago lip-synching to the Beatles' version of 'Twist and Shout.'[26] For first-generation Beatle fans, these kinds of indirect references resonated with both the nostalgic and cultural value they ascribed to the Beatles, particularly after Lennon's death. For younger people who may not have known the Beatles and were not actively seeking out their story, encountering the group in these oblique and mediated forms communicated the centrality of the Beatles to the 1960s and its ideals. The reverence with which these mediated allusions were made further underscored the implicit importance of the group to viewers. Through the 1980s, all of these forms of storytelling renegotiated both the material and cultural value of the Beatles, reacting to the Beatles/EMI/ATV's re-engagement with the group's history. These value negotiations in turn fuelled new forms of entrepreneurial activity which both tapped into renewed popular interest in the Beatles and channelled that interest

[26] Similarly, the 1980s American television programme *The Wonder Years*, a 1960s-inspired comedy-drama used Joe Cocker's rendition of *With A Little Help From My Friends* as its theme song. Also set in the 1960s, American sitcom *Laverne and Shirley* in its opening credits showed the two lead characters rushing from their basement flat to their factory jobs. Halfway out the door, the two women run back in to kiss life-sized cardboard cut-outs of the Beatles fixed to the wall.

into more commercial forms. The changing relationship between Beatle storytellers and the media follows next.

Beatle storytellers and Media

Within moments of the event, media coverage of Lennon's murder was both comprehensive and relentless. Beyond current-events articles, newspapers around the world printed commemorative issues in tribute to the slain musician. Radio stations played 24 hours of Beatles music. Lennon's death was covered regularly, with only the March, 1981 assassination attempt on US President Ronald Reagan eventually bumping it from daily evening news broadcasts. Once the initial wave of current-events reportage had passed, the media still played a central role in reframing public perception of the Beatles. As addressed above, prior to 1980, media in the UK and US had already begun to produce a series of retrospectives on the Beatles. Accordingly, following Lennon's murder, with a framework already in place, the number and scope of these retrospectives greatly intensified. For instance, amongst the first post-1980 Lennon features was BBC Radio One's multi-part series entitled *The Lennon Tapes*. The show largely centres on one of Lennon's last interviews, conducted by Andy Peebles on 6 December 1980 (Badman 2001). Countless, similarly themed media programmes followed with regularity.[27] In this way, the renegotiation of the value of the Beatles through media coverage catalyses an explosion of new storytelling opportunities. Where prior to Lennon's assassination, storytelling activity was limited to occasional retrospectives, following his murder, there is considerable general interest in and demand for further iterations of the group.

Following the 'tell-all' template established by people like Williams, DiLello and Cynthia Lennon, this period was marked by an increasing number of salacious biographies of the Beatles. For instance, Peter Brown, a former personal assistant to Brian Epstein and the Beatles co-authored *The Love You Make* (1983), subtitled *An Insider's Story of the Beatles*. Julia Baird, John's half-sister co-wrote the first of her family accounts in 1988 and May Pang, who had an 18-month affair with Lennon in the 1970s, published *Loving John* in 1983. The market for stories about Lennon and

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[27] For instance, in September 1981, American radio syndicators Westwood One created *John Lennon: Rock and Roll Never Forgets*. In the UK, in December, 1981, BBC Radio One and Two simultaneously broadcast a show titled *The Beatles At the Beeb*; BBC1 aired a Beatles Pop Quiz in December, 1982; and in January 1993 the BBC transmitted a documentary titled *Beatlemania* which examined past and current Beatle fans (Badman 2001).

the Beatles became so strong even people with only very tenuous connections to were able to successfully publish works about the group, including Carol Bedford a former 'Apple Scruff' [*Waiting for the Beatles* (1984)] and John Green, Yoko Ono and John Lennon's tarot-card reader [*Dakota Days* (1984)].

Additionally, there was also an increasing convergence between media and Beatle storytellers in the 1980s. This union produced a growing number of high-profile accounts of the group written by people with significant media experience but with little personal affiliation with the group. For example, though critically acclaimed, Philip Norman's book *Shout! The Beatles in their Generation* (1981/2004) was publicly dismissed by Paul McCartney, who in an interview in March, 1981 with *The Times*, took numerous exceptions to allegations made by Norman, and later denounced the whole of the work as 'shite' (in Badman 2001: 282). It is likely no other single text in this period received more public notoriety than Albert Goldman's *The Lives of John Lennon* in 1988. Perhaps in anticipation of a public outcry, the author added a five-page postscript to his controversial 719-page tome, in which he catalogued the names of all the people, including all surviving members of Lennon's family, that were interviewed over the 7-year period of research for his book (1988). While all the publicity, negative or otherwise, spurred sales, the book was still roundly slated by critics. For his part, Paul McCartney publicly called for its boycott and rock band U2 condemned Goldman and the book in their 1988 song 'God Part II.'[28]

Content aside, the sheer volume of the number of texts in production about Lennon and the Beatles in the 1980s and early 1990s again makes manifest the increasing opportunities for Beatle storytellers in this period. The murder of John Lennon sparked a true media frenzy for information about the Beatles. Solemn and sombre tributes soon made way to more celebratory commemorations and also more 'tell-all,' salacious biographies of the group, produced by a substantially bigger field of storytellers and writers. The demand for Beatle stories drove the market from strength to strength, marking a period of increased competition amongst and between established storytellers – like Allan Williams and Sam Leach – and relative newcomers and 'outsiders' from the media – journalists like Philip Norman and Albert Goldman. As a series of cultural renegotiations, this strand of storytelling

[28] See full lyrics in Appendix B.

about the Beatles valued quantity over quality. As an entrepreneurial opportunity, storytelling was no longer solely reliant on the exploitation of exclusivity – people with no tangible Beatle connections still sustained success in the post-assassination storytelling marketplace. In this way, Beatle storytelling moves from the margins of popular music and society into the mainstream, and with it, making 'the Beatles' a substantive potential business and industry.

Beatle storytellers and wider developments

As discussed above, prior to 1980, Beatle storytelling in part evolved in response to ongoing political, economic and socio-cultural upheaval. Beatle fandom became a kind of symbolic 'badge' of self-identity and affiliation in the face of change, expressed through community-building and local enterprise activity. Following Lennon's death, however, stories of the Beatles begin to travel beyond Beatle-specific contexts into wider cultural and popular narratives. In this way, Beatle storytelling becomes a central and critical mode to translating and making meaningful connections between the Beatles as a 1960s popular music group and 'the Beatles,' as a cultural myth with implicit value and relevance for people, places and events far removed from the Beatles themselves. Here I will discuss three significant storytelling forms: the Beatles in art exhibitions and museum displays; the Beatles as represented in higher education; and Beatle fan conventions.

One way the story of the Beatles is extended into wider popular culture in this period is through a number of museum and art gallery exhibitions. For instance, in London, in May, 1983 an exhibition titled *The Art of the Beatles*, displayed representations of the Beatles in various media: cartoons, paintings, photos, album covers, lithographs and sculpture (Badman 2001: 336). Lithographs created by John Lennon and Yoko Ono are displayed in a Liverpool exhibition in 1985. And in 1988, the Business Design Centre in Islington launched a show called *Imagine*, featuring original artwork by John Lennon. Besides temporary showings, the Beatles were now also featured in permanent displays in the British Museum and in venues specifically dedicated to the Beatles as a cultural form, including Beatle City in Liverpool and The Beatles Revolution in London. Additionally, in 1988, the Beatles are inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio.

As Leonard (2007: 155) notes, when material artefacts of popular music are displayed within gallery and museum exhibitions, they tend, 'to be displayed with the

minimum of contextualization. Instead, they [are] left to speak for themselves as autonomous aesthetic objects, thereby conforming to the overall logics of display of the institutions.' In this way, the objects created by and of the Beatles become divorced from narratives of the Beatles themselves and re-deployed in new contexts relating not only to the 'high' culture of museums and galleries in general but also in specific relation to its local environment. That there is, for example, a display of Beatles lyrics in the British Museum, which also houses a copy of the Magna Carta in close proximity, generates an entirely new plane of Beatle narratives, expressing both the overt and implicit value of the Beatles to British and popular culture.

Similarly, in the period following Lennon's assassination, the Beatles begin to appear more prominently in critical and educational activities. For instance, a number of various scholarships in the name of John Lennon are created: the BMI John Lennon Scholarship for Songwriting; the University of Surrey's 1982 John Lennon Scholarship for the study of recording techniques (Badman 2001), and the EMI Sound Foundation Scholarship which benefits music students of the University of Liverpool. Beyond these bursaries, as indicated in the Literature Review, the Beatles also become an increasingly popular subject of scholarly study in the 1980s, with storytellers like Walter Shenson (film producer), Richard Lester (film director) and George Martin delivering a variety of keynote talks to specialist audiences (Badman 2001). Most significantly, however, in 1992, Paul McCartney became the primary patron for the Liverpool Institute for the Performing Arts (LIPA), to be sited in the buildings which once housed the Liverpool Institute for Boys and the Liverpool Art College. Where there was no intention or expectation that the school would, beyond its location, have any Beatle connection, the inference to the public was made plain. I have, for example, kept a 1993 clipping of a US newspaper story about LIPA which had the headline 'Go To Beatle U' and actively encouraged application by both university-aged students and older Beatle fans. In this regard, the presence of the Beatles in academia takes on a life of its own, apart from the Beatles themselves, culminating in the reification and signification of the Beatles as 'worthy' subjects of study within broad academic discourse in disciplines like musicology, sociology and cultural studies[29].

[29] Further to this argument, in March, 2009, Liverpool Hope University announced the launch of an MA degree programme called The Beatles, Popular Music and Society. See Appendix A for full details.

This general notion is reflected in a more populist context through the ongoing and increasing popularity of Beatle fan conventions and fanzines. Where the first Beatle festivals were organised with the consent and encouragement of the Beatles and various stakeholders, as the number of events expanded, the Beatles and Apple became less closely involved in their production. As a result, storytellers not directly affiliated with the Beatles became primary narrators and authenticators of Beatle history at these gatherings. For instance, on 26 August, the 1984 Beatles Convention in Liverpool featured as its guest speakers Mike McCartney (brother of Paul), author Ray Coleman and Tony Barrow (the Beatles former press officer) (Badman 2001). Through prepared commentary and through question-and-answer sessions with convention attendees, these and other Beatle storytellers began to establish a narrative parameter around a particular strand of Beatle 'expertise,' which would eventually crystallise as Regularly Recurring Narratives. Additionally, Beatle storytellers would often travel a similar 'circuit' of Beatle events around the world, leading to the development of the kinds of storytelling networks and affiliations discussed in Chapter 3.

Beyond this narrative thread, the regularising of storytelling also provided for the beginnings of a fixed, physical Beatle storytelling infrastructure in places like London, New York and especially Liverpool. While I do not wish to conflate this argument with discussion of popular music and tourism (c.f. Cohen 2007; Connell and Gibson 2003), what I do wish to emphasise is the notion that Beatle storytelling was not only a significant narrative and literal form, but also the foundation for a series of local business and industry enterprises, including in Liverpool: Cavern City Tours, Beatle City and the Beatle Story museums and the new Cavern Club; in London: the Beatles Experience museum; and in New York, Strawberry Fields. Particularly in the period after Lennon's death, for fans and tourists, visits to these sites often functioned as Beatle 'pilgrimages' where the importance of storytelling transcended a purely narrative form and of necessity commingled with a sense of reverence and spirituality derived from journeys to 'imagined' places like Strawberry Field, Penny Lane and Abbey Road (c.f. Kruse 2005; Connell and Gibson 2003; Cohen 2007). For Beatle storytellers, understanding and successfully translating this motivation afforded new opportunities to exploit and/or create new Beatle connections. Places like the Jacaranda coffee bar (now a pub), Ye Cracke, the Mathew Street Beatles Shop, the (recently re-opened) Cavern Club and the Beatle City museum all gave fans and

visitors interested in the Beatles a tangible, physical link to the group. For the city of Liverpool which was at the time struggling to emerge from a series of economic, political and socio-cultural problems, these enterprises became central to redevelopment efforts. In this way, even though there still remained a substantial level of resentment towards the Beatles in the city, the income Beatle tourism brought to the city created an undeniable means of further regeneration.

Thus, in the period following John Lennon's assassination, Beatle storytelling underwent a significant market realignment. Where prior to the events of 1980, the Beatles were drifting to the margins of popular music and culture, following the murder, they were again at the centre of a global discourse. For extant Beatle storytellers, there was first a necessary re-negotiation of the value of the Beatles for a far bigger, more generalist audience. Additionally, however, early Beatle storytellers also had to contend with an exponentially expansive pool of new Beatle experts and authors, all challenging for narrative, cultural and economic dominance. New technologies also brought change to Beatle storytelling, with videotape and the CD impacting the ways in which stories of the group were being consumed. Perhaps most significantly, however, the Beatle storytelling market also began to find symbolic value in the Beatles following John Lennon's death, with metonymic allusions and references to the group becoming commonplace in contemporary popular culture texts.

This symbolic value of the Beatles is further made manifest through the myriad number of wider and 'high' culture contexts in which narratives of the Beatles now appear. Through art exhibitions, conferences and academic study, that the Beatles are significant contributors to popular history and culture is now self-evident – it is instead the variety and scope of their contributions which are debated. Ultimately then, the 1980s and early 1990s bring with them a number of challenges but also a number of opportunities for Beatle storytellers. The vastly expanded marketplace enables many new storytellers to tell their tales; yet it also creates substantial rivalry and competition, where success is reliant on establishing and maintaining both a unique Beatle story and an ability to translate that story into a successful commercial enterprise.

Storytelling Period 3: 1995-2008

Cultural disruption: *Anthology*

By the early 1990s, while the Beatles had, undeniably, become widely recognised as musical innovators and cultural icons (c.f. Womack and Davis 2006; Inglis 2000), the collective and holistic international attention accorded them a decade earlier had, again, begun to fade. Where fans could travel to Liverpool and London and experience a progressively more fixed circuit of Beatle sites, as well as celebrate the group in myriad fan-fests, conventions and newsletters around the world, the Beatles in a more general popular context had transitioned to revered elder statesmen, cherished historical figures but ones with little relevance to contemporary music and culture. Thus, the release of the *Anthology* project functioned as a cultural disruption on a number of levels.

First, as Decker (2006) notes, *Anthology*'s release was perfectly timed. In the US, the 1992 election of President Bill Clinton brought a renewed sense of energy and optimism to that country, only just beginning to emerge from an economic recession. Clinton's election underscored the increasing political, economic and cultural hegemony of the so-called 'baby boom' generation via, 'an insistence that the social production of the 1960s dwarfed those of subsequent generations' (Decker 2006: 186). Quoting Gillespie, Decker continues that the baby boomers' '"supposed generational exceptionalism" constitutes an "attempt by aging boomers to colonize the youth of their children (and grandchildren!), to make all who come after them replicate the boomers' own sensibilities, tastes, and experience"' (in Decker 2006: 186-198). As a result, the original generation of Beatle fans had both the money and the desire to revisit the idealism and experiences of their youth, in which the Beatles figured prominently.

In the UK, *Anthology*'s arrival was even more prescient. Following the signing and implementation of the Maastricht Treaty, the European Union was established in 1993, throwing into relief the question of the endurance of a distinct British identity in the face of increasingly complex multinational interactions (c.f. Cohen, R. 1995; Jacobson 1997). Accordingly, the mid-1990s saw a nostalgic revisiting of Britain's 'golden age' of the 1960s (Du Noyer 2002), as evidenced by the popularity of television shows like *Heartbeat* and films like *Small Faces* (1996). In popular music, the era would come to be labelled with the eponym 'Cool Britannia,' where acts like Inspiral Carpets, Blur and most notably Oasis tapped into the sounds,

looks and ideals of 1960s Britain as inspiration for their own 1990s recordings. In this way, the Beatles were twice-over introduced to a new generation of fans, directly via *Anthology* and indirectly through implicit endorsement from 1990s Britpop bands.

A second, related way the *Anthology* project functioned as a cultural disruption was to bring the Beatles, both as a concept and as a musical act, into the modern era. From the breakup forward, the Beatles were a closed set, bounded by *With the Beatles* (1963) and *Let It Be* (1970). While the 1970s and 1980s brought waves of renewed interest in the group, and, while EMI/Capitol released a variety of re-issues, live material and compilation albums, until *Anthology* there was never any 'new' music by the Beatles to sustain these periods of heightened interest in the group. Accordingly, with the singles 'Free As A Bird' and 'Real Love,' the Beatles were releasing new songs for the first time in 25 years.[30] These songs indicated the Beatles' re-entry into the contemporary popular music marketplace, signifying a substantial change of direction on the part of Harrison, McCartney and Starr, who had for previous decades wished to keep their distance from the group's history.

Lastly, and most significantly for Beatle storytelling, *Anthology* signalled the group's formal entry into the storytelling marketplace, potentially and directly challenging the status of the hundreds of pre-existing narratives about the group already in circulation. With the Beatles now poised to actively engage with (and possibly amend) their history, there emerged a possibility that *Anthology* might also call into the question the authenticity and legitimacy of other Beatle storytellers. Thus, these narrators were compelled to find new strategies for survival in the face of direct intervention from the Beatles themselves. More substantially still, *Anthology*, as the official history of the Beatles as told by the Beatles themselves, established a clear authoritative provenance to some of the Beatle narratives which had been circulating for years. Emerging from *Anthology* are a series of direct and tangible interactions between Beatle storytelling and Beatle storytelling enterprises, as validated through a mention in *Anthology*. With a legitimate history of the group finally in place, RRNs of the Beatles grew increasingly fixed and subsequently redeployed and recontextualised within a number of wider narratives of British and popular history and culture. As stories of the Beatles become implicated in an ever-

[30] Both 'Real Love' and 'Free As A Bird' were compositions by Lennon left unfinished at the time of his death. Yoko Ono forwarded the demo recordings to McCartney, Harrison and Starr who completed the music and lyrics and then worked with producer Jeff Lynne to record the two tracks.

increasing number of commercial and cultural enterprises, the line between Beatle stakeholder and non-stakeholder becomes progressively blurred. Not only do storyteller-entrepreneurs have a growing concern in ensuring Beatle history remains comparatively static, the Beatles themselves have utilised this emergent cultural mythology as a springboard to an international marketing campaign, leveraging their musical and cultural 'legacy' against the potential for substantial financial gain through the exploitation of Beatle IP and other tangible assets.

Beatle Storytellers and Beatle stakeholders

For McCartney, Harrison and Starr, *Anthology* signalled a full-circle journey. Where immediately following their 1970 breakup the Beatles had tried to distance themselves from the shadow of the group, in the 1980s it became self-evident that any solo success was contingent on a renegotiation of the perceived 'legacy' of the Beatles in relation to their contemporary work. Thus, for the surviving Beatles, *Anthology* is the culmination of experience gained from time spent away from the group, its history and its music. While the implications of *Anthology* as a business and marketing venture will be discussed in Chapter 5, here I consider its function as a narrative-cultural form and its relationship to antecedent storytellers. In the weeks leading up to its television premiere (on 19 November 1995 in the US on ABC; 26 November 1995 on ITV in the UK), the Beatles' first and collective storytelling enterprise promised unprecedented insider access to the group. For instance, in America, in the run up to the first night of the three-night documentary broadcast, ABC-TV aired a promotional advert with the following copy: '*The Beatles Anthology*: The television event of a lifetime. Two new Beatles songs. Words you've never heard before. Footage you've never seen before. How did it feel to change the world?' (in Badman 2001: 544).

For Capitol/EMI and Apple, *Anthology* marked the formal start to a third era in consideration of the Beatles and their valuable back catalogue. By the early 1990s, EMI, with the support of the Beatles and Apple elected to revisit the previously unreleased Beatle recordings housed in the label's archives in London. While the general concept of *Anthology*, as a musical and narrative chronicle of the group's career, had been around since the early 1970s (Badman 2001; Blaney 2008), the execution of the idea only began to take shape once EMI had completed its 20-year Beatles anniversary CD releases. The label progressed the concept of 'new' Beatle

music forward from 1994, in conjunction with its ongoing strategy of producing a regular stream of reissues and compilations. For instance, in September 1999, Apple/EMI re-released *Yellow Submarine*, in 2000 issued the greatest hits compilation *1*, and in 2003 released a 'new' version of the Beatles' last studio album entitled *Let It Be...Naked*.[31] The most recent Apple/EMI release of 'new' Beatle music has been 2006's *Love*, an album of Beatle 'mash-ups' taking various tracks, hooks and samples of multiple Beatle songs and, using a variety of studio techniques, creating a new medley of music. In addition to a new album, *Love* was also a Las Vegas theatrical production co-produced in a joint venture between Apple and Cirque du Soleil.[32]

Similarly, Sony-ATV also saw substantial profit from the *Anthology* project as well as the reissues and compilations. And while overwhelmingly the publishing company kept to its 1970 verbal agreement to restrict the use of Lennon-McCartney songs, following *Anthology's* release there is evidence of a gradual change in direction, which would gather momentum into the next decade. For instance, in 2000, a cover of the Beatles' song 'Help!' was used in UK adverts for the Halifax bank and Philips successfully licensed 'Getting Better' for its 2001 US television campaign. Additionally, the soundtrack to the film *I Am Sam* (2002) consisted of 15 Beatles' cover songs, the first major studio film release since Robert Stigwood's 1978 *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* to do so. Accordingly, the most salient question raised by *Anthology*, as a Beatle narrative, was not what stories it told, but rather, what stories were omitted – and why.

For earlier storytellers, *Anthology* did not render redundant all other Beatle accounts, but did however, raise the issue of the value of 'authorised' and 'unauthorised' story versions. Where once 'unauthorised' brought implications of an illicit tell-all biography like Goldman's *The Lives of John Lennon* (1988), following *Anthology* 'unauthorised' did not necessarily have a wholly negative connotation. Instead, there was an implication that *Anthology* left much of the Beatles' story untold. Accordingly, following on from *Anthology* there was a new flurry of publications emphasising little-known or extremely detailed Beatle subjects, with titles like: *John, Paul, George, Ringo and Me: The Beatles Real Story* (Barrow 2006),

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[31] The 'naked' in the title refers to the removal of the strings and 'angelic' choir added to the final mix of the 1970 album by Phil Spector, originally added without the consent of Paul McCartney (Beatles 2000).

[32] The idea of *Love* emerged from a conversation between George Harrison and his friend, Cirque founder Guy LaLiberté. Harrison died five years before the show's 2006 premiere.

Beatletoons: The Real Story Behind the Cartoon Beatles (Axelrod 1999) and *The Beatles: The Stories Behind The Songs* (Turner 2005). Additionally, for storytellers mentioned in or affiliated with the *Anthology* project, direct association with the Beatles could yield significant commercial and cultural gain. For instance, subsequent to his participation in researching *Anthology*, in 2005 author Mark Lewisohn received a publishing advance to complete a three-volume history of the Beatles, to be researched through 2018 with the first volume due in 2010 (Lewisohn 2008). If *Anthology* had indeed been intended as the final word in Beatle storytelling, it must be considered a failed enterprise. If, however, *Anthology* was the formal entry of the Beatles and Apple into the Beatle storytelling market, it was a master stroke, spurring on unprecedented interest in all aspects of the group's career. In this way, while it had the potential for decimating the Beatle storytelling marketplace, *Anthology* instead posed no real threat.

Beatle storytellers and Media

As a television documentary, *Anthology*'s success, both before and after its broadcast was fuelled in large measure by the direct and indirect participation of the media. In May, 1995, Badman (2001: 530) points to UK press reports proclaiming the 'biggest bidding war in TV history' for rights to the *Anthology* programme. After intense competition between Channel Four (then managed by Sir Lew Grade's nephew, Michael) and ITV, it was ultimately ITV who won the exclusive rights to the UK broadcast, paying Apple an estimated £5 million (Blaney 2008). In the US, from the outset the ABC television network was determined to secure American broadcast rights, bidding approximately $20 million to do so (Blaney 2008). After such tremendous up-front investment both television networks heavily promoted *Anthology* and realised substantial interest from advertisers eager to book sponsorship of the series. In a parallel strand, tapping into the implications of telling an 'unauthorised' version of the Beatles' story, in the weeks following *Anthology*'s broadcast, in November, 1995, Channel 4 produced their own Beatles documentary, *All You Need Is Cash*, which as its focus examined a number of the financial dealings of the Beatles and Apple since the 1960s.

Beyond *Anthology* itself, another way the media also effected a national change in perception about the Beatles in this period was through a reframing of coverage of the group. In this way, the Beatles were no longer only perceived as

'classic rock' icons but also as contemporary peers of stars in the popular music and culture mainstream. Especially notable in this era were purported 'feuds' between the band Oasis and both George Harrison and Paul McCartney in 1997.[33] Similarly, following the news of the death of Linda McCartney in 1998, tabloid newspaper *The Sun* printed a story of the Spice Girls 'going veggie' in a tribute to Paul and Linda (in Badman 2001: 602). A third way media reportage influenced holistic understanding of the Beatles was through the conducting of 'best of' polls and surveys. Strachan (2003b) notes the Beatles, collectively and as solo acts, have topped around 200 music press readers' polls. While certainly not a new phenomenon, what is significant about these surveys in the 1990s was the demographics of the respondent pools. As might be expected, the Beatles consistently continued to top polls in 'classic rock' magazines like *Mojo* and *Record Collector*, targeted to a readership comprised largely of first-generation Beatle fans. Additionally, however, surveys extending beyond a classic rock readership, into the youth market and the non-music mainstream also saw the Beatles appear regularly at the top of the charts. For instance, in 1999, UK bank Lloyds/TSB surveyed its under-24 customer base looking for 'Britain's Greatest Musical Asset.' With 52 per cent of the vote, the Beatles placed in the top spot, significantly bettering second-place finisher Robbie Williams with 13 percent and the fourth-place Spice Girls with just 11 per cent (Badman 2001: 627). In 1998, Channel 4 television broadcast a show entitled *Music for the Millennium*, which presented the results of an HMV/Channel 4 poll which saw *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* as the 'greatest album of all time' (Badman 2001: 586). Similarly, in a poll conducted by HMV, Channel 4 and radio station Classic FM, drawing on a pool of 600,000 respondents, the Beatles were, in November, 1999, voted the 'Best band for a thousand years' (Badman 2001: 640).

For Beatle storytellers then, the primary challenge in the post-*Anthology* period came in finding a means of identifying and exploiting an exclusive aspect of the group's story. Accordingly, in the 1990s, one of the most substantive avenues of Beatle storytelling enterprise came in the form of 'localising' the Beatles. As Cohen (2007: 162) notes, in this period, 'national tourism and heritage organizations began to take more of an interest in popular culture and the Beatles.' While I do not intend storytelling as synonymous with popular music tourism and heritage, storytelling

[33] The idea of an Oasis-Beatles 'feud' mirrors the 1995 feud between Blur and Oasis, popularly referred to as 'the Battle of Britpop'.

about the Beatles is nevertheless sustained significantly through these activities as organisations like the National Trust and English Heritage began to become implicated in the Beatles' story. In 1997, the National Trust acquired the childhood homes of John Lennon and Paul McCartney. In 2000, Lennon's home, Mendips, received an English Heritage blue plaque, an accolade given to buildings with 'significant cultural heritage' (Cohen 2007: 162). As Cohen (2007) and Badman (2001) further note, the plaque on the Lennon house was the first given to any establishment outside the London metropolitan area and also amongst the first attributed to a popular musician[34]. Working with BBC2, in July, 1998, the National Trust produced a documentary entitled *One Foot In The Past: Birthplace of the Beatles*, a show focussing on the history and renovations of Paul's childhood home in Forthlin Road, Liverpool (Badman 2001).

Similarly, Beatle-based attractions and activities were becoming a more fixed part of local tourism, culture and heritage initiatives in Liverpool as well as London. Opening in 1990, the Beatles Story Museum (succeeding the Beatle City attraction in Seel Street) promoted itself not only to Beatles fans but also as part of the city's wider cultural infrastructure, located along the Albert Docks in close proximity to the Tate-Liverpool gallery. Throughout the city, places of significance in the Beatles' history began to receive more prominence. Writers and researchers like Ray O'Brien (2001, 2003) Ron Jones (2000), and Pete, Rory and Roag Best (2002) published works detailing places of local importance in the group's development. Further, local celebration of Beatle events, like the 1997 commemoration of the 40th anniversary of The Day John Met Paul was celebrated in Woolton not only as a Beatle-event, but also as part of local community culture, publicised in local media. In this way media coverage of the Beatles has become a significant link to commercialising the story of the Beatles first as a central part of national history and culture and second as a palpable and tangible part of local history and heritage. The role of Beatle storytelling in wider developments is discussed next.

[34] The London home of Jimi Hendrix received a blue plaque on 14 September 1997.

Beatle storytellers and wider developments

Following *Anthology* it becomes increasingly difficult to differentiate between the various levels of Beatle-based discourse. As indicated above, EMI are by this point working in conjunction with Apple, Apple are in production and distribution deals with media outlets and media outlets are working with local and national cultural and heritage organisations all to cross-promote the Beatles. Below is a table of the types of representative firms and individuals utilising narratives of the Beatles in some form in the period following *Anthology*'s release.

Figure 4.2
Indicative List of Firms/Events Utilising Beatle Narratives, 1995-2009

NAME OF FIRM	BEATLE NARRATIVE	YEAR
Hollywood Walk Of Fame	Beatles star on Hollywood Boulevard, Los Angeles	1998
Eurostar/Apple	Yellow Submarine rail car	1999
Imperial War Museum, London	Exhibition *From The Bomb To The Beatles*	1999
United States Postal Service	Issued Yellow Submarine stamp as part of 'Celebrate the Century' campaign	1999
Stella McCartney	Chloe fashion line designed around Beatles' song 'She's A Woman'	1999
Peter Blake/Tate Liverpool	Museum exhibition featuring Sgt. Pepper album art	2000
John Lennon museum	Museum dedicated to John Lennon, Saitama, Japan	2000
Liverpool John Lennon airport	Renaming of the Speke airport	2002
National Trust	Tours of Mendips and 20 Forthlin Road houses	2003
Liverpool Culture Company	Beatles as central in Liverpool's cultural heritage	2003-2008
Abbey Road Studios	Abbey Road Film Festival	2005
Royal Mail	Issued Beatle postage stamps	2007
Yoko Ono/Imagine Peace Tower	Visual display commemorating John Lennon, Reykjavik, Iceland	2007
Chelsea Flower Show	Floral George Harrison tribute	2008
Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool	Beatles Day in Liverpool (celebration 44th anniversary of the group's Liverpool homecoming)	2008
Cavern City Tours	A Hard Day's Night hotel, Liverpool	2008
BBC/Liverpool Culture Company	Liverpool Nativity play featuring Beatles music amongst other Liverpool popular music	2008
World Museum, Liverpool	*The Beat Goes On* exhibition of Liverpool popular music	2008
Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal	Exhibition commemorating Yoko Ono & John Lennon's 1969 Montreal Bed-In	2009

While not intended as a comprehensive list, my aim instead is to simply underscore the number of places around the world and the variety of firms which have in some

way utilised the power of Beatle storytelling. Aside from the ongoing and significant number of Beatle storytellers drawing on the group's history, the story of the Beatles has also extended far beyond the parameters of the Beatles themselves or of popular music, to become implicated in wider narratives of heritage and culture both in the UK and around the world.

As the outcome of value negotiation, contemporary emphasis in Beatle storytelling has not been on intensification of narrative content but rather on its consolidation. In this way, the Beatles become not only generally metonymic but also specifically symbolic in the organisational narratives of the firms which adapt them. More directly, as the number of firms utilising the Beatles as part of their own intended organisational outcomes, the more reliant they are on ensuring the qualities attributed to the Beatles via narrativising remains constant. The Liverpool Culture Company, for example, by utilising the Beatles so prominently in its bid to see the city designated 2008 European Capital of Culture would have suffered significant losses in both economic and cultural capital should the Beatles have lost their prominence of place in popular culture and national history.

As the basis of storytelling enterprises, successful commercialisation of the Beatles is today reliant on intertextuality and cross-collateralisation in equal measure. By this idea I mean that Beatle storytelling is, directly, no longer about the Beatles exclusively. Their story can be and is found in iterations around the world, even in places with no overt connection to the group. In this way, the survival of these enterprises is fundamentally reliant on the survival of the Beatles' story itself. Thus, where Beatle storytellers were once competitors there is now an increasing sense of shared benefit in collaboration. For instance, on the official tourism website for the Liverpool City Region, there is a page entitled 'Music and the Beatles' that states:

> Since The Beatles' day, Liverpool has had to balance honouring its world-conquering sons with nurturing new talent, and on reflection it hasn't done a bad job, especially given the mind-altering sums that are always quoted by musical historians when trying to express in figures the impact of the Beatles (Visitliverpool.com 2008).

The website then provides links to various Beatle attractions in the city, a combination of private and public ventures. In this way, the individual Beatle attractions work to an economy of scale by working together to produce an integrated Beatles infrastructure. Similarly, the city of Liverpool no longer works in competition with (or, indeed in opposition to) many local Beatle storytellers and thus derives a benefit

from drawing in Beatle fans who would have little interest in coming to the city otherwise.

The question raised by the formation of this kind of narrative and entrepreneurial partnering is the issue of the future of Beatle storytelling. The intention behind the extended multi-level discourse analysis in this section of the chapter has chiefly been to demonstrate the idea that Beatle storytelling as a commercial enterprise did not organically evolve of its own accord but rather in response to a series of cultural upheavals. Further, I wished to underscore the notion that storytelling is not only a narrative or economic function, but something better understood as an ongoing series of value negotiations and entrepreneurial activities which have not progressed in a linear way but instead in response to changing fads and fashions (Hirsch 1972). Lastly, I have explored the idea that Beatle storytelling calls into relief the emerging and disparate ways stories about the Beatles have been appropriated into wider organisational narratives like those of English Heritage and the City of Liverpool's Capital of Culture events.

Part 3 – Discussion

As evidenced by the above Beatle storytelling genealogy, I have argued that storytelling as a commercialised process is best understood as a series of ongoing renegotiations of value and entrepreneurial activity. By examining the evolution of Beatle storytelling both chronologically and in respect of wider musical, cultural and socio-political upheaval it becomes clear the Regularly Recurring Narratives which have formed and remained relevant to popular culture since 1970 are the ones which do not alter their narrative content, but instead their cultural context to more sympathetically mesh with contemporary thinking and trends. In this final section of the chapter I wish to follow this notion a step further and consider the theoretical implications of this idea. That is to say, now that I have evidenced how storytelling about the Beatles has emerged as a commercialised process, I wish to consider *why* it has done so. Thus, I make the assertion here that storytelling can be understood as commercially valuable in three distinct but interrelated forms: as a cultural object; as a symbolic good; and as something Holt (2004) terms a 'co-author' of the Beatle brand.

As a cultural object, I mean to say that while on its face storytelling, as a narrative, sense-making, reflexive and (auto)biographical activity, may be an innately

personal and creative enterprise, the end result of that creativity – a book, a DVD documentary, a guided tour – is also subject to the mechanisms of cultural production and industrial logics (c.f. Finnegan 1998; Hesmondhalgh 2002). For instance, while the words, ideas and recollections of a Beatle book may be those of the author, the physical book, as an object, is subject to the processes of the publishing industry: commissioning, editing, proofreading, graphic design, printing, distribution, sales and so forth (c.f. Hesmondhalgh 2002; Caves 2000). In this regard, storytelling produces a most direct commercial value: a tangible good or service story-listeners consume. This sentiment is not at all intended to diminish the role of storytelling in the commercialisation of the Beatles. Cohen (2005: 79), for example, notes Beatles tourism brought an estimated £20 million to the city of Liverpool's local economy in 2002. More, these cultural objects are both portable and transportable, bringing the story of the Beatles into new physical and cultural environments where perhaps the Beatles are not commonly known. Lastly, these products over time become artefacts, corporeal evidence of ideas, beliefs, events of significance to a culture in a given moment.

However, a problem in conceiving of storytelling's commercial value as something determined purely within industrial parameters, as relevant only in relation to the manufacture, distribution and sale of tangible goods and services is that it ascribes undue significance to producer-side activities. Consumer-side behaviour is equally implicated in generating and spurring forward continually revised notions of value and commercialisation. Drawing on earlier work from duGay (1997) and McCracken (1998), Ravasi and Rindova (2004: 3) argue that, 'the symbolic value of products arises from their inclusion in patterns of consumption and use, and hence derives from processes through which firms and consumers jointly construct the meaning of products.' More directly, it is not the *creation* of Beatle texts that makes them significant in popular music and culture, but instead how consumers use those texts to make meaningful emotional and cognitive connections of what the Beatles *represent* to them, in everyday life, which cannot be controlled by producers. In this way, storytelling also has substantial commercial value in the creation of the Beatles as a symbolic good.

As argued in Section 2, through storytelling, the Beatles – as both subject and object of narrative form – are continually contextualised and recontextualised, made meaningful and sometimes rendered meaningless in relation to wider patterns of

cultural consumption and ideology. For instance, in America in the 1960s, the Beatles were considered a 'throwaway' music act with no chance of lasting fame with even the group themselves demonstrating little appreciation for the possibility of any long-term success, as evidenced in a 1964 press conference in Detroit:

> Q: "If you had a son, maybe some of you do..."
> JOHN: "I have, I have."
> PAUL: "He's got one."
> JOHN: "I've got one like that."
> Q: "...would you like him to grow up to be a Beatle?"
> JOHN: "No. What's the point. It'll be all outdated when he grows up."
> Q: "How long do you think it'll last?"
> JOHN: "I haven't a clue."
> PAUL: "It probably won't last THAT long though, will it?"
> JOHN: "No."
> GEORGE: "I mean, he's 38 now!"
> (All laugh)
> (in Spangler 2008).

Yet, only two years later, the Beatles had come under global scrutiny and condemnation for an offhand comment made by John Lennon in conversation with *Evening Standard* reporter Maureen Cleave:

> Experience has sown few seeds of doubt in him: not that his mind is closed, but it's closed round whatever he believes at the time. 'Christianity will go,' he said. 'It will vanish and shrink. I needn't argue about that; I'm right and I will be proved right. We're more popular than Jesus now; I don't know which will go first - rock 'n' roll or Christianity. Jesus was all right but his disciples were thick and ordinary. It's them twisting it that ruins it for me.' He is reading extensively about religion.
> (Cleave 1966 in Sawyers 2006: 88).[35]

Thus, while the Beatles remained John, Paul, George and Ringo, their symbolic context had changed: from lovable 'Mop Tops' in 1964 to outspoken dissidents in 1966, accorded current-events coverage in the news media. Following the group's 1970 split, when the Beatles had ceased to be a contemporary act, for fans, storytelling became the primary mode of holistically understanding and regularly re-making the cultural value of the group, post-breakup. In this way, through storytelling the Beatles became a kind of cultural metaphor, or metonym, retrospectively embodying symbolic values of the 1960s, ascribed to them not through

[35] It is worth noting that in 2008 the Vatican officially forgave Lennon's remarks.

any active kind of self-promotion or autobiography, but through second- and third-party value renegotiation and entrepreneurial activity.

Conceiving of the commercial value of Beatle storytelling as the production of both cultural objects and symbolic goods is helpful but still not entirely precise. Understanding commercialisation as a process between story-producer and story-consumer does have merit, but omits consideration of at least two critical issues. First, there is no clear and uniform differentiation between producer and consumer. A Beatle storyteller can logically be a narrative producer in, for example, the writing of an account about the group. But he may also be a consumer – a fan or a collector interested in the Beatles and their music. Attempting to unpick the interrelatedness of these two activities would be both unproductive and unhelpful. Instead, as I have already suggested elsewhere in this chapter, a more complete understanding of the commercial value in Beatle storytelling appears when it is considered as activity not fixed within the bounds of cultural production, but instead in the bi-directional ebb and flow of culture and commerce. Second, while the idea of symbolic value goes some way towards explaining the nested and iterative links between layers of producer and consumer activity, theorisations of symbolic value do little to explicate the interactions between various and competing firms in different fields of (cultural) production and in relation to extra-market discourses. Beatle storytellers, as non-IP stakeholders in the Beatles, Apple or EMI, have definitionally different opportunities, aims and objectives in the commercialisation process. Yet as the above storytelling genealogy demonstrates, despite there being little sustained or formal interaction between 'the Beatles,' as an organisation, and external Beatle storytellers, there is still substantial and correlated commercial value derived from their individual storytelling efforts, in a process Holt (2004) calls 'co-authoring' the cultural brand.

As I have argued, the Beatles' 1970 breakup is a significant cultural disruption in the evolution of Beatle storytelling because it was at the moment of the group's disbanding they ceded control of their own history and 'legacy' for the next 25 or so years. While John, Paul, George and Ringo were in their own ways looking to distance themselves from the group if not also to overtly efface considerations of their long-term cultural and musical influence, other Beatle storytellers assumed control. The creation and (re-)deployment of second- and third-person Beatle narratives has largely produced the storytelling framework evidenced today. Through a number of value renegotiations and cultural disruptions, the cultural mythology of the Beatles

has retained its relevance and importance to popular music and culture because it has, via storytelling, selectively added and deleted qualities and ideas attributed to the Beatles important to successive generations of story-listeners.

Beatle storytellers themselves have an evident and vested self-interest in ensuring their narratives remain prominent. They have entered into storytelling networks and joint partnerships of the types discussed above, as strategic means of staying competitive in the wider marketplace and in the face of ongoing cultural disruption. Collectively, these interactions can be usefully conceived of as an autonomous and commercialised storytelling infrastructure, where storytellers drive their enterprises forward while the Beatles and their stakeholders neither derive direct profit from nor participate in their management or operation. What is less obvious however, is the *indirect* benefit the Beatles themselves receive. As noted above, over the decades the group have offered regular and vocal protestations about storytellers' exploitative practices and unfair narrative characterisations (for instance in response to the publication of Albert Goldman's work *The Lives of John Lennon* [1988]). While this may be true, it is also fair to say the Beatles have not publicly acknowledged the ways in which they have profited from external storytelling enterprises, further extending the narrative belief they are somehow apart from, or even disinterested in self-promotion or economic gain.

Phrased more directly, since 1970 storytelling has functioned as 'pseudo-marketing,' or what Holt (2004) calls a 'co-author' of the Beatle brand. During the time when the group themselves had been unwilling to consider long-term strategic management of their musical and cultural (and perhaps also financial) assets, Beatle storytellers adopted practices that redirected those assets into meaningful socio-cultural contexts from which the Beatles derive appreciable benefit. For instance, beyond the royalties and licensing fees they receive, the Beatles have also seen significant indirect cultural and financial benefit from the myth-generating activities of storytellers. Tours, tribute bands, documentaries, radio and television programmes, and books about the Beatles all serve to *promote* the Beatles to story-listeners, seemingly without any (visible) intervention from Apple. In this way, storytelling has provided the Beatles and Apple with a ready-made market whilst still allowing them to appear to be apart from any secondary commercial and promotional activity.

Thus, with *Anthology*, the Beatles *entered into* the Beatle storytelling market – they did not *create* it. The Beatles were able to harness the extant power of Beatle

narratives, derived from nearly 30 years of storytelling for their own financial and creative gains, built on the foundation of a robust commercialised market created by people and firms with no affiliation with or accountability to the Beatles, Apple, EMI, or Sony-ATV. Yet the success of releases like *Let It Be...Naked* and *Love* evidences the financial and cultural significance of a pre-existing global market not only substantial enough but also knowledgeable enough about the Beatles to want to own these products decades after the group had split up. Further considerations of the successes and failures of the Beatles, Apple and EMI in extending the Beatle brand since *Anthology*'s release is the subject of Chapter 5.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to explore the question of what does it mean to say that storytelling about the Beatles has been commercialised? In the first section of the chapter I sought to define commercialisation in a way that challenges binaries of 'creativity' and 'commerce,' 'producer' and 'consumer.' I conceived of commercialisation of storytelling not as a fixed quantity or process but rather as a series of ongoing value renegotiations, where understanding of the Beatles changes and adapts in response to intra- and extra-market activity. I then argued the outcome of these storytelling value negotiations is best understood not in terms of business or industry but instead as entrepreneurial activity, mobilising the cultural and financial resources at hand into storytelling ventures organised in response to contemporary and changing cultural interest in the Beatles. Lastly, I asserted that commercialisation cannot be fully measured or analysed through snapshot analysis of the Beatle storytelling market in a given moment. Using a method derived from Holt's (2004) brand genealogy, I engaged in a process of multi-tiered discourse analysis intended to understand the commercialisation of Beatle storytelling as read against three layers of wider cultural and economic influence: the actions and activities of the Beatles and their IP stakeholders, the media and wider socio-political developments.

This extended analysis of Beatle storytelling demonstrated that since 1970 there have been three discernible periods of storytelling intensification and consolidation, where developments beyond the extant storytelling market forced cultural renegotiation and reassessment of the Beatles: 1970-1980, following the group's breakup, 1980-1995, following the assassination of John Lennon in 1980 and 1995 to the present, following on from the Beatles' release of the *Anthology* project. I

concluded that Beatle storytelling is best understood as something I termed a commercialised storytelling infrastructure, valuable in three cumulative forms: as a cultural object, as a symbolic good and as a co-author of the Beatle brand. By this idea I meant that while Beatle storytellers derive both cultural and financial benefit from engaging in storytelling practices and processes, the Beatles themselves also have earned indirect but substantial benefit from stories told about them by secondary and tertiary sources.

Ultimately then, as a commercialised quantity, Beatle storytelling has yielded two distinct but interrelated outcomes: a commercialised storytelling infrastructure, where the Beatles are both the subject and object of enterprises increasingly extending beyond the Beatle-centric, becoming part of broader narratives of British history and popular culture; and, since 1995, as the foundation of the Beatles' own marketing and cultural branding strategy, built on and exploiting the pre-existing narrative, symbolic and cultural understanding of the group, created over 25 years by storytellers with no direct stake in the Beatles as an organisation. Chapter 5 examines the conflicts and convergences between various Beatle stakeholder entities in utilising storytelling and the cultural mythology of the Beatles in their attempts to extend the Beatle brand.

Chapter 5 – Advancing the Beatle brand

Introduction

In Chapter 4 I examined the role and significance of storytelling in keeping the Beatles relevant to successive generations of story-listeners, through a practice I termed commercialisation. I argued commercialisation is better understood not as a fixed market quantity but rather as a series of ongoing entrepreneurial activities and cultural renegotiations of meaning, driven and influenced by both intra- and extra-market upheaval. Through an extended multi-tiered discourse analysis, I reached the conclusion that while there is inherent value in conceiving of storytelling as both a cultural object and as a symbolic good, it is most effectively characterised as a 'co-author' (Holt 2004) of the Beatle brand, creating direct and indirect benefit not only for storytellers, but also for the Beatles themselves.

Where in the previous chapter I focussed on the challenges and opportunities commercialisation presents to storytellers independent of the Beatles, here I turn attention to the role and significance of storytelling for the group themselves (and their IP stakeholders). As I have argued elsewhere, beyond its function as a narrative, *Anthology* also worked as an implicit signalling of the Beatles' entry into the storytelling market. Thus, rather than examining *Anthology* in isolation, as the Beatles' formal and fixed narrative record of their lives and career, I will instead be considering it as the point of departure in the Beatles' marketing and branding activities.

Accordingly, in the first part of the chapter, I demonstrate how the Beatles, a popular music act, transform into 'the Beatles,' a cultural brand. Specifically, I will be looking at three particular elements of the Beatle brand: its brand *assets*, a survey of the specific commodities which are saleable, valuable, and/or 'brand-able'; its brand *identity*, the visual signifiers that make 'the Beatles' a unique and memorable quantity; and, critically, the creation of Beatles' brand *story*, the process of channelling the value of the whole of the group's cultural mythology into a discrete series of regularly recurring brand narratives communicating several key themes about the group. My intention is to contribute new research in marketing scholarship by demonstrating how a popular music act, and indeed many cultural texts can be effectively (culturally) branded, challenging extant theories that look at popular music and the entertainment industries not as potential brands in their own right, but merely

as source material for the branding of more traditional and tangible products. In the second section of the chapter I move from the theoretical to the applied, by studying the evolution and progression of the Beatle brand. Through the use of case-study examples, I examine the changing style and content of branding and marketing narratives as presented in materials like packaging text, merchandise advertisements and album notes. Through this kind of discourse analysis I intend to show that Beatle storytelling has become increasingly implicated in the development of the Beatle brand (and its brand narrative), as the Beatles and their IP stakeholders continue to target new and broader groups of consumers.

In the final third of the chapter, I draw on research from Holt (2004), Klein (2002) and Hatch and Rubin (2006) to theorise the connections between cultural branding and Beatle storytelling. I first look at how the Beatles and their stakeholders attempt to ascribe meaning to their products in the minds of (potential) consumers through the use of two distinct branding strategies: 'stitching' and repackaging (Holt 2004). I then turn discussion to the potential benefits and costs of these branding strategies. It is clear that at present the Beatles, Apple, EMI and Sony-ATV are seeking to extend 'the Beatles' into new markets. At the same time, however, by moving so dramatically and comparatively quickly into so many new arenas, they are at risk of achieving the opposite of what they intend, devaluing not only the Beatle brand, but also the Beatles cultural mythology. A first of these risks Holt (2004) terms 'milking the story,' (Holt 2004), where the cultural and political authority of the Beatles is rendered impotent, if not outrightly cliché, through its consistent overuse and overexploitation. The second associated risk is the notion of 'cool-hunting' (c.f. Holt 2004; Klein 2002; Hatch and Rubin 2006), where the Beatles so aggressively seek to attach themselves and their products to new trends and developments they not only lose relevance to their original and core fans/consumers, but also gain only short-term benefit for the effort, as these consumers will, inevitably, move on to the next new fad.

I reach the conclusion that, at least at the time of writing, it is not Beatle storytellers who pose the greatest risk to the group's cultural and political authority, their 'legacy,' but in fact the Beatles themselves. At the same time, however, I also arrive at the conclusion that cultural branding, like commercialisation, is a series of ongoing value renegotiations and entrepreneurial activities, which allows for corrective action in stewardship of the Beatle brand. Thus, even though the Beatles

are at present, taking a substantial and visible turn away from the (perceived) ideals and beliefs that have sustained storytelling about the group since the 1970s, the inherent resiliency and elasticity of storytelling will continue to accommodate ongoing musical, cultural and historical renegotiation of the Beatles, in turn continuing to create opportunities for new understanding of the group.

Part 1 – Defining the Beatle Brand

In 1998, following *Anthology*'s release, George Harrison predicted that soon, 'every Beatles' song is going to end up advertising bras and pork pies' (in Badman 2001: 587). Following on from Harrison's observation I began to think more critically about the idea of branding and specifically the idea of a Beatle brand. Today, the Beatles are not a relic of the past, the irrelevant music and symbol of another generation, but instead a vital and legitimate part of contemporary popular culture – part of a new film soundtrack[36], music on an iPod, a logo on a T-shirt. In that realisation I began to consider how and why the Beatles have become so. Apple's heralding of a 'post-Sixties' Beatles (Apple 2008), reveals it is not through coincidence or happenstance but rather the end-result of deliberate and coordinated management strategies of the Beatles, Apple, EMI and Sony-ATV that have worked to recontextualise the group.

Beatle brand assets

The first aim of this section of the chapter is to clarify and substantiate the idea of a Beatle brand. In Chapter 4, I argued that storytellers who do not have a direct interest in the Beatles' IP had to innovate new entrepreneurial opportunities to create a market for their stories. The Beatles' stakeholders, by contrast, by largely disengaging with the group's history between the years of 1970-1995, had given up 'ownership' of the Beatles' story. As a result, the Beatles were historically, musically and culturally significant, at the centre of an increasingly diverse range of narratives and enterprises, but also at risk of becoming 'artefacts' of the 1960s generation, with little relevance to younger generations. Thus, *Anthology* not only gave the Beatles an opportunity to tell their story to a contemporary global audience, but critically, also

[36] *Across the Universe* (2007) is a Beatles-inspired film set in Liverpool – a love story written around characters and themes based on Beatles' lyrics. The soundtrack to the film is original covers of Beatle songs.

served as an extended advertisement, an 'infomercial,' promoting not just the three double-CD sets, but also the whole of the Beatles' back catalogue. More significantly still, along with the music, video and book there came a range of *Anthology*-themed products and merchandise. In this way, *Anthology* indicates a substantial change in attitude and position for the Beatles and their stakeholders. Where in 1976 the Beatles turned down a $100 million offer in to play a one-time reunion concert, in 1995, Manning estimates the profits derived from *Anthology* itself, revenue from the television licensing rights and the sales of merchandise to have brought the Beatles roughly £100 million (1995: 3).

More than a one-time campaign however, *Anthology* marked a new period in the Beatles' career. As I show below, the Beatles exploited the cultural and political authority ascribed to the group through antecedent narratives to create a valuable and culturally relevant and contemporary Beatle brand. Yet before addressing the Beatle brand and brand strategies in detail, it is first necessary to inventory the scope and variety of saleable Beatle products, significant as the basis of the group's brand assets, or 'any aspect of a brand that has strategic value' (Neumeier 2006: 160). As argued in the thesis introduction, one of the challenges to conceiving of popular music as a brand is that, unlike tangible goods and services, 'the Beatles' is not just one type of product, marketed to a single group of consumers. The following sub-section is intended to clarify what, specifically, the Beatles and their stakeholders can sell as products and market under the Beatle brand.

The Beatles and Apple

Apple, as the Beatles' management company, works as a collective. Accordingly, any new projects involving the group's music or image must receive 100% approval from Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr and the estates of John Lennon via Yoko Ono and George Harrison through his widow, Olivia. Apple controls (many of) the Beatles' images[37], and in a deal brokered by Allen Klein on behalf of the Beatles in 1968, Apple also acquired the right to manufacture and sell, as well as to prevent the issue of any Beatle recordings in America (Blaney 2008). In this way, the Beatles have been directly implicated in the release not only of new Beatle music, but also in

[37] IP laws vary between countries, however. Additionally, a number of individual photographers who have taken authorised photos of the Beatles retained their copyright and as such, do not need the Beatles'/Apple's consent to exploit them.

the reissue and repackaging of the whole of the group's back catalogue in the US for over 40 years (Blaney 2008). New Beatle albums, like the *Love* project (the album and the stage show), *Let It Be...Naked*, and the recent re-release of the Beatle films *Help!* and *Yellow Submarine* on DVD are all illustrations of the kinds of Beatle products Apple releases. Beyond sound recordings, any new and legitimately produced and Beatle-themed merchandise, like the examples shown below, must be created by or licensed from Apple directly.

Figure 5.1
Examples of licensed Beatle products, 2008

(Images taken from http://www.beatles.fanfirecom, accessed 01 March 2008)

<u>Capitol and EMI</u>

As the Beatles' principal recording label, EMI and its US subsidiary Capitol own the rights to the albums, singles and EPs recorded by the Beatles whilst under contract. Although the Beatles via Apple retain creative control over any new reissues and repackages of old material, the physical masters and the sound recordings remain with the label. In this regard, Capitol/EMI are responsible for the release of albums like *1* in 2000, the reissue of the *Yellow Submarine* album in 1999 and the *Love* 'mash-up' album in 2006.

Sony-ATV

As discussed in Chapter 4, Michael Jackson purchased ATV, the publishing company controlling nearly all Lennon-McCartney compositions, in 1985. As Blaney (2008) indicates, by 1995, Michael Jackson had acquired substantial personal debt, resulting in his decision to merge ATV with Sony Music, in exchange for $110 million and a 50% share in the company (Blaney 2008). By 2005, Jackson's ongoing financial difficulties forced him to leverage his stake in Sony-ATV for an estimated $200 million, thus ceding sole creative and financial control of the Lennon-McCartney catalogue (Blaney 2008). With this administrative change, as well as Neil Aspinall's 2007 departure from Apple and the subsequent accession of new CEO Jeff Jones, came a rethinking of the scope and implications of the longstanding moral agreement between Apple and Sony-ATV regarding the use of Beatle songs and lyrics. As a result, in 2008, Sony/ATV issued a press release, 'inviting offers to use the band's hits in ads' (in Sandison 2008).

The market for Beatle music in advertising and promotion is not, directly, the consuming public, but rather organisations, firms and other musicians interested in using the Beatles' music to express an idea or a message to their key audiences/consumer demographics. Recently, companies like the department stores John Lewis in the UK and Target in the US each licensed Beatles songs in television ad campaigns. (See table below). Rob Kaplan, Director of music production for the New York advertising agency Mcgarrybowen has been involved with the recent licensing of three Beatle songs and has said, 'What makes a Beatles song special in advertising is that it's one of the few things that you know everybody is going to "get," no matter what. The lyrics are really clear. There are very few things that cut across every demographic imaginable and are still special. The Beatles really are. There's no comparison' (in Reuters 2008). Similarly, there has been a substantial increase in the number of 'interpolations,' a musical performance technique most notable in the rap genre, where an artist will re-record a portion of an original song used in a way similar to a sample. For instance, the Wu-Tang Clan's song 'The Heart Gently Weeps' interpolates the Beatles' song 'While My Guitar Gently Weeps,' Ja Rule's track 'Judas' uses portions of the lyrics and music of 'Eleanor Rigby' and a collaboration between Jay-Z and Linkin Park produced the 2004 track 'Encore,' which integrates the Beatles' 'I Will' (Reuters, 2008). In each of these examples, it is

not Beatle fans but rather secondary or intermediary sources determining a new value or use for Beatle music.

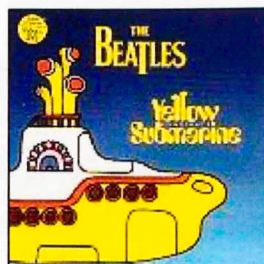
The Beatles

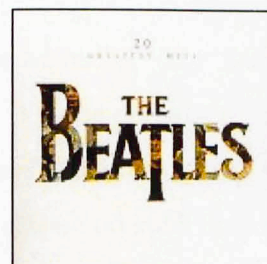
Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, as well as Yoko Ono and Olivia Harrison are additionally involved in the production of new Beatle and Beatle-related products. For instance, in 2004 Ringo released the book *Postcards From The Boys*, a photo-retrospective of postcards he received from Lennon, McCartney and Harrison from the 1960s to the present. As will be discussed below, both Paul McCartney and Starr continue to record and release new musical projects with lyrical and visual references to the Beatles and their time spent in Liverpool. Like Starr's book, individual solo projects from the former Beatles may not focus directly on the group, but are nevertheless significant because of the obvious and palpable connections between the musicians and their former band. It is this kind of indirect allusion which further instantiates the value of Beatle storytelling.

Beatle brand identifiers

Returning to discussion first raised in the thesis introduction, building on the definitions put forth by Holt (2004), one way a brand is recognisable as such is through the establishment of a brand identity, 'the outward expression of a brand, including its name, trademark, communications, and visual appearance' (Neumeier 2006: 162). In this regard, at a most basic level, it is clear that since the mid-1980s, the Beatles have begun to release a series of similarly packaged products, which evidence the emergence of an overall Beatle brand identity. For instance, starting with the 1982 compilation *20 Greatest Hits*, every Beatle album (with the except of *Let It Be...Naked*), utilises a Beatles logo, itself an adaptation of the drop-T logo emblazoned on Ringo Starr's bass drum:

Figure 5.2
Examples of the Beatles' 'Drop-T' logo on post-breakup album releases





Additionally, to coincide with the 2006 release of *Love*, the Beatles employed a new, more dynamic graphic to accompany the drop-T logo. This new logo is derived from a scene the Beatles' first film, *A Hard Day's Night* (1964):

Figure 5.3
The Beatles' Love logo (bottom) and its creative origins taken from the film *A Hard Day's Night*

(Image taken from http://dvdspindoctor.typepad.com/hard_days_night/ images/2007/08/27/hard_days_night_leaping_dvd.jpg, accessed 01 March 2008)

(Image taken from http://www.thebeatles.com/core/love/, accessed 01 March 2008)

As Beasley and Danesi (2002: 12) argue, 'Creating an image for a product is fashioning a "personality" for it with which a particular type of consumer can identify.' In this way, it becomes clear that the packaging of Beatle products have a distinctive visual connectedness, making them readily identifiable to consumers. Both the drop-T and Love logos function in a fashion similar to the Nike 'Swoosh' or the red and white Coca-Cola script as a brand identifier. What is perhaps most telling about this branding activity of post-breakup Beatle releases is that the group's initial set of recordings, released between 1963 and 1970 demonstrate no such uniformity

and regularity, suggesting the branding of the Beatles is a comparatively new, post-breakup phenomenon.

Brand stories

Thus far I have shown the array and variety of Beatle products presently on the market. I have also demonstrated through discussion of the emergence of various Beatle logos since the 1980s, there has been a movement towards an increasing visual consistency across the range of goods presently being marketed under the Beatle brand name. However, as Holt (2004) and Hatch and Rubin (2006) each suggest, material markers and unique design features do not create a brand. Semiotically, these visual cues only develop signification and meaning when consumers interact with the brand and imbue these identifiers with value. In this way, it is perhaps a better question to consider how brands acquire meaning rather than to simply isolate and label brand identifiers (Hatch and Rubin 2006). In this regard, storytelling becomes a central component in this process of meaning-making in branding. Holt (2004: 3) writes:

> A brand emerges as various "authors" tell stories that involve the brand. Four primary types of authors are involved: companies, the culture industries, intermediaries (such as critics and retail salespeople), and customers (particularly when they form communities)...Brand stories have plots and characters, and they rely heavily on metaphor to communicate and to spur our imaginations. As these stories collide in everyday social life, conventions eventually form. Sometimes a single common story emerges as a consensus view. Most often, though, several different stories circulate widely in society. A brand emerges when these collective understandings become firmly established.

Thus, much like the relationship between storytelling and commercialisation, the value and meaning of brand stories are created not in uni-directional flows of communication, but rather through ongoing renegotiations of value both within and beyond the marketplace:

> For while a brand can take years to evolve, it can evaporate in just months if it loses its interpretive audience. Or if it gets the wrong audience. The tipping point tips both ways. Modern commercial brands are tippy because, unlike most other stories, they are not written down in an *ur*-text. They appear in advertising, in packaging, in logos, in slogans, and in the minds of consumers. They are just "out there" in the cultural ether, social constructions without the telltale provenance

> that holds them in place. We know them, yes, but we're not sure how. In this sense, the modern brand is like a smell (Twitchell 2004: 20).

The practice of brand-as-narrative evolves through the artificial creation of a story produced by advertising executives. While the most effective of these stories plainly have lasting resonance, they are nevertheless fabricated, bespoke constructs, intended to elicit a particular emotional response. What makes the branding of the Beatles, of popular music, and indeed many other cultural texts so interesting is that unlike Twitchell's observations, their stories are *not*, simply 'out there in the cultural ether.' While I would not characterise narratives about the Beatles as an 'ur-text,' I would nevertheless describe their story as well-documented, *with* provenance and with meaning already present. Thus, for the Beatles and their stakeholders, the challenge in effectively branding the group is not in creating a new, impactful story for their target audiences, but rather, in discovering how best to utilise extant stories about the group to their most compelling effect. In this way, although the Beatle brand is relatively new, it has nearly 40 years of earlier stories on which to draw, in addition to the 'identity value' created by the group itself during its time together in the 1960s.

Part 2 – Beatle storytelling as brand narrativising

To understand the increasing significance of storytelling in the cultural branding of the Beatles, here I will look at its role in creating impactful brand narratives. As the Beatles have, to date, seldom used extended media advertising campaigns to promote their products, I instead draw on a range of primary materials to explore the role of storytelling in the evolution of the Beatle brand. While narratives can be told through a number of different media including song lyrics, photos and imagery, website text and interviews, here for considerations of space I will be focussing on three critical narrative forms: album notes, merchandise advertising copy and packaging narratives. Through a discursive analysis of exemplar sleeve notes, I first intend to demonstrate a change in the role of Beatle storytelling from independent, retrospective acts of personal narrativising to its function as a central and totalising component of the Beatle brand narrative. Second, by looking at packaging text and merchandising copy I will show how the Beatle brand continues to evolve, extending the story of the Beatles into an increasingly diverse range of advertising and music publishing arenas.

My research suggests that rather than a causative link between the expanding variety and scope of Beatle products in the marketplace and the increased use of Beatle storytelling, there has been instead a functional shift in the day-to-day operations of the Beatles/Apple and their stakeholders. With the recent arrival of new personnel to Apple and Sony-ATV, there has been a revision to earlier, more conservative and less cohesive marketing, promotion and branding activities. Where in Chapter 4 evidence suggested that Beatle storytellers adjust their stories to more appropriately reflect the contemporary cultural and social climate, the Beatles, by contrast, do not. My research shows that at least at present the Beatles and their stakeholders are not directly responding to instances of wider cultural upheaval, but instead aggressively developing new ideas and pursuing new business partnerships as opportunities arise. As a result, the Beatles' story has, by necessity, become a more streamlined, more visible and more effective vehicle for the efficient transporting of the Beatle brand into new markets, leveraging the group's acquired cultural and political authority against short-term profit-making branding activity.

Album sleeve narratives

A first means of evidencing the development and advancement of a Beatle brand is through a chronological survey of the album, sleeve and liner notes moving forward from the 1970s. Following their breakup, the release of Beatle records between 1970 and 2009 can be divided into three distinct eras: 1970-1982, 1987-1988 and 1994-present. Taken in turn, representative liner notes from each period show a clear progression, both in tone and content.

Between 1970-1982, immediately following the group's disbandment, EMI/Capitol and Apple appear to have adopted a strategy of 'letting the music speak for itself.' Even top-selling greatest hits albums like the 1973 double-LP sets, *The Beatles 1962-1966* and *The Beatles 1967-1970*, known colloquially as the 'red' and 'blue' albums respectively, have no accompanying sleeve notes or text to the music, only photos of the Beatles adorning the front, back and centre of the gatefold albums, with lyrics to each track printed on the album sleeves. The *Rock and Roll Music* albums, released in 1976 in the UK and 1980 in the US are more minimal still, with only an illustration of the group on the front cover, and a track listing on the back.

The first post-breakup Beatles album to feature any kind of narrative is also the first to feature 'new' music from the group, 1977's *The Beatles at the Hollywood Bowl.* The sleeve notes, written by George Martin state:

> Over twelve years ago the Beatles appeared for the first time at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles. It was not long after they had made their first impact on the United States, but already two years after I had signed them to a record contract for EMI. Frankly, I was not in favor of taping their performance. I knew the quality of the recording could not equal what we could do in the studio, but we thought we would try anyhow. The results were disappointing; the conditions for the engineers were arduous in the extreme. The chaos, I might almost say panic, that reigned at these concerts was unbelievable unless you were there. Only three track recording was possible; the Beatles had no "fold back" speakers, so they could not hear what they were singing and the eternal shriek from 17,000 healthy young lungs made even a jet plane inaudible...It was with some misgivings therefore that I agreed to listen to those early tapes at the request of Bhaskar Menon, Capitol's president. The fact that they were the only live recordings of the Beatles in existence (if you discount inferior bootlegs) did not impress me. What did impress me, however, was the electric atmosphere and raw energy that came over. And so, together with my recording engineer, Geoff Emerick, I set to work to bring the performance back to life. It was a labor of love, for we did not know if we could make them good enough for the world to hear – let alone John, Paul, George and Ringo... (Martin 1977: album notes *The Beatles At The Hollywood Bowl*).

Significant in Martin's description is the emphasis first on the technical limitations of the recording of the tracks. Extensive consideration, explanation and defence of a seeming lesser-quality release is paramount to Martin, a producer. Worthy of attention as well is the overt reference to 'discount inferior bootlegs.' Indeed, as addressed in Chapter 4, Capitol/EMI was in this period not as concerned with the production of new Beatle releases as in developing strategies designed to counteract the pervasiveness of bootleg Beatle recordings circulating in shops around the world (c.f. Badman 2001; Blaney 2008). Perhaps most telling of all, however, are Martin's closing thoughts:

> Those of us who were lucky enough to be present at a live Beatle concert – be it in Liverpool, London, New York, Washington, Los Angeles, Tokyo, Sydney or wherever – will know how amazing, how unique those performances were. It was not just the voice of the Beatles: it was expression of the young people of the world. And for the others who wondered what on earth all the fuss was about, this album may give a little clue. It may be a poor substitute for the reality of those times, but it is now all there is. In the multiplatinum,

> sophisticated world we live in today, it is difficult to appreciate the excitement of the Beatles breakthrough. My youngest daughter, Lucy, now nine years old, once asked me about them, "You used to record them, didn't you, Daddy?" she asked, "Were they as great as the Bay City Rollers?". "Probably not," I replied. Some day she will find out. Those who clamour for a Beatle reunion cannot see that it can never be the same again. The boys in their own way gave a great deal of their lives to us by being Beatles, and now they have found their own individual selves. Good luck to them. I am very proud to have been part of their story. Thank you John, Paul, George and Ringo (Martin 1977: album notes *The Beatles At The Hollywood Bowl*).

The finality of tone in Martin's comments are self-evident documentation that in 1977, there was a clear sense that the Beatles would never reunite, theirs was a complete career, to be considered retrospectively.

Rarities, the subsequent Beatle release by EMI in 1980 displays a similar tone and content in its sleeve notes. Intended as another countermeasure to curb the circulation of bootleg Beatle recordings (c.f. Badman 2001), the narrative speaks less to the long-term relevance of the Beatles to popular music and culture and more to convincing the (potential) buyer why this supplemental and ostensibly more expensive album is worth adding to a Beatles' record collection instead of a bootleg:

> There probably have been more words written about The Beatles and more discussion of their music than any other music group in history. Every aspect of their recorded legacy has been dissected, examined and catalogued by collectors, many of whom specialize in studying The Beatles. This has led to The Beatles *Rarities* album, a compilation of tracks that for one reason or another are considered rare in the United States. Most of these tunes are familiar to Beatles fans, but the versions presented here are *not* the same versions that are currently available on Capitol or United Artists albums. All of these versions have been released before by Capitol/EMI somewhere in the world, but most of them either haven't ever been released in America or they are no longer available. This album has been designed not only for the discriminating collector, but also for the average fan. Half the fun of these recordings is comparing them to the "standard" versions. As with any collection of songs, many "rare" possibilities had to be left off for lack of space, but the ones included here were chosen because either collectors have searched for them for years or because musically these versions have something "strange" about them to any listener who is familiar with the more common versions. Enjoy! (Davis 1980: album notes *Rarities*).

As with the live album, in 1980, just prior to Lennon's death, this album narrative reflects a wider sense that the music of the Beatles, as an *oeuvre*, could offer nothing new to contemporary popular music. Instead, the liner notes emphasise a sense of

formality and serious study with this new Beatles' release – the implication that Beatle fans should purchase the album not out of a sense of nostalgia or cultural significance but instead because it offered a completist's opportunity to own rare and 'previously unreleased' recordings.

Read together, these two narratives provide no collectivity, no shared sense of continuity or organised progression in the (re-)release of Beatle albums. There is no evidence that these album notes are written to relate any kind of lasting narrative about the Beatles – only that they were, once, a significant band, and that any new releases were intended to supplement, not extend, the group's recorded history. Aesthetically, there is some consideration of continuity in the visual organisation of the records of this period, in particular the double-album releases of the red and blue records, both volumes of *Rock and Roll Music*, and *Rarities*, initially part of the *Beatles Collection* box set. However, these recordings do not display the kind of unity and managed sense of design that post-*Anthology* albums would come to have. In fact, following Lennon's death there would be just two further Beatle releases, 1982's *Reel Music*, a compilation of the Beatles' film music, and *20 Greatest Hits*. These two albums were the last LP-only releases by Capitol/EMI, and the last two Beatle releases altogether for five years. Indeed, in the second period of post-breakup albums, between 1987 and 1988, Capitol/EMI issued no new Beatles compilations at all, instead focussing full attention on the first official release of all 13 UK Beatles albums on CD.[38] Although the CD-booklet medium allowed for extensive supplemental annotation and discussion, EMI issued no further commentary with the CD releases, reproducing only the group's original album art and sleeve notes.

Following the CD releases there is again, remarkably, another six-year gap before there is any new music from the Beatles issued by EMI or Apple. It is in this third period, with the 1994 release of *Live at the BBC*, first evidence of a consolidated and coordinated marketing and branding strategy begins to materialise. Reflected in this emergent strategy is the change of tone in the album notes accompanying this double-CD set, written by Derek Taylor, the group's former press officer and author of many of the liner notes in the Beatles' original body of work. Taylor's

[38] With EMI's decision to release only the Beatles' UK albums on CD, 33 tracks on the original American releases were not immediately available in the new format, creating a problem not only for collectors, but especially for broadcasters. Thus, in 1988, Capitol/EMI and Apple issued *Past Masters*, Volumes 1 and 2, to account for the remaining Beatles' songs not released on earlier CDs.

commentary contextualises the Beatles alongside the BBC as national icons, treasures of a gentler, more innocent time:

> Once upon a time the BBC was a young institution in a world long before Beatles, when broadcasting Uncles and Aunties and chaps with names like Commander Stephen King-Hall ('be good but not so frightfully good') and L. Du Garde Peach guided our attitude and provided some of our music for us...This collection is of a distant era; when London was six/eight hours from Liverpool, when London was The Big Time and almost still 'The Big Smoke.' Trains were still steam. There was no take-away save fish and chips. No 'Sun.' The rudest thing in newsprint was 'Reveille.' Television was black and white; there were two channels...The Beatles gave us a continuing soundtrack of unparalleled charm and reassurance. As long as they kept on delivering fresh songs along with the morning milk, everything was right in our optimistic world...That the Beatles were woven into the fabric of British life was due in large part to the regularity of their attention to good habits – the Christmas message to fans, the package tours, the visits home to Liverpool families, an honest paying of all the expected dues and in no small measure to the BBC, who provided that unparalleled broadcasting expertise to keep the nation in touch with 'the boys' through fifty two broadcasts... If you weren't there, then welcome now and if you haven't yet heard this music, please do so and know that life is indeed still good (Taylor 1994: album notes to *Live at the BBC* page 3).

In many ways, Taylor's commentary works almost as a counterbalance to George Martin's 1977 words. Where Martin intimated that, one day, the Beatles would be considered part of history, Taylor's work heralds the Beatles' arrival as true British cultural icons, alongside the BBC, fish and chips and Christmas messages to their fans. More significant still, with the last line of the commentary, these notes speak directly to new Beatle fans, indicative that the Beatles/Apple are clearly intending this new release to be purchased not only by longstanding fans, but also by younger people less familiar with the group and its history. In this way, Taylor's liner notes function as a primer, not speaking in particulars of facts or figures, but more in general terms emphasising to the reader that the Beatles were of singular musical, cultural and historical importance.

This increasing sense of historical context alone, however, is not enough to indicate the emergence of the Beatle brand. Taylor additionally penned the liner notes to accompany the three double-CD *Anthology* sets. It is in these comments, particularly those of the first *Anthology* album, that indicate the Beatles are moving into a new era:

They were the four most famous and musical young men on earth, the best dressed and on a good day quite the most captivating people any could remember. The narrative that began when Paul met John and clicked at a garden fete in leafy Liverpool, and ended in high dudgeon in high-end London, is so far-fetched that it needs the power of a song punctuating every page to remind you with a joyous jolt that it was all true. We didn't dream it...though it came out of John's dream of the "man on a flaming pie" who said: "You are Beatles with an 'A.'" It did all happen. The whole wonderful thing did happen, a long time ago, on the Mersey, on the Elbe, by the Thames and the Hudson River. *This album is the first of the bunch, the beginning of the latest incarnation*. Amazing and marvellous and, nearly forty years on, forever young' (Taylor 1995: album notes to *Anthology 1* page 3, emphasis added).

With the *Anthology 1* liner notes, Taylor's description of the group moves from the general to the specific, contextualising the Beatles not just as broadly historically significant, as he did with *Live at the BBC*, but instead as the subject and object of a fantastic story. In one sense, this engagement with Regularly Recurring Narratives like The Day John Met Paul, the group's breakup, and Lennon's 'Flaming Pie' story[39], seems natural, as on its face *Anthology* was an autobiographical exercise of the Beatles telling their own history.

Yet Taylor's words are more substantial than they appear, because they also mark the origination of the Beatle brand narrative. Specifically, these liner notes are not advertising copy. They are not intended to compel potential buyers into buying the album. The liner notes are printed in the CD-booklet of the set, sandwiched between the two discs, not visible through the shrink-wrapped, unopened packaging. The only access to the notes comes with the purchase of the album. Consequently, Taylor's narrative is not intended to differentiate the Beatles and *Anthology* from other groups and other CDs in the marketplace. The liner notes function instead as a potted history, a micro-narrative of the group, linking the Beatles' story to their music; and, more significantly, their back catalogue of albums to a new 'incarnation.'

At the time of writing, the Beatles have released four additional albums[40] following the *Anthology* project: a reissue of *Yellow Submarine* in 1999, *1* in 2000,

[39] John Lennon contributed an article to the 6 July 1961 edition of the *Mersey Beat* music paper titled, 'Being a short diversion on the Dubious Origins of Beatles: Translated from the John Lennon' in which he wrote, 'Many people ask what are Beatles? Why Beatles? Ugh, Beatles, how did the name arrive? So we will tell you. It came in a vision – a man appeared on a flaming pie and said unto them , 'From this day on you are Beatles with an "A"' (in Harry 2002). It has circulated as an RRN ever since.
[40] Capitol/EMI have additionally released the boxed sets *The Capitol Albums, Volumes 1 and 2* in 2004 and 2006, respectively, a project which saw the Beatles' American albums issued on CD.

Let It Be... Naked in 2003 and *Love* in 2006. The notes accompanying each of these albums in their own way significantly incorporate storytelling about the group, linking these 'new' Beatle releases to a wider narrative of the Beatles' innovation and cultural contributions to popular music and history. One such example is seen in Kevin Howlett's commentary to *Let It Be...Naked*:

> *The kids of AD 2000 will understand what it was all about and draw from the music much the same sense of well being and warmth as we do today. For the magic of the Beatles is timeless and ageless.* That prediction in the sleeve notes for *Beatles For Sale* was made by Derek Taylor in 1964, when pop stars had a limited shelf life of perhaps two years. But sure enough, at the beginning of our century, the sales of the Beatles' album *1* have proved him right in spectacular fashion with 25 million sales...and counting. Now this latest addition to their catalogue provides another chapter in the most byzantine tale behind any of their albums. By stripping away the decorative layers applied to some of the tracks this special edition reveals *Let It Be* as it was meant to be...Why they wanted to adopt a raw and unadorned approach to these songs in the first place revolves around the ethos of the Beatles: never do what you are expected to do. After pioneering stadium events, they played their last concert on 20th August 1966. When they regrouped three months later, they focussed on the recording experimentation heard on their previous two albums and duly dazzled the world...Then – and here's the thing to set today's marketing men scratching their heads in bemusement – with *The Beatles* in its sixth week at number one, they began work on a new project...For the Beatles the *Let It Be* project retained an air of unfinished business. The memory of its creation tainted by the unhappy business dealings of the period and the tensions threatening to pull the group apart. But, in reality, these new mixes show the group playing as a tight and co-operative unit....Paul is equally enthusiastic about *Let It Be...Naked.* 'It's just the bare tapes; just the bare truth and the great thing now about the re-mixed versions is that, with today's technology, they sound better than ever.' That's one of the wonders of our digital age and it ensures the magic of the Beatles will be timeless and ageless (Howlett 2003: album liner notes to *Let It Be...Naked* pages 3-7).

As Holt (2004: 36-37) states, 'an effective cultural [branding] strategy creates a *storied product*'...where brand managers must, 'detail the brand's stakes in the transformation of culture and society and the particular cultural expressions the brand uses to achieve these transformations.' Howlett's writing, an extended essay substantially surpassing in length the notes for *Anthology*, uses storytelling to link sales figures, historical significance and technological innovation. In this way, the story of the Beatles *becomes* the Beatles brand, demonstrating how the group changed

– and continues to change – the face of popular music and culture whilst still retaining 'timeless' and 'ageless' qualities.

In one final example, the existence of the power within the Beatle story as brand narrative is further underscored through its extension into extra-Beatle contexts. The liner notes for Paul McCartney's 1997 solo album *Flaming Pie*, itself a titular reference to the 'Flaming Pie' RRN, state:

> I came off the back of *The Beatles Anthology* with an urge to do some new music. The *Anthology* was very good for me because it reminded me of The Beatles' standards and the standards that we reached with the songs. So in a way it was a refresher course that set the framework for this album. Watching the *Anthology* also reminded me of the time that we *didn't* take to make an album and of the fun we had when we did one. The Beatles were not a serious group...So I wanted to try to get back into some of that; to have some fun and not sweat it. That's been the spirit of making this album. You've got to have a laugh, because it's just an album. So I called up a bunch of friends and family and we just got on and did it. And we had fun making it. Hopefully you'll hear that in the songs. (McCartney 1997: album notes to *Flaming Pie*: 3).

Here, McCartney is making auto-referential allusion to *Anthology* to cross-promote and implicate his solo work with that of the Beatles. It is a substantial change of strategy for McCartney who spent much of the 1970s and 1980s engaged in practices designed to separate him from the Beatles' history. As a story, McCartney is drawing an implicit connection between his new independent work and the songs of the Beatles. As a branding strategy, he is leveraging the cultural and political authority accorded him via the Beatles' story to simultaneously promote both *Flaming Pie* and *Anthology* as music of substance, of significance, of the Beatles' perceived high standards. As will be discussed next, the Beatles continue to utilise this authority to further extend the Beatle brand into new markets and to new audiences.

<u>Packaging stories and non-music Beatle product</u>

Another indication of the emergence and pervasiveness of the Beatle brand comes in examination of the expanding range of products the Beatles now endorse and sell. As mentioned in the thesis introduction, as a young Beatle fan in 1980s America, it was my experience that there were few, if any, Beatle products beyond albums and books to collect. By 1994, however, this situation had begun to change. Included with EMI/Apple's release of *Live at the BBC* was a flyer advertising a range

of "official Beatles™ merchandise." The American release offered eleven products for sale, all with the Beatle drop-T logo, and included amongst them an 'Authentic USA Bomber Jacket' for $125, a commemorative offset lithograph for $14.95, a Beatles key chain for $7, a Beatles baseball cap for $18, a black knit cap for $15, as well as two styles of Beatles t-shirt, a sweatshirt and polo neck, ranging in price from $18 to $28 (Musicom International 1994: advertisement with CD booklet to *Live at the BBC*).

With the release of *Anthology* the following year, stapled into the centrefold of the CD-booklet was a four-page flyer advertising the new range of Beatle merchandise. There is little in the way of narrative to accompany the advertisement, only several sentences emphasising the organic materials used in the production of the items for sale (EMI Merchandising 1995: advertisement in album notes to *Anthology 1*). With the release of the second and third *Anthology* instalments, the expansion of the range of Beatle goods available for purchase continued. Today, the Beatles' official website has US and UK stores, selling hundreds of Beatle-logo goods, divided into 29 separate pages of products, ranging from infant clothing to housewares to rugs (Beatles 2008). More significant than just the expanding variety and scope of Beatle-themed items for sale is the increasing prominence of storytelling in the promotion of these goods. What follows are case studies of the packaging narratives of three recent Beatle DVD releases. What I will demonstrate through these examples is first how storytelling about the Beatles becomes progressively more central to the logic and justification for the release of these products; and second, how these products work collectively to further the story of the Beatles into ever-widening circles.

I begin this analysis by looking at one of the Beatles' post-*Anthology* DVD releases, a double-disc 'Collector's Series' version of *A Hard Day's Night*, co-produced by Apple and the film studio Miramax in 2002. Accompanying the release is just one paragraph of text, printed on a sheet proud of the physical DVD package:

> This strikingly original classic captures all the fun, excitement and unforgettable music of John, Paul, George and Ringo at the height of Beatlemania! It's a wildly irreverent day in the life of the world's greatest rock 'n' roll band! As they prepare for a big TV appearance, the Beatles perform their songs, look for adventure...and try in vain to keep Paul's mischief-making grandfather out of trouble...all while avoiding hordes of screaming fans! Packed with all-time Beatle favorites including "A Hard Day's Night," "All My Loving," "Can't Buy Me Love," "I Should Have Known Better," "She Loves You," and "Tell Me Why," director Richard Lester's groundbreaking motion

> picture collaboration with the "Fab Four" is itself a treasured piece of rock history that remains influential to this day! This collector's edition includes "Give Me Everything!" – a companion anthology to The Beatles' first film – featuring hours of rare and new material (2002: packaging text *A Hard Day's Night* DVD).

Despite being the 'collector's edition' of the release, the packaging text places primary emphasis on the value of the Beatles' music to the disc, with little consideration of the Beatles' wider narrative history. Thus, it is clear this DVD release is intended for audiences who know and are already familiar with the group and the film.

By contrast, in 2007, Apple, in partnership with DTS Entertainment issued the 'Deluxe Edition' of the second Beatles' film, *Help!* (1965). The deluxe edition contained two DVD discs – the film itself and a second disc of bonus material, a 60-page hardcover book, a reproduction of director Richard Lester's original script with handwritten notes, miniature reproductions of eight original US theatrical lobby cards and a reproduction of an original 1965 theatrical poster. With the hardcover book came an 'appreciation' from film director Martin Scorsese:

> It's difficult to convey now exactly how important Lester's films were. Each new picture was eagerly awaited, and they set the style for so much – in commercials, in television...and certainly in movies – that it's easy to take his influence for granted. He was one of the key figures of the era, just as crucial as Resnais or Antonioni, inventing new narrative techniques and re-defining the vocabulary of cinema as he went along...And then, of course, there was the music: "Another Girl," "You've Got To Hide Your Love Away," "The Night Before," "You're Going To Lose That Girl" (with that beautiful guitar break from George), the title song. The soundtrack of the movie, the soundtrack of our lives. Our memory. Of a time, a sense of possibility. That will never die. (Scorsese, in Beatles 2007: v-ix).

While Scorsese has been involved with popular music films and videos, he had no direct involvement with the original production of *Help!* or with the Beatles.[41] With his standing as a film director of international repute, the inclusion of Scorsese's comments in this DVD release extends the Beatle brand and the Beatles' story beyond music into the realm of film studies. His comments above emphasise Richard Lester's creative contributions to the advancement of film, television and

[41] Scorsese directed the 1978 documentary *The Last Waltz* with Bob Dylan and the Band, several videos and video projects with Michael Jackson and most recently the 2005 Bob Dylan biography *No Direction Home*.

commercials. That the Beatles worked with such an acclaimed and visionary director lends an air of *gravitas* to contemporary analysis and consideration of *Help!*.

By 2008, with the DVD release of the behind-the-scenes making of the Cirque du Soleil production of *Love, All Together Now,* the accompanying text amplifies the cultural context of the Beatles even further:

> *All Together Now* is the story of two groundbreaking, fiercely independent creative forces teaming up and spurring each other to greatness. *Love*, which marked the first time the music of The Beatles was authorized for use in a theatrical production, opened in June 2006, but only a few of the rapturous audience members who witnessed that magical night fully understood the years of preparation and commitment that had gone into getting the show off the ground – in some cases, way off the ground...Director Dominic Champagne said that he strove for "evocation more than duplication." One early rule was that no one would portray the band onstage. "Instead of telling the Beatles story, I tried to touch the main emotions that went through their experience," said Champagne, "building the show as a rock 'n' roll poem." The final results allude to Beatle iconography, from the early days of Beatlemania to the final "rooftop" concert. Sometimes, as in *A Day in the Life*, details are taken from the Beatles' own lives; elsewhere, like the in-line skaters used for *Help!* or the trampolines for *Back in the U.S.S.R.*, the stage concept is rooted in the pure energy of the songs...What *All Together Now* reveals is the blood, sweat, and – yes – love that went into this remarkable production.. This sense of devotion is what makes the experience ring so true to the audience. "Every generation, as it grows up, finds The Beatles for themselves," said George Martin. "My children did, and now my grandchildren. With the show, we see how it will go on" (Light 2008: DVD liner notes *All Together Now*).

Through comparison of these texts a clear evolution in the role and significance of storytelling in the branding of the Beatles emerges. At a primary level, the hyperbole within these stories underscores their function as marketing copy, designed and intended to distinguish the Beatles and Beatle products from others in the marketplace. In this respect, the narrative progression of the brand stories reflects the increasing cultural influence of branding more generally, described by Klein (2002) as a modern phenomenon materialising in the 1980s and 1990s. However, the production of brand stories as well as the consumption of new Beatle merchandise are, on their own, meaningless endeavours. As Hatch and Rubin (2006: 45) argue, 'acquiring the product cannot fully satisfy the depth of emotional memories and historical associations.'

Thus, the critical role of storytelling in the production of these brand narratives is to generate a new layers of meaning of 'the Beatles' for new markets. With the *Hard Day's Night* DVD release, the story and significance of the Beatles is merely implied, with narrative emphasis instead on the film's plot and soundtrack. With the *Help!* release, in part through Scorsese's comments, Richard Lester and, by extension, the Beatles themselves are implicated in formal discourses of film study. In this way the narrative works to establish the Beatles not only as musical icons but also more generally creative *auteurs* on a par with 'high culture' artists, producers and directors. With *Love*, Light's comments make reference to a Beatles 'iconography,' with the implication that the group's history is so ubiquitous, so significant that its performance and creative interpretation will be immediately recognisable to audience members. Building on this idea, the final point of analysis I wish to make in this section is to consider the kinds of partnerships the Beatles and their stakeholders have recently entered into, and critically, how those partnerships are extending and influencing storytelling about the Beatles.

One highly visible form of Beatle brand partnerships has originated with Sony-ATV and their recent decision to more liberally license Beatle music in advertising, television and film. The table below indicates the most prominent uses of Beatle music in current years (Reuters, 2008).

Figure 5.4
Recent uses of Beatles music in television and advertising

Company/Product	**Beatle Songs used**	**Year**	**Country/Market**
Philips	Getting Better	1998	World
Halifax bank	Help!	2000	UK
Canon digital cameras	Across The Universe	2004	US
Chase bank	All You Need Is Love	2006	US
Luvs nappies	All You Need Is Love	2007	US
Target stores	Hello Goodbye	2007-2009	US
Hampton Inns (Hilton Hotels)	With A Little Help From My Friends	2008	US
Sony-Ericsson mobile phones	Magical Mystery Tour	2008	US/World
American Idol TV show	Various Beatle-themed performances	2008	US
John Lewis department store	From Me To You	2008	UK

Martin Bandier, chief executive of Sony/ATV has argued that while there has been some resistance to the use of Beatle music in these new contexts, his intention is to, 'ensure these classic songs reach the next generation of listeners in a myriad of ways, not just from their parents talking about them' (in Reuters 2008). Beyond music in adverts, Bandier has additionally approved the use of Beatles lyrics to appear on clothing, signing a deal with fashion label Lyric Culture (Reuters 2008). At the time of writing, it also seems highly likely that the music of the Beatles, as promoted through Bandier's strategies, will very soon be released as both digital/MP3 tracks and as part of a Beatles video game[42].

These activities indicate how prominently the Beatles are now positioned in contemporary popular culture. If Bandier's argument is taken at face value, his is a strategy that has succeeded in promoting awareness and appreciation of the Beatles to a younger and more media-oriented audience. With the group's deployment across mass media like television shows, video games, advertising soundtracks and clothing, the Beatles are no longer only cultural icons and a metonym of the 1960s, but have genuine relevance to contemporary culture. Similarly, the story of the Beatles has, in the language of Hatch and Rubin (2006), become a palimpsest, with new cultural meanings being both inscribed and ascribed on top of the narratives told by Beatle storytellers since 1970. However, while Beatle stakeholders are, in the short term, deriving great financial and, arguably, cultural benefit from the extension of the Beatle brand, a question raised by this increasing visibility of the Beatles is that, like commercialisation, brand narratives are subject to intra- and extra-market forces, with the potential for the group and its story to take on meanings and ideas which cannot be anticipated, measured or controlled by stakeholders. It is this idea which forms the basis of the discussion presented in Section 3 and the conclusion, below.

My intention in this portion of the chapter has been to demonstrate how storytelling has functioned in the creation and advancement of the Beatle brand since 1995. By looking at brand narratives presented in album liner notes, merchandise adverts and packaging texts, I have demonstrated a progression in narrative tone and content, with an increasing emphasis on the Beatles as musical and cultural 'icons.' This forward narrative motion is paralleled by a simultaneous increase in the scope

[42] In March, 2009 Apple announced details of a deal between Apple, MTV and video game publisher Harmonix to produce 'The Beatles: Rock Band' to be released on 09 September 2009. See Appendix A for full press release.

and variety of Beatle product in the marketplace. Collectively, these two developments have, to date, worked to make the Beatles relevant to new and younger music fans. In the final portion of the chapter, I consider the long-term implications of these strategies for the Beatles and their stakeholders.

Part 3 – Discussion

Branding strategies

A first strategy evidenced through the cultural branding of the Beatles is one Holt (2004) has termed 'stitching,' a process through which a brand is accorded cultural and political authority through its prominence in already-extant cultural contexts. This is a theory that seems especially appropriate to the experience of the Beatle brand. While the Beatles and their IP stakeholders did not begin to aggressively develop and deploy the Beatle brand until the mid-1990s, through the co-authoring activities and processes described in Chapter 4, storytellers independent of the Beatles have since 1970 harnessed social, political and cultural developments to create ongoing narratives and new enterprises through which the Beatles have remained relevant to successive generations of fans and story-listeners. Through these ventures understanding of the Beatles has expanded beyond the Beatle-specific, becoming implicated in wider narratives of popular history and culture.

By the time of *Anthology*'s release, the Beatles were entering into a pre-existing marketplace, stitching their story to the inherent cultural and political authority accorded the group through decades of antecedent narratives. In this way, in this first branding period, the Beatles were, with *Anthology* telling a story in a context that an already-extant market of story-listeners and consumers had sympathy for, awareness of and enthusiasm about:

> Paul: I think we game some sort of freedom to the world. I meet a lot of people now who say The Beatles freed them up. If you think about it, the world was slightly more of an upper-class place till The Beatles came along. Regional actors had to have also a very good Shakespearean voice, and then it started to be enough just to have your own accent, your own truth. I think we set free a lot of people who were blinkered, who were perhaps starting to live life along their parents' authoritarian lines...
>
> John: I think The Beatles *were* a kind of religion and that Paul epitomised The Beatles and the kind of things that were a hero image more than the rest of us, in a way. He was more popular with the kids, girls and things like that. I think the Sixties was a great decade. I

> think the great gatherings of youth in America and in the Isle of Wight might have just been a pop concert to some people, but they were a lot more than that. They were the youth getting together and forming a new church, as it were, and saying, 'We believe in God, we believe in hope and truth and here we are, 20,000 or 200,000 of us, all together in peace...
>
> George: The Beatles somehow reached more people, more nationalities, more parts that other bands couldn't reach. (If you listen to the music that's going on now, all the good stuff is stolen from The Beatles. Most of the good licks and riffs or ideas and titles. The Beatles have been plundered for thirty years.) I think we gave hope to the Beatle fans. We gave them a positive feeling that there was a sunny day ahead and that there was a good time to be had and that you are your own person and that the government doesn't own you. There were those kind of messages in a lot of our songs...
>
> Ringo: I do get emotional when I think back about those times...We were honest with each other and we were honest about the music. The music was positive. It was positive in love. They did write – we all wrote – about other things, but the basic Beatles message was Love (in Beatles 2000: 356).

What this example suggests is that although the *music* of the Beatles had, with the release of the *Anthology* CDs in 1995 and 1996 been targeted to a mass audience, understanding and emergence of the Beatles, as a *brand*, was still evolving. From these quotes it is clear that the story the Beatles told in the *Anthology* book sited them in a context of the 1960s and the ideals and beliefs that were popular in that era. In these excerpts, taken from the text's conclusion, there is no sustained discourse about the group's relevance to contemporary popular culture, only extended consideration of the Beatles' contributions and centrality to the 1960s. Particularly noticeable in George's comments, there is also an overt criticism of modern popular music and popular musicians.

With the release of *Let It Be...Naked* in 2003 however, it becomes evident the Beatles and their stakeholders had begun to adopt a new strategy, one which Holt (2004: 186) refers to as 'repackaging,' where instead of focussing on the dissemination of an extant brand narrative, marketers, 'reinvent it by spotlighting and reinterpreting certain features of the myth while hiding others.' Accordingly, with that 2003 release the Beatle brand narrative began to undergo a subtle but nevertheless significant change of tone, emphasising not only the group's contributions and significance to 1960s music and culture, but also of their relevance

to contemporary popular music, creating 'new' works for new audiences. With *Let It Be...Naked* the Beatles were not only a product by and for the 1960s, but now additionally an ongoing and still-creative force, producing music intended to compete with modern acts. This narrative shift is even more evident still with the 2006 release of *Love*:

> The Martins [George and son Giles] quickly created a fifteen-minute demo, which demonstrated the approach they had in mind; most notably, a mash-up that put Ringo's propulsive drums from *Tomorrow Never Knows* under George's serene vocals from *Within You Without You*, resulting in a track instantly ready for 21st century dance floors (Light 2008: DVD liner notes *Altogether Now*).

By applying a 21st century production technique to the music of the Beatles, it becomes clear the group are targeting an audience beyond one that is primarily familiar with and interested in only their 1960s output. With *Love*, the Beatles' music is now also intended to appeal to a younger audience, one *au fait* with and amenable to the concept of 'mash-ups.' Through this narrative shift, the Beatle brand has progressed into a new and broader market.

Threats to and limitations of current cultural branding strategies

In Chapter 4, I argued that Beatle storytellers adapted their narratives in ongoing cultural and entrepreneurial value negotiations within and beyond the marketplace. Here, there is no evidence to support the Beatles engage in similar holistic and hyperopic practices. Instead, at present Beatle stakeholders seem intent on pushing forward the brand with a significant new Beatle release every three or so years: *1* in 2000, *Let It Be...Naked* in 2003 and *Love* in 2006. While there has been a clear progression the way the Beatle brand narrative has developed since 1995, there is still, however, little evidence that this narrativising has been influenced by stakeholders' interaction with other storytellers or with extra-market variables. Rather, the Beatle brand narrative seems to be evolving only in response to functional personnel and managerial changes within Apple, EMI and Sony-ATV, chiefly the appointment of Martin Bandier as CEO of Sony-ATV in 2007 and the appointment of Jeff Jones as Neil Aspinall's successor at Apple in 2008.

With Aspinall's departure from Apple and his death soon after, there was a substantive change in direction in the stewardship of the Beatle brand. For instance, in 2004, Apple executive Jonathan Clyde was quoted as saying, 'If Apple showered

the market with DVDs and CD compilations and went into overdrive on merchandising, the Beatles' reputation for integrity would be compromised. Apple is here to protect a precious cultural legacy. Any short-term gain would be utterly self-defeating' (in Petridis 2008). Yet by 2008, Martin Bandier, CEO of Sony-ATV remarked, 'It's important the world knows this music [the Beatles' music]. It just can't be hidden forever, otherwise you're going to miss generations of music listeners' (in Reuters 2008). Taken together, these two comments suggest there is no long-term, coherent Beatle branding strategy in place. Non-stakeholder storytellers have succeeded in particular instances in commercialising Beatle narratives by adapting the context and not the content of their stories. By contrast, Beatle brand narratives have undergone both a change in context *and* a change in content. While it would be unproductive to attempt to assess how this *ad-hoc* system of brand management will play out in the long-term, what is clear is that Beatle stakeholders face two immediate branding threats: 'milking the myth' and cool-hunting, each of which will be discussed in turn.

Holt states, 'When a brand appears to be taking advantage of its followers' allegiance to myth for quick commercial gain, the brand haemorrhages credibility and loses its effectiveness. Consequently, a sure way for a brand to destroy its myth is to milk it, to behave like a shill' (2004: 189). Since *Anthology*'s 1995 release, the Beatles have released several albums of new music, licensed hundreds of Beatle-logoed products and co-produced a Las Vegas stage show. To date, as evidenced by comments attributed to Bandier and marketing executives involved with the Beatle brand, the rationale for these management decisions has been, ostensibly, to drive cultural awareness of the Beatles forward for new generations. Thus far, each of these projects has seen substantial commercial success. However, if Beatle stakeholders continue to extend the Beatle brand in increasingly disparate directions, there is a palpable risk the group will see its current cultural and political authority eroded over time.

For instance, with the 2007 use of 'All You Need Is Love' in an advert for American nappy manufacture Luvs, Mark Rolland of ad firm Saatchi and Saatchi commented, 'The song helps us break through the diaper advertising clutter and simply communicate to mums that Luvs diapers are 'all you need' to keep your baby happy' (in UPI.com 2008b). However, the advert, 'angered Beatles fans around the world, leading to a deluge of complaints on fan forums and sites' (Sandison 2008). In

this way, the Beatles are clearly ignoring – not responding to – market indicators, instead guided by internal institutional decision-making mechanisms. Should this kind of indifference to intra- and extra-market factors continue, it seems likely that the Beatle brand will lose credibility with story-listeners and consumers.

Similarly, a second threat to the Beatle brand is 'cool-hunting,' the idea of chasing each new trend in popular culture. Holt writes, 'When a brand chases after populist worlds that are incongruous relative to its cultural and political authority, the brand comes off as an opportunistic cultural parasite. Inevitably, in its stretch to fit in the new populist world, the brand comes off as stilted, even foolish' (2004: 198). To date, the Beatles have seen significant commercial success with the major projects they have launched. As above however, there is ultimately a limit to how far the Beatle brand's credibility can flex. After three decades of virtual non-engagement with the Beatles' history and legacy, stakeholders have in the past 14 years advanced the group, its music and its brand into myriad new facets of popular media and culture. While it would again be unhelpful to attempt to predict the success of future ventures, what does seems likely however, is if the Beatles continue to chase trends, in particular the youth market, without more considered and holistic understanding of the necessity of ongoing value negotiation with intra- and extra-market forces, the Beatle brand will ultimately become devalued as trendy consumers move on to the next new phenomenon, abandoning the Beatle brand.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to establish how the Beatles, a popular music act, a cultural text, can equally be understood as a brand. Through examination of the group's intellectual property I demonstrated that Beatle recordings, images, logos, songs and lyrics can – and have been – successfully marketed to an increasingly diverse and expansive consumer core. But rather than focussing on the brand assets, drawing on ideas from Hatch and Rubin (2006) and Holt (2004) I questioned instead how a brand acquires meaning. Through examination of Beatle brand narratives taken from album liner notes, packaging texts and merchandising copy, I evidenced a progression in the way Beatle stakeholders have positioned the group and its products over time, gradually pulling away from a 1960s-centred aesthetic and sensibility and moving towards a more contemporary and youth-orientated market. Critically, I have argued that where non-stakeholder Beatle storytellers have sustained market position

over time through ongoing meaning renegotiations with intra- and extra-market forces, the Beatles have, to date, demonstrated no such market awareness. Instead, stakeholders have driven the brand's narrative undeniably forward, but without regard for wider cultural implications, a situation which, if sustained, may ultimately lead to the erosion of the cultural and political authority presently accorded the Beatles.

In one regard, the Beatles should not be criticised for wanting to introduce the band and its music to new and broader groups of story-listeners and consumers. Stakeholders in the Beatles are operating businesses in which the group are directly implicated. Letting the Beatles' brand assets and corporate value atrophy in aid of keeping the group's cultural and historical 'legacy' intact would be both a foolhardy and myopic practice. At the same time however, there is no evidence to support the idea that the Beatles and their stakeholders are fully cognisant of the importance of storytelling in the advancement and extension of the Beatle brand. As Hatch and Rubin (2006: 46) state:

> The many texts of branding processes may retain some sense of intention placed in them by their 'authors' (those who promote the brands) but they also respond to interpretations produced by multiple readers (stakeholders such as consumers, the public, social and political activists, employees and managers of the organisations that promote the brand). Even this does not capture the panoply of activities that include, among others: events promoted by fan clubs, collecting signs and old advertisements, and photographing the vestigial and fading signs painted on city walls.

By not engaging in the same kinds of value negotiations as non-stakeholder storytellers, I believe the Beatles have not fully appreciated the implications of pushing the Beatle brand forward according only to internal management logics. Unaware or unbothered by the notion that understanding of the Beatles is neither wholly created nor wholly controlled by its stakeholders, Beatle brand stewards have, I feel, have wilfully ignored the notion that, 'texts cannot be isolated from earlier interpretations' (Hatch and Rubin 2006: 48). By this idea I mean that in pushing the Beatle brand, and indeed its cultural and political authority so far so comparatively quickly, there is a real risk of the Beatles achieving precisely the opposite of what executives like Jones and Bandier intend. Instead of gradually advancing the Beatle brand through careful and considered storytelling activity, stakeholders appear to be attempting to reinvent the Beatles for successive audiences and markets with each new venture and partnership, picking up and putting down 'the Beatles' in new and

increasingly hyperbolic narrative contexts. As I have demonstrated above, there has been, to date a brand progression from the Beatles as relevant within only a 1960s context to the Beatles as historically and culturally significant to the Beatles as subjects of their own iconography. There is no wider context left.

However, as Klein writes, 'The product always takes a back seat to the real product, the brand, and the selling of the brand acquired an extra component that can only be described as spiritual. Advertising is about hawking product. Branding, in its truest and most advanced incarnations, is about corporate transcendence' (2002: 21). In this sense, there is still time and opportunity for Beatle stakeholders to retrieve and mitigate their more overzealous marketing endeavours. Hatch and Rubin (2006) refer to this notion as the 'trace' of a brand. By this idea they mean that no matter how aggressive the brand management, there always remains a trace historical element of earlier brand stories. Whatever the continuity or discontinuity of a brand over time, even 'radically altered' brands can reorient themselves in the market through a revisiting of older and more impactful brand associations and narratives (Hatch and Rubin 2006: 58). In the conclusion to the thesis I will examine some of the possible future opportunities for the Beatle brand as well as potential for further exploration of the role and significance of storytelling in the commercialisation and cultural branding of the Beatles as well as other popular music and cultural texts.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to investigate the role and significance of storytelling in the commercialisation and cultural branding of the Beatles. I have first sought to contribute new scholarship in popular music/music industries studies by taking a more epistemological approach to studying the Beatles. Rather than focus on a particular aspect of the group and their career, I have instead sought to consider the wider cultural and commercial implications of how collective storytelling contributes to ongoing understanding and debate about both the Beatles, a musical act, and 'the Beatles,' a cultural brand. Building on ideas presented by Finnegan (1998), I have also intended to contribute new thinking about storytelling. Where there has been an abundance of research into individual narratives and life-histories as well as stories told in organisations, there has been a gap in scholarship in the collective practices of individual storytellers on a shared story subject, something best understood through Boje's (1995) concept of 'plurivocality.' Additionally, using the Beatles as an exemplar, this thesis has sought to interrogate and extend current thinking in branding and specifically Holt's (2004) concept of cultural branding, challenging his assertion that, 'marketing has yet to crack the code on how to develop branded cultural texts' (184). Finally, I have intended to contribute new ideas to discourse analysis through the development of a methodology I term 'storytelling genealogy,' derived from Holt's process of 'brand genealogy' (2004). By looking at storytelling as something that occurs at the intersection of text, context and discourse, as well as a result of ongoing negotiation between the cultural and the commercial, I have sought to situate storytelling at the centre and not at the margins of popular music and branding research.

There are a number of implications of this thesis for both Beatle storytellers and the Beatles themselves. First, my work has demonstrated that, over time, storytelling about the Beatles has been on an upward spiral moving from a Beatle-specific to an increasingly extra-Beatle context. Through the ongoing narrative and entrepreneurial actions and activities of storytellers, the Beatles are becoming progressively more implicated in wider cultural, historical and popular narratives. With stories of the Beatles currently bound up with, for instance, the National Trust, the British Museum and Liverpool's designation as 2008 European Capital of Culture, there are both a growing number and variety of Beatle storytellers (and Beatle

storytelling organisations) and with them an implicit necessity that values and ideals attributed to the Beatles via narrative forms remains constant. In this way, the notion of storytelling fixity becomes important. That is not to say there will ever be one, totalising history or discourse of and about the Beatles. Instead, I am asserting that through the notion of Regularly Recurring Narratives, RRNs, there has been evidence of an emerging series of narrative checkpoints and benchmarks, reflecting a gradual and subtle shift away from stories, that in the language of Stark (2006), focus on the 'what' of Beatle history, moving instead towards more regular consideration of the 'why.'

Second, through this escalation in Beatle storytelling activity, there is also evidence of the increasing significance of emergent narrative 'blocs,' or informal storytelling networks. Through exploration of the inherent cultural and political authority of storytelling, my research demonstrates that individual storytellers often work in competitive and complementary ways seeking to establish their place in hegemonic narrative threads. Implicated with these movements are considerations of the links between the cultural and commercial aspects of storytelling. In this way, I have shown that successful exploitation of a unique understanding or insight into the Beatles requires awareness of and effective strategies for navigating the dynamic and porous boundaries of the storytelling marketplace.

Additionally, this thesis has demonstrated the necessity of situating stories about the Beatles in a context that is both historically informed but also attuned, responsive and sympathetic to the demands, desires and aspirations of contemporary popular culture. While the content of Beatle stories seldom changes, the context can and indeed must. For storytellers, failure to recognise and adapt their narratives and their entrepreneurial activities to intra- and extra-market fluctuations will have both financial and cultural implications, as these storytellers risk being subverted by more agile and canny competitors. For the Beatles and their stakeholders, who did not meaningfully engage with the group's history or legacy between the 1970 breakup and the 1995 release of *Anthology*, I have shown that the challenge instead has been how best to harness the cultural and commercial power of decades of antecedent narratives to most effectively mesh with their present and future commercial and marketing aims.

Finally, I have made the argument that since the release of *Anthology* the Beatles and their stakeholders have moved comparatively quickly and aggressively to

promote, in their own language, the 'post-Sixties Beatles' (Apple 2008). The Beatles contend they are seeking to establish the group's relevance to a younger generation through a more liberal policy of licensing Beatle songs for use in commercials, television programmes and films, as well as in the production of a vast array of new logo-labelled merchandise. Indeed, at the time of writing, there is an inevitability that the Beatles' back catalogue will sooner than later be released in digital formats as well as used in interactive video games. While these activities have undoubtedly brought substantial short-term financial gain, the long-term risks to the group and its stakeholders are twofold. First, there is the concern that in their pursuit of a younger fan-consumer core, the Beatles are alienating their long-term and loyal supporters by ignoring the ways in which storytelling has accorded the group an aura of uniqueness and exceptionalism. Second, through this process of 'cool-hunting,' the Beatles may ultimately lose the younger audience they are so aggressively courting when these consumers move on to the next trend. While the principles of branding and cultural branding afford the opportunity for corrective action, for the Beatles to do so, they will need to demonstrate a more hyperopic understanding of the cultural-commercial power of storytelling.

This research is just a preliminary investigation into the connections between popular music, storytelling and cultural branding, with numerous opportunities for further study. Perhaps the most natural extension of the ideas presented in this thesis would be an enquiry into the role and significance of storytelling in the Beatles' future branding and marketing activities. Similarly, with the escalation in the variety and scope of Beatle narratives, a study that followed the development of these activities into the future would also generate further understanding of the cultural-commercial functions of storytelling.

More broadly, the template I have established here could be used for investigation into the ways other popular music acts have utilised extant narratives; and, conversely, how narratives about other popular music acts have been developed, adapted and advanced by storytellers. Acts with the most obvious parallels to the Beatles and Beatle storytelling might be, but are not limited to, Bob Marley, the Smiths and the Ramones. Additionally, much could also be learned from evaluation of how more contemporary acts have taken more agentic management of their own stories for successful cultural and commercial exploit: Madonna, the Who, P. Diddy and 50 Cent amongst them.

Further study of the role of storytelling as a mediated, commercial popular music form could also be undertaken using ideas presented in this research. For instance, the music video channel VH-1 has produced series called *Storytellers*, where artists situate their music in a narrative context, telling stories of the inspiration and motivations of their songs, as well as *Behind the Music*, a documentary series that chronicles the history of popular music acts. Investigating how these programmes influence not only the establishment of a dominant pop music history and canon, but also how they bridge the chasm between storytelling as a creative, historical force and storytelling as a commercial and branding vehicle would be a worthwhile study.

Moving beyond the realm of popular music, there is much that remains to be explored in the intersections between storytelling and the cultural branding of other forms of cultural texts. For instance sports teams, like Manchester United and entertainers and performers like Oprah Winfrey, Martha Stewart, Jerry Springer and David and Victoria Beckham all have, in spite of Holt's assertions, established their own cultural brands, in which stories and storytelling are a central component. Even US President Barack Obama has displayed an increasing awareness of the value of telling a compelling story, using narratives of change and progress as foundations of recent campaign strategies (Frank and McPhail 2005). Ultimately, consideration of the role and significance of storytelling in the commercialisation and cultural branding of the Beatles leads to understanding of stories not as monolithic and static, but instead as dynamic and fluid, informed by as much as informing popular music and culture.

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APPENDIX A

Press Releases

For Immediate Release 09/06/2008
The Beatles Story, Albert Dock, Liverpool

John Lennon's sister calls on Reuters to retract

Speaking today from the opening of the Beatles Story's new special exhibition "The Many Faces of John Lennon" , John's sister Julia issued an impassioned plea for news agency Reuters to retract a comment made in a recent story in which John was described as a "lonely teenager abandoned by his mother".

"John is no longer around to defend himself from some of the bizarre, sordid and downright scurrilous rumours that still sadly surround his extraordinary life" said Julia Baird, speaking from the Albert Dock attraction, on what would have been Lennon's 68th birthday. "It makes me so sad especially in recent weeks when all manner of accusations have been flying about."

"In 2007 I wrote a book 'Imagine This' which was my attempt to tell the truth about John's childhood. John was removed from our mother Julia at the age of five to live with his aunt Mimi. He was not abandoned nor was he unloved – despite what the accepted tale might be."

"I'd like to take this opportunity to reiterate once more the love our mother Julia had for both John and I. In the short time I had with her, she installed the deep love and spiritual strength which have let me go on and was an inspiration to brother John. I'm in no doubt that my brother John felt the same."

Julia was speaking at the opening of 'The Many Faces of John Lennon', a photographic collection featuring over 40 images from Lennon's iconic career. Also on display will be items of John's clothing including Lennon's 'Imagine' jacket and one of John's famous collarless stage outfits.

'The Many Faces of John Lennon' will be on display at the Beatles Story until March 9th 2009.

- ENDS –

Notes to Editors:

- The Beatles Story is a unique visitor attraction that transports visitors on an enlightening and
  atmospheric journey into the life, times, culture and music of the Beatles.
- The Beatles Story is located on Liverpool 's historic Albert Dock. The attraction opened in
  1990 and has welcomed 3 million visitors from all around the world.
- The experience is accompanied by the 'Living History' audio guide which is narrated by John
  Lennon's sister, Julia. The Beatles Story offers English, French, Spanish, German, Italian,

Polish, Russian and Japanese audio guide translations. A Chinese version will be launched in late 2008.

- The Beatles Story, Albert Dock has undergone a massive expansion throughout 2008 which has seen it double in size. New features include a special exhibition space, 'Going Solo' a new gallery dedicated to the solo careers of John, Paul, George and Ringo, a hands-on interactive Discovery Zone for children and families, the Fab4Store gift shop and the Starbucks coffee house and relaxation area.
- www.beatlesstory.com

For further information, please contact:

Jamie Bowman, Press Officer
The Beatles Story, Britannia Vaults, Albert Dock, Liverpool, L3 4AD
Tel: 0151 709 1963 ext 231
E-mail: jamie@beatlesstory.com

Neil Aspinall, The Beatles' friend, guide and Apple mastermind, has died.

24th March 2008

Released on behalf of the family of Neil Aspinall.

One of the great legends of the music business, Neil Aspinall, has died in New York after a brief illness and a glorious life.

He was 66. His wife Suzy and his five children were with him as he passed over.

Neil's family said today: "He was the centre of our universe and still is".

Neil Aspinall was the man who was closer to all of The Beatles than anyone. Under his creative and caring direction, The Beatles business phenomenon and its trademark Apple transcended far beyond the Sixties.

He was the Beatles' friend who became their roadie who became the chief of their empire and the unassuming, modernising mastermind behind the band's enduring appeal and influence for four generations.

Although he would deny it, he was long considered to be "the real Fifth Beatle" by the music and entertainment industries which for 40 years revered and respected him as one of the wisest men in the record business.

Today Sir Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr paid tribute to "a loyal friend and a great man".

In a statement on behalf of Paul, Ringo, Yoko Ono and Olivia Harrison, Apple Corps said today: "The Beatles and the entire Apple Corps family, both past and present, wish to extend their greatest sympathy to the family of Neil Aspinall. As a loyal friend, confidant and chief executive, Neil's trusting stewardship and guidance has left a far-reaching legacy for generations to come. All his friends and loved ones will greatly miss him but will always retain the fondest memories of a great man".

Neil was born in October 1941 to Liverpool parents evacuated to Prestatyn, North Wales. He was the Liverpool schoolboy who became pals with Paul McCartney and George Harrison at the Liverpool Institute for Boys, where together they formed the 'Mad Lad' gang, sharing cigarettes behind the sheds, "doing ridiculous things together" and, as teenagers, adding John Lennon to the Mad Lads.

Although he studied for and briefly became an accountant, when his friends later formed The Beatles with Pete Best and then Ringo Starr, Neil remained at the centre of the gang that was to change the world. Always he was right at the Beatles side; captaining their flagship Apple for 40 years after beginning as their first road manager and driver of their old Commer van, doubling up as The Beatles' minder, spotlight operator, confidante, fixer, personal assistant and, moreover, their mate.

In a rare interview, Neil once said "People used to say to me then 'What do you do?' I'd stopped being an accountant or pretending to be one by this time and I said 'I drive the band around' and they'd say 'Yeah - I know that, but what do you do for a living?' Two years later, the same people were saying 'You lucky git, Neil'".

In 1964 during the making of The Beatles movie 'A Hard Day's Night', Neil met his future wife Suzy. They were married in 1968. Neil was a very proud father and grandfather.

Following the death of The Beatles manager Brian Epstein in 1967, Neil was asked by the band to take over the management of their company Apple Corps when it was founded in 1968. Typically, he agreed on condition that he would manage the corporation "only until they found somebody else". He remained the chief of Apple Corps until last year.

Shrewd, innovative and totally-trusted, Neil was the unseen architect of the reinvention of the post-Sixties Beatles, first with The Beatles At The BBC CD in the mid-90s, followed by the record-breaking Beatles Anthology and Beatles 1 albums.

As the keeper of The Beatles flame and protector of their legend, it was Neil who quietly acquired for Apple the Beatles rights back to countless photographs and film footage that enabled the making of the Grammy-winning Beatles Anthology TV and video series and the band's celebrated autobiography.

It was also Neil who masterminded the modern merchandising of The Beatles, notably with the relaunch of The Beatles Yellow Submarine film and CD, making it a bigger success in the 90s than it had originally been in the Sixties. From Let It Be Naked to The Beatles' recent Cirque du Soleil show hit Love, to every Beatles business success since the band broke up in 1970, Neil Aspinall steered the ship - and the submarine - always ensuring the Beatles' strong bond with Liverpool in every venture.

It has been reported that during the last 20 years of Neil's time at the helm of Apple Corps, The Beatles sold in excess of 70 million albums.

Although modest in any claim of his achievements, his quick and dry wit was amused by a comment made in The Observer newspaper during the hugely-successful 1995-96 Beatles Anthology project. The multi-media project, of which Neil was executive producer, once again cemented the Sixties band's dominance of the music scene around the world – "the only band to have become bigger than The Beatles is The Beatles", commented The Observer on the Anthology-led resurgence of Fab.

His friend, Apple aide and ABC TV producer David Saltz said today: "Neil was the most brilliant and inspirational guy that everybody just gravitated around; he had an amazing mind and he was a very groovy guy".

Neil Aspinall's wise, commonsense approach to what he dubbed "not the music business but the Beatles business" commanded great affection and respect in all who had the privilege of working with him but he was an intensely-private and naturally modest man in both his professional and personal lives, never taking a bow himself.

Neil avoided all personal publicity and always refused requests for interviews, pointing the credit to the band who made the records.

In The Beatles Anthology Neil said: "My happiest memories of being with the band were some of the laughs that we had backstage and in dressing rooms when nobody else was around and we were swapping jokes together. No big deal, really. It was those little personal things that are my favourite moments. We always had a laugh".

Besides running Apple Corps, Neil created Standby Films with Suzy - makers of the acclaimed 1999 Jimi Hendrix movie, Hendrix: Band Of Gypsys. Neil was also one of the co-founders of Paul McCartney's performing arts university LIPA, now housed in the building of their old school.

Few outside Neil's circle knew of his own talent as a wry artist with coloured inks - but now an exhibition of his previously-never-before-seen work is to be held on a date to be announced.

Neil Aspinall fell ill to lung cancer two months ago. He has been under care at the Sloan-Kettering hospital in New York.

Apple Corps, http://www.thebeatles.com/core/news/, accessed 24 September 2008

World First for New MA in The Beatles, Popular Music and Society

*** Press Release ***
3rd March 2009

A brand new MA in The Beatles, Popular Music and Society has been launched at Liverpool Hope University and is the first MA of its kind in the World.

The new course, which can be studied both full- and part-time, covers four modules with specific issues relating to The Beatles and Popular Music, consisting of four 12-week taught modules plus a dissertation.

Mike Brocken, Senior Lecturer in Popular Music at Liverpool Hope University said: "There have been over 8000 books about The Beatles but there has never been serious academic study and that is what we are going to address.

The Beatles influenced so much of society, not just with their music, but also with fashion from their collar-less jackets to their psychedelic clothes.

Their output covered a huge range from the black and white film 'A Hard Day's Night' to Strawberry Fields Forever which was accompanied by arguably the first pop video.

Forty years on, now is the right time and Liverpool is the right place to study The Beatles. This Beatles MA is expected to attract a great deal of attention, not just locally, but nationally and we have already had enquires from abroad, particularly the United States.

The MA the Beatles Popular Music & Society is a seminal moment in popular music studies. For the first time in the UK and possibly the world a post graduate taught course is offered to research into the Beatles, the city from which they emerged, the contexts of the 1960s, technology, sound and songwriting, and the industries that have set up in their wake to capitalise on tourism in the city of Liverpool."

Popular music studies is now rightly regarded as an academic discipline in its own right and its interdisciplinary nature will appeal to those who have come from backgrounds in the humanities, cultural studies as well as music. There are also opportunities to study at certificate and diploma level."

The one-year full time course will cover not just The Beatles but popular music in general and its effect on society since the sixties.

The first module introduces methods and approaches of how we go about studying popular music and is linked to a specific text that is recommended to students,

Longhurst - Popular Music and Society. This module then focuses down on several short Beatles-related issues that can be covered by some of Longhurst's text - issues such as covering and authenticity, locality, the music industry of the post-war era, and subcultures.

The second module discusses Liverpool in the immediately pre and then post wwii eras and how various social and musical issues fed into the early Merseybeat & Beatles profiles. It will also discuss the politics of place and focus on venues in and around Merseyside, genres, class and suburbia.

The third module looks at the studio sound and compositions of the Beatles and will bring in popular music semiotics. There will be an opportunity in this module to present a case study of one song and this will be linked to a performance if the student so wishes, otherwise assessment via a presentation and written work will be acceptable.

The final module deals with social anthropology and ethonography of the Beatles and gives the student the opportunity to get out and interview people with a presentation and report to submit. Students may wish to study some local musicians or media or even the local industry that has now set up to capitalise on the group.

*** ENDS ***

Notes to Editors:

1. Students on the full-time course would attend two evenings per week and cover all four modules in one academic year. Part-time students would attend once per week for two years. In both cases a dissertation is due towards the end of August.
2. There is no need to be a music reader for the final module as popular music semiotics allows us to study a musical text in a different way.
3. Different guest lecturers will be available for all three modules.
4. Assessment will be via an annoted biblio, a presentation, and an essay.

For further information please contact The Press Office at Liverpool Hope University on telephone: 0151 291 3355 or e-mail: press@hope.ac.uk

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Liverpool Hope University, http://www.hopeac.uk/press-releases/beatles-ma.html, accessed 4 March 2009

APPLE CORPS LTD., MTV AND HARMONIX ANNOUNCE "THE BEATLES: ROCK BAND", WORLDWIDE RELEASE SET FOR 9/9/09

5th March 2009

New York, NY - March 5, 2009 - Apple Corps, Ltd., Harmonix and MTV Games, a part of Viacom's MTV Networks (NYSE: VIA, VIA.B), today announced the 9/9/09 worldwide release of The Beatles: Rock Band (http://www.thebeatlesrockband.com). The music-based video game, an unprecedented, experiential progression through and celebration of the music and artistry of The Beatles, will be available simultaneously worldwide in North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and other territories for the Xbox 360 video game and entertainment system from Microsoft, PLAYSTATION 3 computer entertainment system and Wii home videogame console from Nintendo.

The Beatles: Rock Band will allow fans to pick up the guitar, bass, mic or drums and experience The Beatles extraordinary catalogue of music through gameplay that takes players on a journey through the legacy and evolution of the band's legendary career. In addition, The Beatles: Rock Band will offer a limited number of new hardware offerings modeled after instruments used by John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr throughout their career.

The Beatles: Rock Band will be offered as standalone software and hardware as well as a limited edition bundle. The game will be compatible with all Rock Band instrument controllers and other current music-based video game peripherals.

Available on 9/9/09:

- The Beatles: Rock Band Software - Xbox 360, PLAYSTATION 3, Wii: $59.99 MSRP
- The Beatles: Rock Band Standalone Guitars - Xbox 360, PLAYSTATION 3, Wii: $99.99 MSRP
- The Beatles: Rock Band Limited Edition Premium Bundle: Xbox 360, PLAYSTATION 3, Wii: $249.99 MSRP

Please note: Pricing outside of the US to be announced at a later date.

The Beatles: Rock Band marks the first time that Apple Corps, along with EMI Music, Harrisongs Ltd, and Sony/ATV Music Publishing, has agreed to present The Beatles music in an interactive video game format. The Beatles: Rock Band will be published by MTV Games and developed by Harmonix, the world's premier music video game company and creators of the best-selling Rock Band. Electronic Arts will serve as distribution partner for the game. In addition, Giles Martin, co-producer of The Beatles innovative LOVE album project, is providing his expertise and serving as Music Producer for this groundbreaking Beatles project.

Exclusive content created by Apple Corps, MTV Games and Harmonix will be made available to fans over the next few months who participate in a pre-order campaign through major retailers. More details on The Beatles: Rock Band game and pre-order will be revealed in the coming months.

Please visit thebeatlesrockband.com.

Apple Corps, http://www.thebeatles.com/core/news/, accessed 07 March 2009.

APPENDIX B

Song Lyrics

Del-Vikings
'Come Go With Me' (1957)

Love, love me darlin'
Come and go with me,
Please don't send me
'way beyond the sea;
I need you, darlin',
So come go with me

Come, come, come, come,
Come into my heart,
Tell me, darlin',
We will never part;
I need you, darlin',
So come go with me

Yes, I need you,
Yes, I really need you,
Please say you'll never leave me.
Well, say, you never,
Yes, you really never,
You never give me a chance

Paul McCartney
'Dear Boy' (1971)

I guess you never knew, dear boy, what you have found,
I guess you never knew, dear boy,
That she was just the cutest thing around,
I guess you never knew what you have found,
Dear boy

I guess you never knew, dear boy,
That love was there.
And maybe when you look too hard, dear boy,
You never do become aware,
I guess you never did become aware,
Dear boy

When I stepped in, my heart was down and out,
But her love came through and brought me 'round,
Got me up and about

Dear boy,
Dear boy, dear boy,
Dear boy

I hope you never know, dear boy,
How much you missed.
And even when you fall in love, dear boy,
It won't be half as good as this
I hope you never know how much you missed,
Dear boy, how much you missed

George Harrison
'Isn't It A Pity' (1970)

Isn't it a pity
Now, isn't it a shame
How we break each other's hearts
And cause each other pain
How we take each other's love
Without thinking anymore
Forgetting to give back
Isn't it a pity

Some things take so long
But how do I explain
When not too many people
Can see we're all the same
And because of all their tears
Their eyes can't hope to see
The beauty that surrounds them
Isn't it a pity

Forgetting to give back
Isn't it a pity
Forgetting to give back
Now, isn't it a pity

What a pity
What a pity, pity, pity

George Harrison
'All Things Must Pass' (1970)

Sunrise doesn't last all morning
A cloudburst doesn't last all day
Seems my love is up and has left you with no warning
It's not always going to be this grey

All things must pass
All things must pass away

Sunset doesn't last all evening
A mind can blow those clouds away
After all this, my love is up and must be leaving
It's not always going to be this grey

All things must pass
All things must pass away
All things must pass
None of life's strings can last
So, I must be on my way
And face another day

Now the darkness only stays the night-time
In the morning it will fade away
Daylight is good at arriving at the right time
It's not always going to be this grey

All things must pass
All things must pass away
All things must pass
All things must pass away

George Harrison
'Run Of The Mill' (1970)

Everyone has a choice
When to and not to raise their voice
It's you that decides
Which way will you turn
While feeling that our love's not your concern
It's you that decides

No one around you
Will carry the blame for you
No one around you
Will love you today and throw it all away
Tomorrow when you rise
Another day for you to realise
Or send me down again

As the days stand up on end
You've got me wondering how I lost your friendship
But I see it in your eyes

Though I'm beside you
I can't carry the blame for you
I may decide to
Get out with your blessing
Where I'll carry on guessing

How high will you leap
Will you make enough for you to reap it?
Only you'll arrive
At your own made end
With no one but yourself to be offended
It's you that decides

John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band
'God' (1970)

God is a concept,
By which we can measure,
Our pain

I'll say it again,
God is a concept,
By which we can measure,
Our pain

I don't believe in magic,
I don't believe in I-ching,
I don't believe in bible,
I don't believe in tarot,
I don't believe in Hitler,
I don't believe in Jesus,
I don't believe in Kennedy,
I don't believe in Buddha,
I don't believe in mantra,
I don't believe in Gita,
I don't believe in yoga,
I don't believe in kings,
I don't believe in Elvis,
I don't believe in Zimmerman,
I don't believe in Beatles,
I just believe in me,
Yoko and me,
And that's reality

The dream is over,
What can I say?
The dream is over,
Yesterday,
I was the dreamweaver,
But now I'm reborn,
I was the walrus,
But now I'm John,
And so dear friends,
You just have to carry on,
The dream is over

John Lennon
'How Do You Sleep' (1971)

So Sgt. Pepper took you by surprise
You better see right through that mother's eyes
Those freaks was right when they said you was dead
The one mistake you made was in your head
Ah, how do you sleep?
Ah, how do you sleep at night?

You live with straights who tell you you was king
Jump when your momma tell you anything
The only thing you done was Yesterday
And since you're gone you're just Another Day
Ah, how do you sleep?
Ah, how do you sleep at night?

Ah, how do you sleep?
Ah, how do you sleep at night?

A pretty face may last a year or two
But pretty soon they'll see what you can do
The sound you make is Muzak to my ears
You must have learned something in all those years

Ah, how do you sleep?
Ah, how do you sleep at night?

George Harrison
'All Those Years Ago' (1981)

I'm shouting all about love
While they treated you like a dog
When you were the one who had made it so clear
All those years ago

I'm talking all about how to give
They don't act with much honesty
But you point the way
To the truth when you say, "All you need is love"

Living with good and bad
I always looked up to you
Now we're left cold and sad
By someone, the devil's best friend
Someone who offended all

We're living in a bad dream
They've forgotten all about mankind
And you were the one they backed up to the wall
All those years ago

You were the one who imagined it all
All those years ago

Deep in the darkest night
I send out a prayer to you
Now in the world of light
Where the spirit free of the lies
And all else that we despised

They've forgotten all about God
He's the only reason we exist
Yet you were the one that they said was so weird
All those years ago

You said it all though not many had ears
All those years ago
You had control of our smiles and our tears
All those years ago

George Harrison
'When We Was Fab' (1988)

Back then long time ago when grass was green
Woke up in a daze
Arrived like strangers in the night
Fab...Long time ago when we was fab

Fab...back when income tax was all we had
Caresses fleeced you in the morning light
Casualties at dawn
And we did it all
Fab...Long time ago when we was fab

Fab...You are my world you are my only love
And while you're in this world
The fuzz gonna come and claim you
But you mo better wise
When the buzz gonna come and take you away
Take you away, take you away

The microscopes that magnified the tears
Studied warts and all
Still the life flows on and on

Fab...Long time ago when we was fab
Fab...But It's All Over Now Baby Blue
Fab...Long time ago when we was fab
Fab...Like this pullover you sent to me

Fab...And You've Really Got A Hold On Me
Fab...Long time ago when we was fab

Paul McCartney
'Here Today' (1982)

And if I say I really knew you well
What would your answer be
If you were here today
Ooh-ooh-ooh, here today

Well knowing you,
You'd probably laugh and say that we were worlds apart
If you were here today
Ooh-ooh-ooh, here today

But as for me,
I still remember how it was before
And I am holding back the tears no more
Ooh-ooh-ooh, I love you

What about the time we met,
Well, I suppose that you could say that we were playing hard to get
Didn't understand a thing
But we could always sing

What about the night we cried,
Because there wasn't any reason left to keep it all inside
Never understood a word
But you were always there with a smile

And if I say I really loved you
And was glad you came along

If you were here today
Ooh-ooh-ooh, for you were in my song
Ooh-ooh-ooh, here today

Elton John
'Empty Garden (Hey, Hey Johnny) (1982)

What happened here
As the New York sunset disappeared
I found an empty garden among the flagstones there

Who lived here
He must have been a gardener that cared a lot
Who weeded out the tears and grew a good crop
And now it all looks strange
It's funny how one insect can damage so much grain

And what's it for
This little empty garden by the brownstone door
And in the cracks along the sidewalk nothing grows no more

Who lived here
He must have been a gardener that cared a lot
Who weeded out the tears and grew a good crop
And we are so amazed we're crippled and we're dazed
A gardener like that one no one can replace

And I've been knocking but no one answers
And I've been knocking most all the day
Oh and I've been calling, 'Oh hey, hey Johnny
'Can't you come out to play'

And through their tears
Some say he farmed his best in younger years
But he'd have said that roots grow stronger if only he could hear

Who lived there
He must have been a gardener that cared a lot
Who weeded out the tears and grew a good crop
Now we pray for rain, and with every drop that falls
We hear, we hear your name

Johnny can't you come out to play in your empty garden

U2
'God Part II' (1988)

Don't believe the devil
I don't believe his book
But the truth is not the same
Without the lies he made up

Don't believe in excess
Success is to give
Don't believe in riches
But you should see where I live
I...I believe in love

Don't believe in forced entry
Don't believe in rape
But every time she passes by
Wild thoughts escape
I don't believe in death row
Skid row or the gangs
Don't believe in the Uzi
It just went off in my hand
I...I believe in love

Don't believe in cocaine
Got a speedball in my head
I could cut and crack you open
Do you hear what I said
Don't believe them when they tell me
There ain't no cure
The rich stay healthy
The sick stay poor
I...I believe in love

Don't believe in Goldman
His type like a curse
Instant karma's going to get him
If I don't get him first
Don't believe that rock 'n' roll
Can really change the world
As it spins in revolution
It spirals and it turns
I...I believe in love

Don't believe in the '60s
The golden age of pop
You glorify the past
When the future dries up
Heard a singer on the radio late last night
He says he's gonna kick the darkness

'til it bleeds daylight
I...I believe in love

I feel like I'm falling
Like I'm spinning on a wheel
It always stops beside of me
With a presence I can feel
I...I believe in love

Stop