L. SCHEMA

Fetish, taboo, simulacrum: An applied psychoanalytic/semiotic approach to the experiential consumption of music products

George Rossolatos, PhD Candidate, University of Kassel, Germany

and

Margaret K. Hogg, Fulgoni Professor of Consumer Behaviour and Marketing, Lancaster University, UK

Abstract: We draw on key concepts from Freudian and Lacanian theories in order to conceptualize and interpret the experiential consumption of music products, and to demonstrate the potential contribution of psychoanalytic theories to marketing and consumer behaviour. By combining psychoanalytic with semiotic terms and methods (which were integral to Lacanian psychoanalysis and evident, albeit latently, in Freud's interpretivist approach to the 'symptom'), we propose a conceptual model based on the concepts of fetish, taboo, simulacrum. In order to explore the experiential consumption of music products, we examine the process of meaning co-creation through a discourse analytic approach to findings from four focus groups with specific music-acts' fans. By applying the conceptual framework to the interpretation of the findings, we illustrate the potential contribution of psychoanalytic concepts (hitherto largely under-leveraged) to understanding the consumption and marketing of cultural artifacts, such as music products.

Keywords: consumer psychoanalysis, fetish, taboo, simulacrum, Lacan, semiotics

INTRODUCTION

Fetish, taboo and simulacrum constitute the operational pillars of our proposed consumer psychoanalytic interpretive model that we hope will help us make sense of how a music product functions in the context of experiential consumption. We begin by discussing the key concepts from Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic theories that constitute the basis of our conceptualization and interpretation of the experiential consumption of music products. The line of argument that we develop from the literature is that the music product is a taboo that caters for consumers' need for ecstatic experiences, that is for experiences that deliver them from their phantasmatic identity and relocate them to the realm of unconscious processes. As fetish or petit objet a, the music product allows for access to the Other, in as much as it distances consumers from the Other as object of desire. Contamination is the mode whereby aesthetic features of music products are transferred to the communicative (communal) sphere within which the consumption experience is embedded. Consumers gain jouissance from the specular experience, that is the mixed feeling of pleasure from temporarily identifying with a decentralised signifier, and pain caused by the permanent absence of the centre of the simulacrum. We then proceed by describing our empirical research, and the application of discourse analysis to the interpretation of our data, collected via focus groups with four different groups of fans. We present our findings and illustrate how the conceptual framework, developed from the psychoanalytic literature, can be used to generate richer insights into the co-creation of meaning during the experiential consumption of music products. We conclude with a discussion on the conceptual and methodological contributions of our study.

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND SEMIOTICS

Our proposed model of consumer psychoanalysis draws on concepts from Freudian and Lacanian theories. But we also seek to introduce semiotics into this interpretive canvas. Why? Perhaps stressing that a psychoanalytic approach is complemented by semiotics is a pleonasm, especially in the case of Lacanian theory, where the structure of language came to replace Freudian biologism and naturalism. Whereas Freud sought to ground his theory in biological processes (albeit speculatively and with an occasional stress on the impossibility of such a task), Lacan drew on Saussure's structural linguistics and was inspired by the structuralist movement in developing his complex diagrammatic reasoning.

Lacan is known not only for having inverted the Saussurean equation of the sign as the ratio of signifier to signified, but also for having employed both Saussurean and Jakobsonian semiotic terminology in different phases of his thinking. Hence, we would argue that semiotics is indispensable for understanding and applying Lacanian psychoanalysis. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that parts of Lacan's theory can be difficult to comprehend without some knowledge of Heidegger's fundamental ontology and Hegel's phenomenology.

THE CONSUMPTION ACT OF THE MUSIC PRODUCT AS EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING PHENOMENON

Music as discourse is highly self-referential. Our analytical focus is not on the internal syntax of a music piece as a non-branded artistic object, but rather on the ways whereby the music product assumes signification in the context of inter-subjective communication, facilitated by promotional discourses. We agree with Bode's (2006) criticism that syntactical approaches fail to take account of music perception, as they address neither the ways in which a music product is shaped through its promotional discourse, nor the ways in which the meaning created by

promotional discourses is further diffused and re-interpreted by mediators of cultural production (in Bourdieu's (1993) terms).

Fetish, taboo, simulacrum: The triadic definition of the music product

In order to develop a psychoanalytic account of how the signification of the music product is enacted in the context of the inter-subjective communicative trajectory of a neo-tribe or followers of a music act, we propose a model that consists of three key operational categories: the simulacrum, the fetish, and the taboo. We briefly define these three categories before seeking to demonstrate how they are inscribed in consumer behavior.

Simulacrum and phantasm

The notion of simulacrum dates back to Platonic idealism. "Plato distinguishes between the idea and its physical embodiment, between the model and the copy, but he also occasionally discriminates between the good copy (eikon) and the bad copy (phantasma) or simulacrum" (Borgue, 1989, p.56). In contrast to Plato, images for Lacan are copies of the absent 'event' that sets in motion the chain of cultural signifiers. Therefore, the concept of '*eikon*' or 'image' becomes redundant, and what we are left with are 'fleeting phantasms' or simulacra. According to Baudrillard, the simulacrum "masks *the absence* of a profound reality. It does not refer to any reality whatsoever. It is the simulacrum of itself" (Baudrillard, 1981, p.17; italics in the original, first author's translation).

The simulacrum differs from the image, while being responsible for its formation for the following reasons. First, contrary to the image, simulacrum does not presuppose an object external to itself that causally determines its appearance as copy. Simulacrum is self-produced and self-subsistent. It alters constantly in itself, allowing for new signifiers to emerge in a signifying chain.

Second, simulacrum does not have a representative function, but rather conceals a radical absence, which is that of the Real[1], in Lacan's terms, or the primary process that takes place in the unconscious / id, in terms of Freud's first and second topography respectively.

The music product as simulacrum is precisely this discursive bricolage of heterogeneous elements. The promotionally constituted music product, as a verbal, aural and visual rendition/revision of the primary process of the unconscious libidinal flow, sets the stage for the recuperation of the absent 'event' of the subject's split. Concomitantly, the phantasmatic subject of consumption is instituted in the signifying chain of the promotional discourse of the music product qua simulacrum. By incorporating the signifying effects of the simulacrum in the sphere o f a neo-tribe's communicative exchanges, consumers participate in the establishment and enhancement of the stage-setting created by a promotional discourse.

Fetish and petit objet a

The fetish is primarily an object invested with libidinal energy. Hence, it is often viewed as an eroticized object, because it performs a function that accords with the pleasure principle, i.e. the maximization of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. "The Fetish has an ordering power derived from its status as the fixation or inscription of a unique originating event that has brought together previously heterogeneous elements into a novel identity" (Ades, 1995, p.72). As Freud argued: "What is substituted for the sexual object is some part of the body (such as the foot or the hair), which is in general very inappropriate for sexual purposes, or some inanimate object which here bears an assignable relation to the person whom it replaces…In other cases the replacement

---

[1] The Real constitutes one of the three Lacanian orders, the other two being the Imaginary and the Symbolic. Imaginary grows from the infant's experience of its 'specular ego'. It arises with the mirror phase but extends far into the adult individual's experience of others and of the external world.' (Sarup, 1992, p.101). The Symbolic Order is the sum of 'various codes that situate our behavioural utterances, rendering them meaningful' (Sarup, 1992, p. 121). The unconscious, the Real and the Other are used isotopically by Lacan. What Freud sought to delineate topographically as unconscious, as the locus whence stems desire, Lacan circumscribed in terms of the Real. Both the unconscious and the Real cause the subject to desire a primordial fullness-of-being, which is lost when entering, for Lacan, the Order of the Symbolic. A language allows for the recuperation of the 'object' of the Real as the object of desire, by furnishing identifiable cultural signifiers in an endless chain of signification, in as much as the object is distanced from the subject through its leapfrogging among signifiers. 'The 'orders' are not stable concepts; at each moment each may be implicated in the redefinition of the others. Although the Imaginary and the Symbolic are distinct and opposed, the Symbolic encroaches upon the Imaginary, organises it and gives it direction.' (Sarup, 1992, p.105).

of the object by a fetish is determined by a symbolic connection, of which the person concerned is usually not conscious. It is not always possible to trace the course of these connections with certainty" (Freud, 2000, pp.1480-1482).

Lacan dislocates the concept of fetish from its strictly biological contours and its circumscription in erogenous zones, and transposes it to the cultural order. The function performed by fetish in this instance is the same as the function performed by the petit objet a[2] (a standing for *Autre* in French or small other).

> "The *objet* a, as what is lacking, is non-specular, it is not graspable in the image…. Then again, the *objet a* is intimately related to the linguistic signifier and is a kind of constitutive effect of signification….The *objet a* is at once impossible to possess and impossible to live without. In these ways, the *objet a* is an embodiment of perfect contradiction. Both inner and outer, subjective and objective, it is at every point both/and and neither/nor. This sheds light on Lacan's formula for phantasy $S \lozenge a$, ,in which the subject stands in relation to the Other. The central term of the formula, the *poingon,* fuses the logical symbols of conjunction and disjunction, indicating both inclusion and exclusion, both necessity and contingency, both implication and impossibility. The *objet a* is the point at which the subject assumes a certain paradoxical consistency precisely by virtue of marking the impossibility of coincidence of the subject with itself' (Boothby, 2003, pp.161-162).

The cultural icon provides a cipher for approximating the Other, a code for communicating among a music act's fan base a fundamental lack, which is the lack of the origin. The Other points to a 'gap' in the centre of subjectivity, which gap is re-produced in consumption through the gap that exists between the iconic object as objet a and what it stands for. "The Other is the locus in which is situated the chain of the signifiers that governs whatever may be made present of the subject; it is the field of that living being in which the subject has to appear…… The relation of the subject to the Other is entirely produced in a process of gap" (Lacan, 2006,

---

2 Henceforth designated as *small object a*.

pp.203-206). The reason why this gap, which is of central value in constantly rekindling the desire to consume, is never closed, is that its closure would amount to a dissolution of the ego, as it would become one with its Other. This gap *in* and *for* the Other "presents a trickier problem: it can only be 'interpreted' by the offer of an object, and the impossible task is now to procure an object that could measure up to it, that would be on the level with the Other's desire" (Dolar, 2003, p.25). The 'gap' is also the reason why the icon is an object of uncritical devotion. The processes whereby devotees demonstrate psychic attachment to the icon have been called 'sacralizing processes', that is processes whereby "consumers construe meaning in various fashions and in different degrees of ontological intensity" (Belk, Wallendorf, Sherry, 1989, p. 13).

Taboo and the arche-signifier of the phallus

What is of particular relevance in Freud's interpretive approach to the taboo, which combines moral percepts of his time with anthropological insights, is the paradoxical nature of the concept. The object that functions as taboo is unclean and sacred at the same time. Communal taboos inspire awe and terror as they stand at the limits of a community's ethical and spiritual contours, which must not be transgressed. "The meaning of taboo, as we see it, diverges in two contrary directions. To us it means, on the one hand, 'sacred', 'consecrated', and on the other hand 'uncanny', 'dangerous', 'forbidden', 'unclean'. The converse in Polynesian is *noa*, which means 'common' or 'generally accessible'. Thus 'taboo' has about it a sense of something unapproachable, and it is principally expressed in prohibitions and restrictions" (Freud, 2000, p. 2666). The transgression of these boundaries amounts to the dissolution of the notion of selfhood, and concomitantly lapsing into the dark continent of the unconscious. The cultural icon functions as taboo for the simple reason that it guards against the ultimate transgression, which is the defiance of primary repression, and which is a necessary condition for entering the symbolic order of language.

In so far as Lacan posits the Phallus (in its symbolic dimension) as the primary signifier, which must be lost in order for the individual to enter the order of language (that is the chain of interlocking cultural signifiers) the Phallus assumes the role of a taboo. "The phallus is a signifier, a signifier whose function, in the inter-subjective economy of analysis, may lift the veil

from the function it served in the [Ancient] mysteries. For it is the signifier that is destined to designate meaning effects as a whole, insofar as the signifier conditions them by its presence as signifier" (Lacan, 2006, p.579). By implication, a dominant visual anchor of a cultural icon is co-extensive with a phallic arche-signifier and, qualified in terms of the product category at hand, a music product and the key signifiers in its signifying chain qua simulacrum constitute (as a gestalt) a taboo, insofar as these stand metaphorically for an object of devotion on behalf of a core consumer franchise or a loyal fan base.

The subject's immersion in a signifying chain is tantamount to an attempt to recover the 'object' that was lost in the event of the split of the subject. Therefore, fetishes are significatory condensations of the elements that have been displaced from the locus of the 'event' into the order of language, and are thus responsible for the maintenance of the prohibitive function of the primary taboo. Alternatively, the primary taboo can be seen as infinitely refracted in the mirror-images or the signifiers that fetishistically make up the image of the music product. "Normally, the purchase of a good does not violate the displacement rule. It does not summon the larger system of which it is a part[3] and so expose it to empirical scrutiny and proof. What is being bought is not the whole bridge but a small part of it" (McCracken, 1988, p.112). What McCracken calls 'small part' is tantamount to the small object a, as above illustrated. Each 'small part' acts as an inscription of the prohibitive function of the phallus. The music product and its structural elements, as constituted through promotional discourse, is, therefore, a taboo that prohibits inasmuch as it reveals the 'object' or the 'event' of prohibition, an object that has always been absent from the order of language, and, indeed, allows this order to be constituted as such by virtue of its absence.

To summarize, fetish, taboo and simulacrum are the key constituents of our proposed consumer psychoanalytic interpretive model, which will help us make sense of how a music product functions in the context of its consumers' attempt to recuperate the 'event' of the split, and to reach the originary point of their entry or birth into the symbolic order, as evinced in a

---

[3] In terms of the 'summoning' of the product, in contrast to McCracken's approach, we would argue that the product perpetuates the displacement of meaning precisely because of its capacity to summon the general system, or, in symbolic notation, the capacity of 'S' to summon '$'. This summoning was called by Lacan 'Demand' (in contrast to 'need' and 'desire'), a fundamental demand laid upon the subject by the Real for displaying it in 'full nudity', which is the impossibility that motivates the infinite displacement of signifiers and consumers' identification with them.

dynamic interplay with the order of the Imaginary. We now move to an illustration of how the subject is formed through language, with an emphasis on inter-subjective processes of subject formation, which will aid us in gaining a clearer picture of the differences between ego-psychology and Lacanian psychoanalysis that are instrumental for making sense of the unique contributions of the latter to consumer behaviour research.

FROM ECO-CENTRISM TO INTER-SUBJECTIVITY: THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE AS OTHER IN CONDITIONING COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCES

One of the main reasons why the paradigm of psychoanalysis has tended to remain on the margins of consumer behaviour research relates to the fundamental differences in theorizing the subject between ego-psychology and Lacanian psychoanalysis. In crude terms, whereas for ego psychology, which is informed by the Cartesian ego-centric cogito, subjectivity is identical to an omnipresent and stable center, for Lacanian psychoanalysis the subject is always already absent and ec-centric[4]. The subject for Lacan may not be conceived of separately from the notion of the Other. The other, as a concrete subject, different from oneself, is an instantiation of the *Big Other* (Autre), while an object, as object of value, is a small object a (small other). Inter-subjectivity (as opposed to ego-centrism and biological reductionism) is, therefore, of paramount importance for understanding the foundational character of language and the Other in Lacanian psychoanalysis. "Freudian psychology, propelling its induction with an audacity that verges on recklessness, claims to move from interpersonal relations, isolating them as determined by our culture, to the biological function that is taken to be their substratum" (Lacan, 2006, p.73). Experiential consumption of music products from a psychoanalytic perspective cannot be conceptualized independently of others who are partaking of a neo-tribe of fans or followers of a music act. Let us start by briefly showing how the subject is constituted and/or split through language,

---

4[1] 'The ego is a place of an imaginary blinding, a deception; far from being the salutary part of the mind that could serve as a firm support of the psychoanalytic cure, against the vagaries of the id and the superego (such was the argument of ego-psychology), rather, it is itself the source of all kinds of fantasy formations. If such is the nature of the I, then it must be most sharply opposed to cogito, with its inherent pretension to self-transparency and self-certainty' (Dolar 1998: 14-15).

according to Lacan, prior to further qualifying the subject's subjectification through an inter-subjective account.

"Since the ego is an imaginary construction by which the subject objectifies himself for himself through his stand-ins, the whole of subjectivity is thus undermined by a paradox" (Dor and Gurewich, 1998, p.155). According to Lacan, the ego is 'absolutely impossible to distinguish from the imaginary captations that constitute it in its function and in its actuality, by another and for another' (Dor and Gurewich, 1998, p.155). Lacan's account of the constitution of the subject through inter-subjectivity is illustrated in Schema L (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Lacan's Schema L (Lacan 2006: 40)

According to Dor and Gurewich's (1998) account of Schema L Es $(1)_5$ in the upper left-hand corner stands for 'Subject'. Even though the subject is in position S, it is not here that he apprehends himself. He sees himself in the 'ego' (3). Because the subject starts with the

---

5 Numbers in brackets correspond to positions of the Schema L in Figure 1. Additionally, the initials 'a' and 'o', denoting 'autre' and 'other' are used interchangeably in the description of Model L which is in line with Dor and Gurewich's illustration.

image of the other in the formation of his identity, he will enter into a subjective movement, correlative with the other. Thus, it is in the form of the specular other (the subject's own image in the mirror) that the subject will also perceive the other, that is, his fellow being, situated at o' (2) in the schema. The subject's relation with himself is always mediated by a fictional line, the axis oo' (3-2). The relation of S to o (1-3) is, thus, dependent on o' (2), and, inversely, the subject's relation to the other (o'-2), his fellow being, is dependent on o (3). We may, therefore, speak of a dialectic of identification of oneself with the other and of the other with oneself. The fourth term of Schema L is symbolized by O (4), the Other. To understand this term, we first must clarify that what happens when the subject speaks to his fellow beings, he speaks in a common language that upholds o (3) and o' (2) as imaginary egos that are *ec-sistent* with regard to the Other (4), but also 'real' entities. The Other, as against a subject as o (3) and its other as o' (2) is situated on the other side of the *wall of language*, just as the subject S (1) himself is separated from the Other by this same order of language.

The music product has its own language. The inter-subjective formation of the subject qua member of a neo-tribe that is predicated on the imago of the music product is enacted not only through oral discourse, but also through partaking of the aural and visual signifiers that make up the language of a music product. The aural and visual modalities are of greater semiotic significance in the constitution of inter-subjective identity in relation to music products, while the mode of constitution is largely of a specular order, as will be shown in the next section.

MIRROR-MIRROR ON THE…RECORD-COVER: THE PRIMACY OF THE MIRROR-STAGE IN INTER-SUBJECTIVE SPECULAR EXPERIENTIAL CONSUMPTION

Popular music is an indispensable part of people's lives in contemporary post-industrial societies. Tagg (1982, p.37) has estimated that the 'average Westerner's brain probably spends around twenty-five per cent of its lifetime registering, monitoring and decoding popular music'. The *image* of a music product functions as a *mirror* in which individual members of the audience reflect themselves and, concomitantly, structure their self-image around the signs that make up

this cultural artefact. Cultural mediators (press, radio, dj's, influencers, opinion-leaders) are responsible for the construction of the mirror, which lies between the poles of consumption and production. Consumers are responsible for inscribing the mirrored features in their comportment, and reflect these features back to the cultural mediators. Figure 2 summarizes the process of the music product's image-making or product concept:
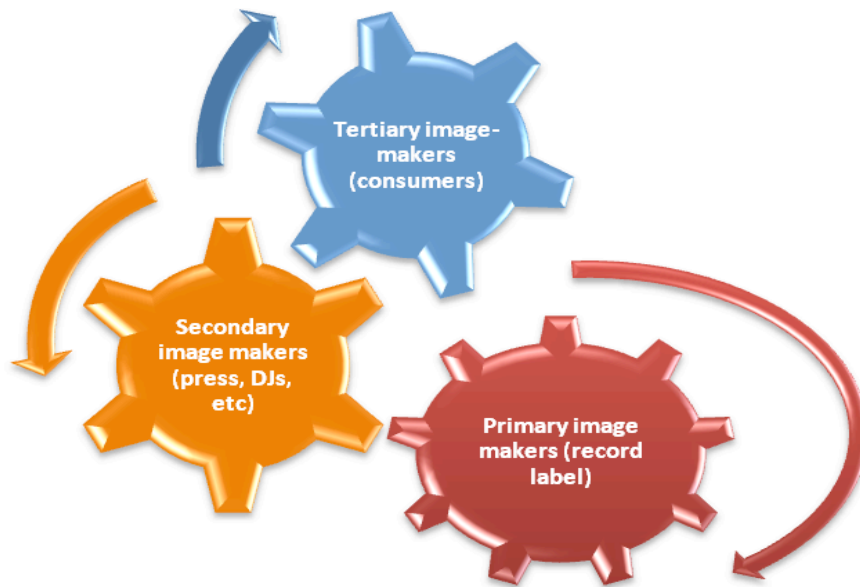
Figure 2. Stakeholders involved in the cultural production of a music product (Rososolatos, 1998)

The meaning of the music product that is produced by cultural mediators has been defined as "the complex of significations, which at once represents, advocates and anticipates the circulating entity or entities to which it refers" (Wernick, 1996, p.182). Ritson and Elliott (1995, p.1049) termed this process *co-creation of meaning,* denoting that "the reader connects the meanings derived from a text with their own experiences and repertoires in a co-creative act" (also see Ritson and Elliott 1999).

The process of constructing a music product is embedded in progressive mirroring effects between a brand's discourse and the inter-subjective communicative trajectory of its followers. The concept of the mirror-stage is crucial for understanding this mirroring process. "The mirror stage is the inaugural phase of psychic development during which the child frees himself from

his captivity in the dual relation to his mother. The outlines of subjectivity that are defined through the achievement of primal identity allow the child to begin his subjective movement toward access to the symbolic, where he will put an end to his imaginary, specular relation with the mother. Yet it is precisely through this access to the symbolic that the subject's relapse into the imaginary occurs" (Dor and Gurewich, 1998, p.157). The imaginary identification of the child with its mirror-image is largely accounted for by the way the Order of the Imaginary functions as responsible for the non-symbolic aspects of subject-formation, also prevalent during adult life. Examples of imaginary identification with specular images abound in cultural products, such as film and music. As discussed in the previous section, specular identification as a condition for the formation of the subject does not take place merely between the subject and the music product's imago, but among subjects that partake of the common language instituted by a music product.

Identification with the specular object in an inter-subjective setting occurs in a participatory fashion. Participation (and not individual reflection) is the modus operandi whereby the specular object assumes value for a consumption tribe. The mirror phase whereby a subject recognizes (and at the same time misses) itself in the specular image is enacted in a group participatory setting through multiple mirrorings. The subject is mirrored in another subject's gaze and both subjects are mirrored in the music act as simulacrum on stage. At the same time, the simulacrum on stage is a mirroring of other signifiers that make up the imago of the music act, such as record covers and video clips. "The repetition of a signifier repeats […] the mark to which the object is reduced" (Zizek, 1992b, p.79). A striking example of the latter, that is the deflected repetition of a key signifier as dominant visual stimulus in a music act's internal structure as simulacrum, is cited here-below in the re-enactment by the singer of the heavy metal group *Immortal* of the dominant visual signifier of their album *Diabolical Full moon Mysticism* in the context of their live appearance at the festival *The seventh date of Blashyrkh*:

Picture 1. Immortal's album Diabolical Full moon Mysticism

Picture 2. Snapshot from Immortal's live appearance at the festival *The seventh date of Blashyrkh* (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUB2MkmfGAY)

The in vivo enactment of a visual signifier as part of the signifying chain that makes up a music product qua simulacrum, not only aims to bring a narrative to life[6], but, moreover, to

---

[6] Certain promotional techniques employed in the music industry, such as the live show, target the purely affective part of their audiences. 'The live show has become a mirror through which the most publicised celebrities leap off the celluloid, or out of the record track, into direct sensory range' (Wernick, 1996, p.115).

furnish a small object a, upon which the gaze may be fixated and thus function as a simulacrum whereby access to the ineffable order of the unconscious is effected in a participatory fashion. "These signifiers do not depict reality; rather, they construct it" (Golan, 2006, p.10). Hence, the phenomenological experience of the live show assumes the form of a triple mirroring structure. The participating subject (S) gazes at another (o') gazing at itself (o), while both are instituted as members of a neo-tribe through the mutual gaze that is oriented towards the live act on stage (O). At the same time, the live show assumes the character of a double stage. It constitutes a staging or a parade of signifiers in terms of the internally coherent structure of the music product qua simulacrum; and also a stage as a visual scaffold, as specular object a, where participating subjects are constituted through the specular identification with *it*. "The function of the mirror stage thus turns out to be a particular case of the function of imagos, which is to establish a relationship between an organism and its reality or between the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt*" (Lacan, 2006, p.78).

The gaze compels our look because it appears to offer access to the unseen, to the reverse side of the visible. Even when the subject sees a complete image, something remains obscure: the subject cannot see how its own desire distorts what it sees. "What is absolutely crucial in this incitement of the gaze is its collective character, the way in which it is not the individual but the solidarity of the group that is its object. In and through its collectivizing effect, the overwhelming sense of the gaze in mass psychology brings the subject into a position of being completely dominated by the desire of the Other" (Boothby, 2003, p.175).

By allusion to the function of the gaze in Merleau-Ponty's posthumous work *The Visible and the Invisible*, Lacan delineates the function of the gaze as central to the establishment of a relationship with the Real. Lacan's argument here is that the gaze is not an object of specular fixation in the scopic field, but rather slides through as the eye focuses on discrete objects of the scopic field or on the signified that slides constantly under a chain of signifiers [glissement]. "It is no doubt this seeing, to which I am subjected in an original way that must lead us to the aims of this work, to that ontological turning back, the bases of which are no doubt to be found in a more primitive institution of form… In our relation to things, in so far as this relation is constituted by the way of vision, and ordered in the figures of representation, something is

transmitted, from stage to stage, and is always to some degree eluded in it; that is what we call the gaze" (Lacan, 1984, pp.72-73).

The specular experience of the live show is similar to that of the filmic gaze, albeit differing in terms of corporeal involvement of the visual signifiers. The function of the gaze in both instances (film and the experiential promotional technique of the live show) is the same. As Metz argued in his psychoanalytic reading of the cinematic experience, "the cinematic experience allows spectators to overcome temporarily the sense of lack that we endure simply by existing as subjects in the world" (cited in McGowan, 2007, p.2).

HEDONISM VS. JOUISSANCE: THE EC-STATIC FACET OF EXPERIENTIAL CONSUMPTION

The consumption of music products is not only hedonic in line with the pleasure-principle, but even more fundamentally jouissance-driven, in *excess* of hedonism. *Excess* surfaces in the ecstatic feeling that is generated in the experiential consumption of music products, and, more particularly, through participation in certain promotional activities, such as that of the live-show. The accompanying mood state is not characterized simply by 'pleasure', but, rather, by a mixture of pleasure and pain or 'jouissance'. Jouissance (cf. Lacan, 1999, pp.64-77) is a mood that transcends joy. It is sometimes described as pain in pleasure and accompanies ecstatic experiences. "Jouissance is what serves no purpose" (Lacan, 1999, p.3).

Jouissance is an experience that precedes the formation of subjectivity and transgresses its boundaries. As against hedonic consumption, what we may call *jouissance consumption* is not motivated by a conscious pleasure seeking activity. "One's jouissance is without rhyme or reason, one might say" (Fink, 2002, p.26). In the case of jouissance consumption, subjectivity yields to a loss of selfhood through a ritualistic act of fusion with others. This defining feature of the experiential consumption of music products is not taken into account in Lacher's (1989) hedonic consumption perspective about music products. By focusing on what she calls 'personality traits', she imposes an ego-centric outlook on jouissance consumption, and thus does not address the

experiential facets of a music product as ec-static phenomenon. We have already stressed the importance of shifting our focus from an ego-centric perspective towards an inter-subjective one, and from subjectivity to how the loss of self is effected through the consumption of music products. The live-show constitutes an act of jouissance consumption through the way it engages the gaze in the face of small objects a.

The inscription of neo-tribalist paraphernalia in the inter-*subjective* communicative trajectory of a consumer tribe's members takes place through 'contamination' (a key sacralizing process according to Belk et al., 1989).The ritualistic fusion functions in the order of the Imaginary, rather than in the order of the Symbolic, whence the primacy of the 'gaze' (mirror-reflection) and the specular image. For Lacan, it is important to remember that the Imaginary precedes the Symbolic, while operating in complementarity with it.

To summarize our line of argument, the experiential consumption of music products is an act of jouissance, rather than hedonic consumption. By a slight conceptual detour into the land of the fetish, consumers gain jouissance, that is a mixed feeling of pleasure in pain, by identifying with a decentralised signifier that marks the permanent absence of the centre of the simulacrum. In the act of music products' experiential consumption the subject re-lives on an imaginary level its split that allowed for entry in the symbolic order, thus attesting to the music product's taboo character. Contamination is the mode whereby the re-enactment of the subject's split is commonly shared in the context of the specular encounter with the signifiers that make up the simulacrum. "Public events resemble sacred, religious ceremonies, as exemplified by the reverential lighting of matches at the end of a rock concert" (Solomon, 1997, p.620).

METHODOLOGY

Aim and objectives

The aim of this research is to draw on concepts from psychoanalytic theories in order to explore and conceptualize the experiential consumption of popular culture products in the context of the music industry. Our objectives consist in examining, firstly, how music products are constructed through live-shows and by extension how the image of a music product promotes

intra-tribe coherence as a sacralizing ritual process for neo-tribes of fans; and secondly, how jouissance consumption has wider cultural implications for the maintenance of the sacred character of music products and how this is reinforced through promotional techniques. The three key interpretive operational categories of fetish, taboo, simulacrum guided the data collection and interpretation process.

The research was exploratory, aiming to shed light on the "ways whereby people in particular settings come to understand, account for, take action and otherwise manage their day-to-day lives" (Miles and Huberman, 1994, pp.6-7) in the context of the experiential consumption of music products. A qualitative research design matches the interpretive endeavor of consumer psychoanalytic exploratory research. It is suitable for identifying distinctive behavioural groups, such as neo-tribes or, according to Featherstone (1995), constellations with fluid boundaries, that is social groups that are not necessarily defined by socio-demographic variables, like gender, class, age, but rather by common life-styles with shared values and 'ritual paraphernalia' that convey these values. This design is also relevant for examining how the meaning of music products is construed in experiential events, such as the live-show, through the situational co-belonging of neo-tribal members .

Data collection methods

The research design comprised focus groups with four different groups of fans, whence stem our primary data. We used mini-groups (4-6 participants) as opposed to extended groups (6-8 participants), as "focused information is required (for example reactions to press advertisements)" (Gordon and Langmaid, 1988, p.12). Nineteen members were recruited as focus group participants from four well-established fan clubs: Pulp (Group 1: 5 participants), The Smiths (Group 2: 5 participants), Depeche Mode (Group 3: 5 participants), Madonna (Group 4: 4 participants)[7].

Focus group discussions were used to explore fans' perceptions of their preferred music act(s), as well as their experiential consumption of a range of promotions techniques used in the

---

[7] For further details about the groups' profile see Appendix 1.

music industry, with an emphasis on the live show. The focus-group discussions were semi-structured, driven by a list of key themes, based on the aim and the objectives of our research design. such as:

- What is a music product? (Prompts: the various features of a music product: music, lyrics, cover, band-image)
- What does the act 'mean' for you?
- In what contexts in your daily lives as consumers do you apply this/these meaning(s)?
- How do you communicate with your friends and peers about this act?
- Which promotions techniques are more important to you in terms of communicative content?
- What examples can you identify where promotional messages have acted as vehicles of intra-group communication?
- What kind of 'value' do you derive from making use of promotional items, such as posters, limited edition items, t-shirts?

The semi-structured data collection method allowed us to gauge how a chain of signifiers is deployed in a given phenomenological reality. During the discussions tangible cues and prompts were also presented, such as advertisements and record covers in order to trigger further associations. However, given that there are no established projective techniques that might aid psychoanalytically-based research into consumer behaviour, it is difficult to determine the extent to which interpretive categories such as taboo, fetish and simulacrum are operative in consumers' perceptions of music products through direct lines of questioning. Therefore, it was necessary to reconstruct interpretively these concepts from the focus group verbatims by using discourse analysis. In this way, attention was paid to both conscious and possibly hidden or unconscious processes (Mick, 1986). Nevertheless, 'we are not trying to dig things up from under the surface, but to show how the surface of the text – the text as a kind of 'Moebius strip' – itself constitutes certain objects, subjects and relationships between them, and how it covers them over (Frosh and Baraitser 2008).' (cited in Parker, 2010, p.158).

In addition, as one of the research objectives was to examine the impact of promotions techniques, such as the live show, on intra-group coherence, we also observed how consumers of a particular music act behaved as a group, that is how they were mutually mirrored against each other in the process of communicative exchanges that relied on the employment of commonly shared, meaning-laden signifiers, so that we could "experience consumer vocabulary, attitudes and reactions first hand" (Gordon and Langmaid, 1988, p.11).

Discourse analysis as data analysis method

We used discourse analysis to analyze and interpret the data. For our dataset this involved re-ordering informants' verbatims according to the key themes that derived from our objectives. Discourse analysis is the study of language, which is viewed not only as reflecting psychological and social life, but above all as constructing it. According to Parker, discourse constitutes "a system of statements, which constructs an object" (1992, p.5). Discourse analysis looks at what the discourses are trying to achieve, in order to gain "a better understanding of social life and social interaction" (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.25). This is accomplished by relating the structure of language to its desired function, while observing the social forces that operate behind utterances. Discourse analysis is characterised by *the use of texts*; *concentration on the role of language* (in our case, we applied discourse analysis to focus group findings in order to elicit how the three operative categories of fetish, taboo, simulacrum surface in consumers' discourse, and to show how the experiential consumption of music products furnishes useful cultural cues for the construction of coherent and meaningful intra-group communication); *representativeness* (which implies that participants in the focus groups should have similar music tastes and life-styles); and *variability in accounts* (Elliott, 1996). The following recommendations from Van Dijk (1997) were taken on board, while applying the method: (i) select a sequence in which whatever interests you occurs, by looking at identifiable boundaries between topics; (ii) characterize the actions in the sequence, i.e. the actions performed in the course of speech acts; (iii) consider how the speakers' packaging of actions, including their selections of reference terms, caters for certain understandings of the actions performed and the matters talked about;

(iv) consider the ways in which the actions were accomplished and implicate certain identities, roles and/or relationships for the interactants[8].

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The function of music products as fetishes or small objects a: The case for libidinally cathected cultural products

As was clearly gauged from the focus group discussions, certain promotions techniques have a more long-lasting impact on the formation of consumers' world-view than others. The relative importance of various elements from different promotions techniques was assessed in relation to the impact of each technique on the formation of participants' life-styles, based on the imagery that was shaped through distinctive discourses, employed by different music products. The 'importance' of the various promotions techniques, as already stressed, lies in their power to establish a system of equivalences, sustained by the exchange value of different items. What personalises these items, what makes them customized, even though they are mass market products, is precisely the different portions of libidinal energy (in terms of Freud's quasi-naturalistic explanation) they are invested with by individuals and the multiple ways in which they are 'encoded' with 'evocative powers'. This truism has been repeatedly stressed in official trade literature: "More than ever, today's fashion-conscious pop and rock acts insist that the merchandise emphasises their individuality. As a result, they ask for special branding on everything from caps, T-shirts and jackets to badges and keyrings" (Followers of Fashion, Music Week). "The idea of a T-shirt as a statement of culture and identity has impacted on the market, with styles like skinnies, ringers and long sleeves now widely available" (Those little added extras, Music Week 6/12/97). The saliency of these items for the maintenance of a music brand's imago is evinced in their function as fetishes or small objects a. Almost all groups' informants agreed that they derive pleasure from gazing at posters or record-covers, thus attesting to the primacy of the gaze in the inscription of cultural signifiers in a neo-tribe's modus vivendi.

---

8 See Appendix 2 for further discussion of how discourse analysis was applied to the text of this dataset.

'**[Group 4]** Q: Do you have any posters in your room?

Informant 4: 'All over the place. If you come in you think that Madonna is watching you. I have a big one on the ceiling, facing my pillow, so every time I wake up I can see Madonna right in front of me.'

Intra-group coherence is maintained by the groups' instantiation of the aesthetic features that make up the 'meaning' of the product, such as wearing club T-shirts, and waving at each other in the same way the lead-singer waves at the end of a video-clip (Group 3). What are the 'neo-tribe paraphernalia' in this case? For Group 1 it seems that posters is a way of achieving intra-group coherence, something like an emblem that suggests a 'shared past' for the group.

The identification with the imago of the artist on the Order of the Imaginary, and the fetishistic character of the music product, are evinced by the way in which heterogeneous audiovisual signifiers are accommodated under the significatory umbrella of the 'name' of the artist. Group 1 informants' passionate proclamation 'Pulp *is* my life' is a metonymic registering (i.e. displacement of the name of the primary signifier by and into a signifier within the chain of signification). Let us repeat McCracken's (1988, p.112) remark: "the purchase of a good does not violate the displacement rule […] What is being bought is not the whole bridge but a small part of it".

The function of music products as taboos: [No] access to the Real

The progressive shift in importance from the order of the symbolic to the order of the imaginary in accessing the order of the Real takes place through a shift of focus from the symbolic value of fetishes as neo-tribe paraphernalia to the participatory immersion of neo-tribe members in the context of the live-show, where the simulacrum is present on stage or present in absentia through special events.

The latter was evinced in Group 3 informants' discourse, who recollected during the discussion how under the aegis of a Depeche Mode song flirting was facilitated in a club, or by Group 1 informants who stated that Pulp brought them closer to what they would like to be.

As regards participatory immersion in the live-show, Group 3's recollections of U2 on stage converge on the verbatim 'Time has stopped for me', coupled with an anticipation of a hysteric response at the sight of the 'cultural icon'. In the context of the live-show as an experiential event re-doubling the event of the split, the Real is exchanged for the music simulacrum. The visual contact that is established between band and consumers becomes an overflowing experience, over abundantly pleasant, a moment of jouissance consumption.

The pervasiveness of the gaze that spans the entire continent of the imaginary landscape made up of tangible signifiers is an attempt to break free from the Symbolic Order of language and merge with the Real, which is the Impossible as the necessary condition for rekindling the desire to exhaust a signifying chain. "To experience the world in the form of images is, precisely, to re-experience the unreality and remoteness of the Real" (Sontag, 1984, p.164). The pre-reflectively encoded cultural meaning of the gaze was found to be operative in the consumption phenomena of live-shows and posters.

Given that the dissimulating state in which the Real is gazed upon is that of an 'aesthetic hallucination', as Baudrillard put it, waking from the dream-world of the simulacrum is a necessary prerequisite for maintaining its oneiric character.

'[Group 2] Informant 4: 'We were all speechless during the show; it was like a dream... After the end, back to the real world... I remember we kept commenting about how 'big' Bono [U2's singer] looked on stage...'

The fact that the visual encounter with the simulacrum did not generate any further thoughts, but provoked a loss in the 'image' can be interpreted as suggestive of what was called by Lacan 'gazing at the nudity of the Phallus' ('…just stood there, gazing…', Group 2) that can only be achieved in dissimulation.

'[Group 2] 'Q: Would you regard the experience of these shows as, in a certain sense, ecstatic, meaning that you 'lost' or 'forgot' yourself in the spectacle?

Informant 1: 'I remember the crowd dancing like mad... The band didn't stop between the tracks, everything was moving very fast, you didn't have time to think what was going on. It hit me like an explosion'.

Hence the inevitable paradox of the 'gaze', which affirms and at the same time negates the truthfulness of *what* is seen, i.e. the fleeting centre of the simulacrum. Group 1 informants remained speechless after having met the 'real' band, before waking up from a hallucinatory, trance-like state, hardly capable of finding any words to articulate the in vivo visual encounter with their cultural icon, thus witnessing a temporary breakdown of the symbolic order, the function of the music product as taboo, the transgression of which allows for a dissimulated immersion in the Order of the Real. Therefore, the significance of the promotion technique of the live-show for consumer psychology lies in its promise of a dissimulatory encounter with the Real (also manifested in Group 1's verbatims about the 'reality' of the live-show as against the 'staged' nature of a video-clip).

In the course of the discussion with Group 2 informants, the theme of the 'taboo' emerged completely unexpectedly, while discussing cd covers and how these added value to the music product. The ensuing utterance concerns the latest cd (in digipack format, i.e. unfolding cover) of the major American rock act Pearl Jam (on Epic Records, division of Sony Music):

'[Group 2] Informant 2: 'I really like this cover because it unfolds both ways... Whichever way you open it there is a **'Stop' sign printed on the cover**, as if it wants to say don't open me. It makes you wanna see what's inside'.

This is clearly an example of the 'logic of transgression', which grounds the particular cd. It is a simulation of breaking the 'taboo' in an immanent world, the prohibited act of gazing at the nudity of the repressed primary signifier.

The function of music products as simulacra: Visual and oral signifiers as cultural glue for collective neo-tribal experiences

Promotional tactics, such as posters and T-shirts, are often viewed as peripheral to the 'central' elements of music and lyrics, however indispensable they may be in differentiating products, building and maintaining brand-images and constructing fan-bases. Even though the live-show is the pinnacle of promotions techniques in the music industry as a participatory mechanism that grants access to the Real through the simulacrum on stage, different elements from different promotions techniques act as multimodal anchors or master signifiers for different occasions.

Group 3 informants unanimously agreed that video-clips offer more input for their ordinary communicative exchanges than print-adverts, which are aimed merely at creating awareness with regard to forthcoming releases. They also converged on the primacy of live-shows over other promotions techniques in constructing a 'direct' relationship with the group, emphasizing that it is on stage that they can check whether the band's project is 'real'.

'**[Group 1]** Q: In what respects do you believe video-clips relate to live-shows? Would you regard the former as a preamble to the latter?

Informant 5: 'I regard video-clips as one step before live-shows. It gives you the opportunity to see how the band moves, their expressions… The video-clip shows that the music is real, if you know what I mean…'
Informant 3 (to Informant 5): 'Don't you think that the video-clip is like a small gig?'
Informant 1: 'Sometimes, when instead of a script it includes shots from live-shows…'
Informant 2: 'But again, you can't compare these two… The live-show is more immediate, more direct… The video-clip is somehow pre-meditated.'

This quest for authenticity may be interpreted as a quest for the 'centre' of the simulacrum. The video-clip is just one step in the process of approximating the 'essence' of the

music product, the next one being the attendance at a live-show. The significance of the latter is shaped in different ways for different informants. For Group 3 informants there is a marked need to be close to the scene, to the 'staging of the event', which enhances feelings of being one with the act and its followers. 'By virtue of the communalizing effect of the music on its listeners, they also identify with each other, so that a sense of communal togetherness is created' (Bradley, 1992, p.52).

'**[Group 3]** Q: Do you believe that the video-clip is one step closer to the 'essence' of the band, given the visual contact that is established?

Informant 5: Certainly. Every time you watch a video-clip you pay attention to how the band is dressed, what's the colour of their hair, the gestures, everything. Next day you may see ten fans dressed in exactly the same way.

Informant 1: The way they wave at each other at the end of the video-clip for 'It's not good' is remarkable. We wave at each other in exactly the same way [laughter]'

The cultural imagery is disseminated in the context of an intersubjective interpellative dialectic, where individual consumers are 'summoned' (*demanded*, to use the Lacanian term, which is part of the triple structure of need-desire-demand) to give their own accounts of the consumption experience of the music product. The dialectic takes place through 'sacralizing ritual processes'.

'**[Group 4]** Q: Would the rest of you agree that Madonna is a Goddess on stage?

Informant 1: 'Not just on stage… She's a Diva… Every time you open a newspaper or a magazine there's no chance that you won't read something about her'.

Informant 3: 'She definitely is a Diva. In all her aspects… either in the video-clip of 'Erotica' or 'Ray of Light'. The video-clip of Erotica is very artistic. I like it because it is black and white, a lot simpler than what usually comes out'.

Informant 4: 'I think that on stage Madonna is her 'true self'. She shows that she is the center of attention… Everything else is just complementary to what she's doing up there…'

'**[Group 3]** Q: Would you say that the live-show is something like a ritual, a process that brings you closer to your peers and other fans?

Informant 5: It brings you closer to other club-members. You communicate in a very special way and when you recollect it afterwards it is only within the group that you can understand each other. People from outside cannot make sense because they haven't felt it.

Informant 2: The same happens when we invite local acts to play Depeche Mode tracks. We all gather in the front and we feel like we're seeing Depeche Mode. There is a singer that moves and sings exactly like them. It's like being there.

Informant 3: In club-parties, when we're standing next to each other, it feels like something 'more'. I don't know how to describe this 'more'. It's like we're all the nodes in a long chain. I remember during one of the club-meetings one guy grabbed me and danced with me. I didn't even know him, but it felt very nice, very spontaneous and direct'.

The signification of the music product qua simulacrum takes place in the collective locus of the neo-tribe, which constructs its world-sense on the basis of shared interpretive repertoires.

Complementary to the instrumentality of the gaze in comprehending sacralizing processes, we also posited contamination as the mode whereby the circulation of the signifiers making up a simulacrum is effected among the neo-tribe's members. Belk et al. (1989) provided the example of the lighting of matches at the end of a rock concert. Our research findings suggest more variable ways whereby 'contamination' is achieved. Wearing hats at a live-show was one way whereby club-members of Group 3 maintained their coherence as a group of disciples following their favourite cultural icon. Whistling a tune is also a way of maintaining group-identity amongst Group 2 consumers. Dancing and singing-along during a live-show is a way of communicating directly for Group 1 consumers. Each common experience bears a different meaning for individual consumers, the same 'promotional currency' is exchanged for different 'psychic goods', in the process of connotative displacement. Each signifier in the signifying chain assumes the character of a 'life-vest' (Group 3) that guards consumers against sinking in the archipelagos of desire.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Our proposed consumer psychoanalytic perspective diverges from traditional approaches based on symbolic and hedonic consumption in various ways. First of all, from a psychoanalytic perspective, the music product does not necessarily enter into a one-to-one symbolic relationship with an abstract idea, but it constitutes a signifying chain, where signifiers are contiguously ordered according to the rationale of the Imaginary order. Secondly, in our view, hedonism is not sufficient in accounting for the ec-static feeling of pleasure and pain deriving from the loss of self which is experienced while gazing at the simulacrum during a live-show. This is rather experienced as a re-enactment of the split of the subject, a decisive moment that sets in motion the cultural imagery of the product qua signifying chain. Thirdly, the distinction between affective and symbolic levels alludes to the distinctive orders of the Imaginary and the Symbolic, which, despite constituting different paths for approximating the Order of the Real or the unconscious[9], as *retroactive cause* (Zizek, 1992a), they are imbricated in the same fashion that the mirror stage underpins and precedes the identificatory logic of the subject's formation. Fourthly, jouissance consumption aims to effect an interpretive shift from perspectives which presuppose the existence of distinctive egos, towards an approach that prioritizes 'fusion' and 'communion' among consumer-group members, which is the way sacralizing processes manifest themselves in the experiential consumption of music products.

The research findings also have implications for consumer segmentation. "In recent years there has been increasing dissatisfaction with socio-economic classifications. This has led firstly to a growth in the use of qualitative research and secondly to the use of 'life-style' or 'psychological variables' in market segmentation'' (Hankinson and Cowking, 1996, pp.23-24). By using psychoanalytic vocabulary and interpretive methods, we have illustrated how the product-category at hand seeks to give expression to unconscious processes, by providing identifiable simulacra around which the inter-play between 'id' and consciousness takes place. This classification leads by default to a tentative segmentation of a consumer base in terms of unconscious, rather than conscious, processes.

9[1] 'We have set at the heart of the unconscious the causal gap' (Lacan 1984: 46)

On a theoretical level, there seems to be ample scope for expanding consumer psychoanalysis, both conceptually and methodologically within the field of consumer behaviour research, while extending the scope of its applications to product categories other than the music industry. A typology of promotions techniques predicated on their function in relation to the different Lacanian orders, as well as the evaluation of a brand according to its jouissance consumption potential are just two examples of how psychoanalytic concepts may be fruitfully employed in consumer research. By drawing on the triadic structure of fetish, simulacrum, taboo, consumers' level of involvement with a given product category may also be gauged in an interpretively rich manner.

Appendix 1- Focus group informants' profile
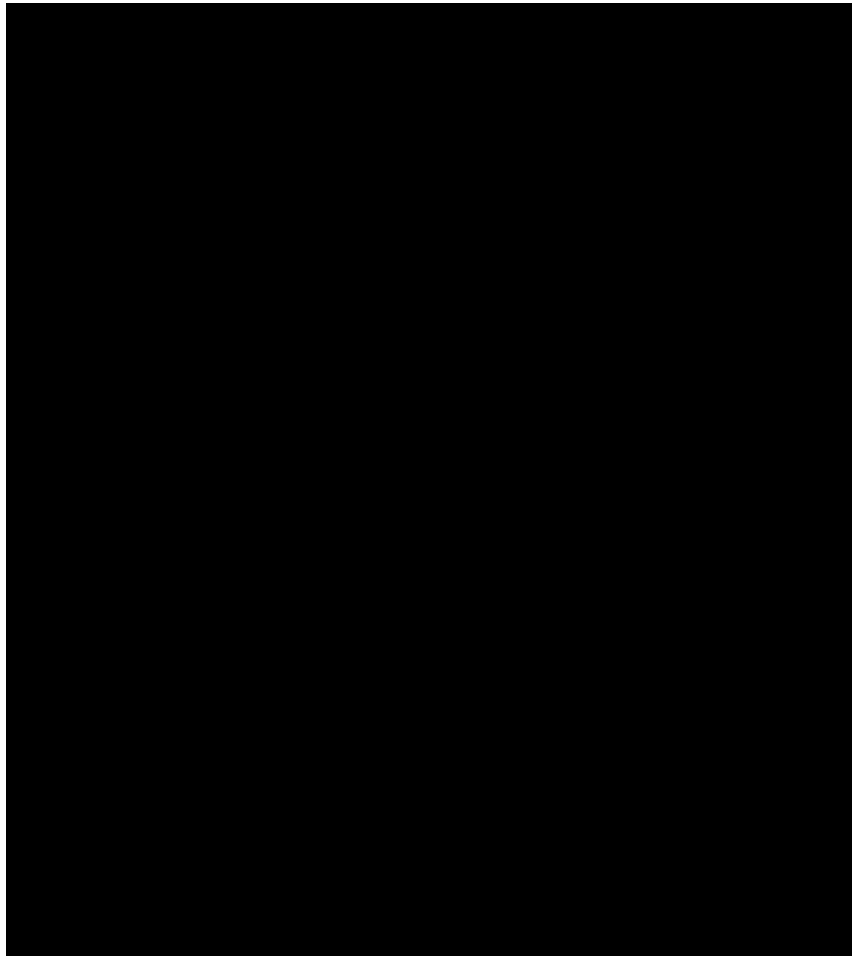
Appendix 2- How discourse analysis was applied to the research data

As Parker (2010) suggests, it cannot be claimed that psychoanalytic categories actually exist as motivational structures behind informants' speech. Their incidence is a matter of interpretive reconstruction and this is the task of discourse analysis. The incidence of psychoanalytic categories in this context may be discerned by attending to patterned regularities in consumers' recollections, which is how we proceeded in the interpretive reconstruction of manifest discursive texts. As our main preoccupation was to show that taboo, fetish and simulacrum were operative in experiential facets of music products, and given that no direct elicitation of instances of such categories is feasible, the discernment of these categories in informants' speech was rendered possible by reading consumer texts in the light of the definitional components of these categories.

Insofar as our concern was to demonstrate how a signifying chain that makes up music products assumes signification in the context of the inter-subjective communicative trajectory of focus group informants, during the data collection emphasis was placed on how they recollected their participation in experiential events, such as live-shows and fan club events at clubs; how multimodal aspects of music products were able to colonize their inter-subjective relationships; and how elements of music products were anchored in their collective experiences (thus functioning as master signifiers, according to Parker 2010). In this way "it was possible to note how each member of the group was simultaneously identifying themselves with the group through their shared knowledge and interpretation of the text" (Elliott and Ritson, 1999, p.268).

Moreover, since the language informants used to shape their collective experiences opens up to all three orders at the same time, viz. the Real, the Imaginary, the Symbolic, a retroactive reconstruction of consumers' texts in which their relationship to the three orders are embedded was undertaken. Certainly the analytical context was not that of the clinical laboratory, but of a sociocultural milieu, which may be mapped out by recourse to psychoanalytic concepts. But certain aspects of textual reconstruction, prevalent in clinical settings, were endorsed in this discourse analytic predicament, such as an active search for lacunae in manifest speech, meaningful ellipses that manifest more with regard to what is left unsaid, as well as textual anchors in terms of overt agreement about the saliency of certain experiences. At the same time,

factors in group dynamics, such as the ability of more outspoken informants to influence and direct the remaining informants' recollections were taken into account and filtered by moderating the discussion in such a fashion as to allow for as many voices to be heard in the collective text as possible, while ensuring that tacit agreement on master signifiers, even though manifested on a conscious elaboration level, was in fact mirroring informants' unconscious structures regarding their comportment towards the Other as a tribal experiential silent ground. It was not expected that the 'truth of the text' would emerge fully in manifest discourse, as this is the function of repression that separates consciousness from the preconscious and the unconscious.

References

Ades, D. (1995), Surrealism: Fetishism's job, in *Fetishism: Visualising power and desire,* Shelton, A. (ed.), London: Southbank Centre, pp.67-87.

Baudrillard, J., *For a critique of the political economy of the sign.* London: Telos Press, 1981.

Baudrillard, J., *Simulation et simulacres,* Paris: Editions Galilée, 1981.

Baudrillard, J., *Simulations,* Los Angeles: Semiotexte, 1983.

Baudrillard, J., *Symbolic exchange and death,* London: Sage, 1990.

Becker, H.S., *Telling about society,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Belk, R.W., Wallendorf M., Sherry, J.F.Jr. (1989), The sacred and the profane in consumer behaviour: Theodicy on the Odyssey, *Journal of Consumer Research,* Vol.16 (June), pp.1-38.

Bode, M. (2006), Now that's what I call music! An interpretive approach to music in advertising, *Advances in Consumer Research,* Vol. 33.

Boothby, D. (2003), Figurations of the objet a, in *Jacques Lacan: Critical evaluations in cultural theory Vol. 1,* Zizek, S. (ed.), London: Routledge, pp.159-191.

Bourdieu, P., *The field of cultural production: Essays on art and literature,* Cambridge: Polity, 1993.

Bradley, D., *Understanding rock'n'roll,* Buckingham: Open University Press, 1991.

Breakwell, G.M., Fife-Schaw, C., Hammond, S., Smith, J., *Research methods in psychology*, London: Sage, 2006.

Burnett, R., *The global jukebox: The international music industry,* London: Routledge, 1996.

Chambers, I., *Urban rhythms: Pop music and popular culture,* London: McMillan, 1985.

Dolar, M. (1998), Cogito as the subject of the unconscious, in *Cogito and the unconscious,* Zizek, S. (ed.)*,* Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 11-40.

Dor. J., and Gurewich, J.F., *Introduction to the reading of Lacan: The Unconscious structured like a language,* New York: Other Press, 1998.

Elliott, R. (1994), Exploring the symbolic meaning of brands, *British Journal of Management Special Issue,* Vol.5, pp.S13-S19.

Elliott, R. (1996), Discourse analysis: Exploring action, function and conflict in social texts, *Marketing Intelligence and Planning,* Vol.14, n°6, pp. 65-69.

Elliott, R. (1997), Existential consumption and irrational desire, *European Journal of Marketing,* Vol.31, n°3/4, pp.285 – 296.

Elliott, R. and Ritson, M. (1999), The social uses of advertising: An ethnographic study of adolescent advertising audiences, *Journal of Consumer Research,* Vol.26, pp.260-277.

Featherstone, M., *Undoing culture: Globalization, postmodernism and identity,* London: Sage, 1995.

Fink, B. (2002), Knowledge and jouissance, in *Reading Seminar XX,* Barnard, S. and Fink, B. (eds.). New York: SUNY, pp. 21-46.

Fishwick, M. and Browne, R. (eds.), *Icons of popular culture.* Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1970.

Freud, S., *Complete works*, Ivan Smith, 2000.

Golan. R., *Loving psychoanalysis: Looking at culture with Freud and Lacan.* London: Karnac, 2006.

Gordon, W. and Langmaid, R., *Qualitative market research.* Gower: Aldershot, 1988.

Hankinson, G. and Cowking, P., *The reality of global brands: Cases and strategies for successful management of international brands,* London: McGraw-Hill, 1996.

Hirschman, E. and Holbrook, M.B. (1978), Beyond attitude structure: Toward the informational determinants of attitude, *Journal of Marketing Research,* Vol.XV, pp.545-556.

Hirschman, E. and Holbrook, M.B., *Postmodern consumer research: The study of consumption as text*, London: Sage, 1992.

Hirschman, E. and Holbrook, M.B., *Semiotics of consumption*. Berlin: Mouton, 1993.

Lacan, J., *Ecrits*, Paris: Seuil, 1966.

Lacan, J., *The four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis*, London: Penguin, 1984.

Lacan, J., *The seminar of Jacques Lacan XX: On female sexuality, the limits of love and knowledge,* New York: Norton & Company, 1999.

Lacan, J., *Ecrits: The first complete collection in English.* New York: Norton & Company, 2006.

Lacher, K.T. (1989), Hedonic consumption: Music as a product, *Advances in Consumer Research,* Vol.16, pp.367-373.

McCracken, G., *Culture and consumption: New approaches to the symbolic character of consumer goods and activities*, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988.

McGowan, T., *The real gaze: Film theory after Lacan,* New York: SUNY, 2007.

Merleau-Ponty, M., *The visible and the invisible,* Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1968.

Metz, C., *The imaginary signifier,* London: Macmillan, 1982.

Mick, D.G. (1986), Consumer research and semiotics: Exploring the morphology of signs, and significance, *Journal of Consumer Research,* Vol.13, pp.196-213.

Middleton, R., *Studying popular music*. Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1990.

Miles, M.B. and Huberman, M.A., *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods,* London: Sage, 1984.

Laplanche, J. and Pontalis, J.B., *The language of psychoanalysis,* London: Hogarth Press, 1973.

Negus, K., *The discovery and development of music artists in the popular music industry,* PhD Thesis, Southbank University, UK, 1988.

Negus, K., *Producing pop, culture and conflict in the popular music industry,* London: Edward Arnold, 1992.

Parker, I., *Discourse dynamics*, London: Routledge, 1992.

Parker, I. and Burman, E., *Discourse analytic research: Repertoires and readings of text in action,* London: Routledge, 1993.

Parker, I. (2010), Psychosocial studies: Lacanian discourse analysis negotiating interview text. *Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society,* Vol.15, n°2, pp.156-172.

Potter, J. and Wetherell. M., *Discourse and social psychology,* London: Sage, 1987.

Ricoeur, P., *Hermeneutics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Rossolatos, G., *The impact of promotions techniques on consumer psychology in the popular music industry*, MSc Thesis, UMIST, UK, 1988.

Sarup, M., *Jacques Lacan,* London: Prentice-Hall, 1992.

Silverman, D., *Qualitative methodology and sociology,* Gower: Aldershot, 1986.

Sontag, S., *On photography*, London: Penguin, 1984.

Solomon, M.R., *Consumer behavior*, London: Prentice–Hall, 1997.

Sullivan, H.W., *The Beatles with Lacan: Rock'n'roll as requiem for the modern age,* New York: Peter Lang, 1995.

Thompson, C.J., Locander, W.B., Pollio H.R. (1989), Putting consumer experience back into consumer research: The philosophy and method of existential phenomenology, *Journal of Consumer Research,* Vol.16, n°2, pp. 133-146.

Thompson, C.J. (1991), May the circle be unbroken: A hermeneutic consideration of how interpretive approaches to consumer research are understood by consumer researchers, *Advances in Consumer Research,* Vol.18, pp.63-69.

Van Dijk, T.A, *Discourse as structure and process,* London: Sage, 1997.

Wernick, A., *The promotion culture.* London: Sage, 1996.

Williamson, J., *Decoding advertisements: Ideology and meaning in advertising,* London: Marion Boyars, 1978.

Zizek, S., *The metastases of enjoyment: Six essays on woman and causality*, London: Verso, 1994.

Zizek, S., *Looking awry: An introduction to Jacques Lacan through popular culture*. Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992a.

Zizek, S., *Enjoy your symptom: Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and out*. London: Routledge, 1992b.