Demythologizing the sixties; reappraising the British groupie and her relationship to feminism, 1965-1974

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Thesis Abstract

The British groupie phenomenon first came to public attention in the 1960s and 1970s. This period saw radical changes in women's lives, but roles for women were still restricted and historical accounts of the period continue to underplay and devalue their experiences. By examining groupie representation across a range of sources, including novels, films, newspapers and magazines, this thesis charts the contradictory, iconic, and extreme ways in which different actors have made sense of the groupie phenomenon at different times.

Feminist appraisal of the groupie has been historically fraught with paradox and conflict. This thesis examines how different kinds of feminist have made sense of the groupie phenomenon. By recording the oral histories of two British groupies and seeking to understand how these women make sense of their behaviour on their own terms, this thesis demystifies the figure of the groupie, dismantles stereotypes, and foregrounds the human agency in their struggle against the restrictive feminine role. The groupie pattern of behaviour is reconceptualised as a highly individualistic form of female liberation which corresponds with Hilary Radner's neo-feminist paradigm (2011), and an imperfect form of resistance. This intervention disrupts established assumptions regarding the tangential role of women and girls in post-war male-dominated subcultures.

This approach also presents an important contribution to women's history which undercuts key sixties mythologies such as the 'sexual revolution' and the 'classless society'; by drawing a contrast between the lived experiences of two groupies from different social backgrounds, this thesis reinstates the concept of class as crucial to any analysis of the British groupie phenomenon. It is argued that while the category of respectability (Skeggs, 1997) worked to frame, constrain and produce working-class groupies, structures of class and gender established the hegemonic currency of subcultural capital (Thornton, 1995) in the underground field, to position and regulate which groupies were able to advance their social status by trading their sexual capital (Green A. I. , 2011) and which were not.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Introducing the scope of this research **8**

Previous scholarship *8*

The scope of this research *11*

Sixties Mythologies *12*

Writing Women's Histories *13*

Groupie Mythologies *16*

Twenty-first century fashionable reconstructions *17*

Feminist reappraisals *19*

Theoretical approaches *21*
Neo-feminism 21
Respectability 22
Forms of Capital 23
Subcultural scholarship 23
Sexual capital 27

Aims and Objectives *29*

Research Questions *29*

Summary of Chapters *29*

Chapter 2 Methodology **33**

Triangulation *34*

Groupie perspectives; Oral histories *34*
Participants and access 34
Online Interviewing 37
Feminist interviewing 38
Transcription 41
Confidentiality 45
Analysis and Interpretation 46
Groupie perspectives; semi-fictional accounts 52

Archival research *54*
Newspaper Databases 55
Other publications 56
Documentaries 59
Fictional Recreations 59
Analysis and Interpretation 60

Chapter 3 Conditions for the emergence of the groupie **64**

Post-War Austerity and Reconstruction *65*

Changes to Public and Private Morality *70*

The Affluent Society *73*

Conclusion *83*

Chapter 4 Scrubbers and Nice Girls: Constructing the Female Fan **85**

Judgements about respectability; constructing the proto-groupie 85
Media strategies; Regulating female sexual behaviour 88
The eradication of autonomy; neutralising the threat of female sexual agency 100
Conclusion 104

Chapter 5 Reinstating groupie subjectivity; Female subordination and groupie resistance **105**
Female Restriction and subordination 105
Reinstating female desire 114
Pleasure without responsibility 118
Risk and Respectability; Navigating the nice girl/scrubber dichotomy. 121
Conclusion 129

Chapter 6 Underground manifestations; bourgeoisification of the groupie **131**
The Times They Are a-Changin'; The emergent underground groupie 131
Reconstructing the groupie; mainstream media perspectives 141
Claiming the groupie; Underground perspectives 148
Conclusion 157

Chapter 7 Chasing 'Groupie glory': navigating the underground field **158**
Feminine cultural subordination and the trading of sexual capital 158
Not 'just a groupie'; resisting the groupie stereotype 166
Sexual capital and autonomous status 168
The hegemonic currency of subcultural capital 173
'Gaming the system' 180
Tensions under the new regime of self-reliance 182
Conclusion 188

Chapter 8 From decline and disillusionment to resignation: Groupie representation in the seventies **190**
The end of an era; Reappraising the groupie 190
Cinematic recreations; the groupie and excess narratives 198
Resignation, diversification and cementing an anachronism. 206
Conclusion 209

Chapter 9 Resurgent feminism and the groupie phenomenon **211**
The Feminist Movement 211
Germaine Greer: Individualistic feminist perspective(s) on the groupie 214
Spare Rib: Collectivist feminist perspectives on the groupie 217
Other female perspectives on the groupie 220

Female musicians and male groupies 224

Groupie perspectives on feminism 226

Conclusion 233

Chapter 10 Conclusion **235**

Media representation 235

Groupie lived experiences 237

Demythologising the sixties 237

Feminist perspectives 239

Scope for further research 243

Epilogue; What next for Jenny and Emma? 243

Bibliography **246**

Films and television programmes cited: 262

Interviews, conversations, and correspondences 264

Groupie novels and memoirs 264

Social Media 265

Archival Sources 265

Appendices **270**

Appendix i: Oral History interview themes 270

Appendix ii: Emma (2020) Oral history interview with Emma. Interviewed by E. Foden, 16 June. 270

Appendix iii: Fabian, J. (2019) Oral history interview with Jenny Fabian. Interviewed by E. Foden, 29 April. 270

Appendix iv: Fabian, J. (2022). Conversation with Ellie Foden, 6 September. Field notes. 270

Appendix v: Fabian, J. (2021). Email to Ellie Foden, 2 Feburary. 270

Appendix iv: Redacted. (2018). Conversation with Ellie Foden. 25 April. 270

Table of figures

Figure 2.1 Table of archival sources **61**

Figure 4.1 Screenshot of female fan kissing Simon Dupree from 'The Ravers' (28 June 1967) *Man Alive* BBC. **98**

Figure 4.2 Screenshot of 'groupies' from 'The Ravers' (28 June 1967) *Man Alive* BBC. **99**

Figure 4.3 Image of screaming fans from Walsh, A. (1966) 'Scrubbers- the facts', *Melody Maker*, (16 December), p. 11. **100**

Figure 4.4 Photograph of Scott Walker in flight from fans from Hennessey, M. (1965) 'Pop and the Public', *Melody Maker*, (25 September), p. 10. **101**

Figure 5.1 Screenshot of groupie 1 from 'The Ravers' (28 June 1967) *Man Alive* BBC. **113**

Figure 5.2 Screenshot of groupie 2 from 'The Ravers' (28 June 1967) *Man Alive* BBC. **114**

Figure 6.1 Photographs of Mia, Marie, Christine, Kathy Etchingham and the Pretty Things from Fabian, J. (1969) 'Orpheus received a lute', *Queen* (14-27 May), pp. 92-95. **144**

Figure 6.2 Photograph of Caroline Coon, Mitch Mitchell and Noel Redding from Unknown, (1969) 'Is this girl a tart?', *Oz* (Issue 19, March), p. 11. (Credit: Keith Morris). **149**

Figure 6.3 Photographs of Germaine Greer and Viv Stanshall from Greer, G. (1969) 'The Universal Tonguebath: A Groupie's Vision', *Oz* (Issue 19, March), pp. 30-33. (Credit: Keith Morris) **151**

Figure 7.1 Photograph of Jenny Fabian from Peters, G. (1970) 'Girls who are going for a song', *The Mirror Magazine* (11 April) pp. 14-15. (Credit: Pat Keene) **173**

Figure 8.1 Cartoon, 'Suzie Slugoddess' from Unknown, (1971) 'Suzie Slumgoddess', *Oz*, (Issue 39, December), pp. 37-38. **193**

Figure 8.2 Cartoon, 'Virginia Books' from Molloy, (1974) 'Virginia Books', *Daily Mirror* (19 July), p. 7. (Credit: Molloy) **209**

Chapter 1 Introducing the scope of this research

Previous scholarship

The study of women and music culture is an academically underexplored area. Previous investigations have focused on female performers and their struggle within a male-dominated music industry (Burns & Lafrance, 2002; Carson, Lewis, & Shaw, 2004; Gaar, 1992; O'Brien, 1995; O'Dair, 1997; Steward & Garratt, 1984). As Julia Downes observes, this "women in rock" or "women in music" paradigm has become a well-established corrective strategy that makes women's lives and contributions visible' (2012, p. 11). Other studies have examined gender in the music industry (Leonard, 2007), the changing role of female musicians from the sixties to the nineties (Whiteley, 2000), and the ways in which popular music, as an ideological and cultural form works as both a form of sexual expression and sexual control (Coates, 1997; Frith & McRobbie, 1990; Reynolds & Press, 1995; Whiteley, 1997). Within cultural studies, gender and sexuality have often been at the heart of studies of female audiences and female fans (Andrews, 2000; Garratt, 1990; Hill, 2016). But the position of women and girls in relation to music subcultures remains an underexplored area with some exceptions; while Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber (1991) have addressed the marginality of girls in post-war subcultural scholarship and groupings, in her study of club cultures, Sara Thornton (1995) has examined how girls participate in the economy of subcultural capital. Downes (2012), Lauraine Leblanc (1999) and Leslie G. Roman (1988) meanwhile, have focused upon the position of women in punk subcultures, and Tina Wilkins (2004) has examined the position of women in goth subcultures.

Historical scholarship on sixties groupie culture has so far been restricted to three chapters in *Electric Ladies: Women and Rock Culture* (Rhodes, 2005), two PhD theses (Fenn, 2002; Rhodes, 2001), and one journal article (Coates, 2003)- all US-based. In her PhD thesis Lisa Rhodes focuses primarily upon the representation of groupies and other women in American music magazine, *Rolling Stone,* between 1967 and 1972, but she also discusses some British sources. Adopting a theoretical framework derived from scholarship on 'media scandals', she argues that stories about groupies in the mainstream and music press served to reassert the consequences for the expression of female sexuality outside traditional gender roles at a time when the meaning and nature of female sexuality in America was under renegotiation. Rhodes asserts that, before *Rolling*

Stone published its infamous 'Groupies and Other Girls' cover story (15 February 1969), the meaning of the groupie label had been in flux, but this issue permanently linked the rock groupie with the construction of compulsory female sexual behavior. In the book which followed, Rhodes extends her research; drawing upon present day interviews with some high-profile American groupies, she argues that the historically maligned figure of the groupie should be credited with the expansion of female sexual freedom and the redefinition of gender roles within the music industry, and thus reinstated in the history of feminism.

In her PhD thesis, Kathryn Fenn (2002) also draws upon present-day interviews with high profile American groupies and focuses primarily on the representation of groupies in the American press and groupie biographies, although she also discusses some British sources. Fenn credits unpaid groupie labor as indispensable to sustaining sixties music culture, and on this basis argues groupies should be restored to the historical record of rock 'n' roll. Drawing upon Dick Hebdige's (1979) definition of subcultures as subordinate groups who refused and revolted against mainstream society, Fenn identifies a distinct groupie subculture in both the UK and USA. She claims that groupies used style in a similar way to the subcultures described by Hebdige but stops short at attempting any semiotic analysis of groupie style. She also identifies a groupie contingent among British and American post-war subcultures, including 'teddy boys, mods, rockers, skinheads, punks' (p.3), a claim for which she provides no empirical evidence.

While Fenn acknowledges that 'there were notable differences among groupies' experiences- the most substantial of which were economic or class-based' (Fenn, 2002, p. 121) she does not provide any further analysis of how the assemblage of power through structures of class worked to regulate groupie experiences. She also acknowledges that feminists were divided over the groupie, suggesting this prefigured the coming rift in the feminist movement over sex, but fails to interrogate how the conflicting tendencies and tensions at play within feminism defined this division. Like Rhodes, Fenn calls for groupies to be restored to the history of feminism because they shared many concerns with feminists, such as the redefinition of gender roles and expansion of sexual freedom.

In her paper, 'Teenyboppers, Groupies, and Other Grotesques: Girls and Women and Rock Culture in the 1960s and early 1970s' (2003) Norma Coates examines groupie representation in the American music press, primarily *Rolling Stone.* Like Rhodes and

Fenn, Coates suggests that groupies transgressed traditional gender roles, but in order to maintain the gender hierarchy within rock, a feminine mass culture/masculine high culture binary was mapped onto early rock criticism. Coates draws upon Andreas Huyssen's (1986) thesis, arguing that, within cultural criticism and the various representations of aesthetic Modernism throughout the twentieth century, mass culture has been identified as feminine and both have subsequently been denigrated. She argues that, in an example of 'displaced abjection' (Stallybrass & White, 1986) male music journalists positioned female fans, groupies, female musicians and pop groups who appealed to a predominantly young female 'teenybopper' audience, as an 'inauthentic' low 'other', in opposition to discerning male fans and 'authentic' masculine rock, thus marginalizing all women in music.

Gretchen Larsen (2017), in a later paper, draws upon the rhetorical analysis of British and American groupie biographies to examine the groupie from a marketing perspective. Like Coates, Larsen draws upon Huyssen's thesis to argue that groupies have been historically othered as women and, through conflation with the teenybopper, constructed as inauthentic consumers. She claims that the intertwining of these two identities has underpinned and reinforced the groupie identity, which works to invalidate the role of women in rock, exclude them from creative production, and reinforce gendered hierarchies. While Larsen makes a cogent argument, her paper is not historically grounded. Unlike Rhodes and Fenn, Coates and Larsen take a more critical view of the groupie phenomenon. Rather than credit the groupie with redefining gender roles within the music industry, they suggest the legacy of groupie representation in the media has been more damaging than empowering for all women.

More recent investigations have focused upon contemporary female rock fans and their negotiation of the media-constructed myth that produces all women fans as groupies (Hill R. L., 2014; 2016; Schippers, 2000), the endurance of 'the groupie' as a term used to 'deride women as a group' within teen drama fandoms (Gerrard, 2022), and the way in which the narratives of American groupies like Pamela Des Barres have become a symbol and role model for subsequent generations of female fans (Karbownik, 2021). Groupie manifestations within the contemporary American sporting world have also been the subject of academic inquiry (Ardell, 2005; Forsyth & Thompson, 2007; Gauthier & Forsyth, 2000; Gmelch & San Antonio, 1998; Nelson, 2018; Oritz, 2022).

Beyond the academy, popular perceptions of the groupie phenomenon are dominated by a small number of high-profile American groupies and Hollywood films;

however, the primary sources discussed throughout this thesis tell a different story- that the groupie was also very much a British phenomenon. While previous historical investigations have touched upon the British groupie phenomenon (Fenn, 2002; Rhodes, 2001; 2005), they have been cursory, limited in scope and written from an American perspective which pays negligible attention to the specificity of the British socio-historical context. Previous scholarship may have been founded upon the idea that gender is of central importance to the groupie phenomenon, but the concept of social class has been entirely neglected. This study reinstates the concept of class, as well as gender, as crucial to the analysis of the groupie phenomenon and offers a distinctly British historical perspective on this subject for the first time.

The scope of this research

By conducting archival research, to examine groupie representation produced in the British media at the time, and actively engaging with the women themselves through extended, in-depth interviews, this study seeks to understand how different actors made/make sense of the groupie phenomenon. The oral histories of two former groupies provide parallel and contrasting narratives which inform the entirety of this thesis. The first of these women, Jenny Fabian, is a public figure who chronicled her groupie experiences at the time in her semi-fictional memoir *Groupie* (1969) which she co-authored with writer, Johnny Byrne. The second woman is a private individual who has never spoken publicly of her groupie experiences and has requested anonymity. This woman will be referred to as 'Emma' in this thesis. For reasons which will be expanded upon in Chapter 2, I have chosen to focus on the oral histories of these two women from very different social backgrounds; in doing so, this historical study reinstates the subjective meaning of the groupie lived experience to write a 'history from below' (Thompson E. P., 1966).

No agreement exists regarding the definition of the term 'groupie'. Today, it can be used to describe a 'person who likes a particular popular singer or other famous person and follows them to try to meet them' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). But the 'groupie' label also has a long-standing sexual connotation and is commonly used in both popular culture and academic literature to describe a predominantly female type of fan who seeks sexual encounters with musicians (Larsen, 2017, p. 1; Melly, 1970, p. 217). This

pattern of behaviour had historical precedents, but it was first identified as a social phenomenon and brought to public attention in the mid-to-late sixties.[1]

This study is concerned with the media representation and lived experiences of groupies (defined as young women who sought sexual encounters with male musicians) who were active between 1965 and 1974. The rationale for selecting this particular historical period relates to the case for a 'Long Sixties' (Marwick, 1998); the idea of a cultural decade, which was initiated in 1958 when minor social and cultural movements contingent upon post-war expansion in the fifties, were poised to become major movements of the sixties, and which was brought to a close in 1974, when ordinary people began to feel the impact of the 1973 oil crisis and the subsequent recession (Marwick, 1998, p. 7).

Sixties Mythologies

The sixties have been mythologized perhaps more than any other decade, and like the groupie, subject to polemic alternately reviled and idealized in the mass media. Popular mythologies of the period, which were constructed in the media at the time and continue to endure in the popular imagination, include: the 'sexual revolution'- the idea that, with the introduction of the contraceptive pill in 1961, sexual attitudes and behaviours were radically liberalised; the 'classless society'- the idea that a rise in living standards saw the eradication of class inequality; 'Swinging London' - the coalescence of the sexual revolution and classless society mythologies in the idea that London was transformed into the cultural and creative epicentre of the world; and even the idea that, for a short period of time, a tangible radical left-wing youth-led political revolution was close at hand.

As popular historian Dominic Sandbrook has noted, the most common interpretation of the sixties is one of a 'cultural renaissance that encompassed tolerance, freedom and, above all, love' (2005 p.xvii). There is also a tendency for historians and commentators, such as self-styled chronicler of the underground, Jonathon Green, to

[1] While Elvis Presley reportedly indulged in groupie culture while on tour in the mid-late fifties (Des Barres, 2007), itinerant African American blues guitarist, Robert Johnson also made a habit of spending the night with women he was able to seduce after his live performances (Guralnick, 1998). English poet, Lord Byron and Hungarian composer and virtuoso pianist, Franz Liszt, both of whom found fame in the nineteenth century, are known to have attracted a devoted female following, and to have had sexual relationships with upper-class women who followed them (De Vries, 2009; Millstein, 2007).

characterise the sixties as a 'party' to which a lucky few were invited (1998 p.xii), or as a monumental period in which a 'cultural revolution' changed the face of British society forever (Marwick, 1998 p.15). These 'golden age' mythologies have been perpetuated in most representations of the period within popular culture and in the accounts and memoirs of individuals who occupied positions in some way central to metropolitan, middle-class, male-dominated movements of the period, such as countercultural magazine editor Richard Neville's memoir, *The Hippie Hippie Shake* (2009).

English journalist Christopher Booker has suggested that while 'the "dream" aspect of the Sixties has been preserved… their darker side has slipped from view' (1992, p. 11). Such an assertion is not entirely true: the 'post-1968' sixties have a darker more violent mythology of their own, constructed in the media, both at the time and subsequently, as a period of decline and disillusionment. The seventies, meanwhile, were vilified as a uniquely depressing period marked by 'a pervasive sense of crisis and discontent with few parallels in modern history' (Sandbrook, 2011, p. 9). These mythologies sit in contrast to ideas of the 'high sixties' as a period of unbridled optimism, idealism and energy (Marwick, 2003, p. 732).

For those on the libertarian left, this was a period in which the much-vaunted revolution had been close at hand, only to fail to materialise (Haynes, 1984). For conservatives, on the other hand, the fifties were the last 'golden age' of conformity and morality, 'before society's defences were breached' and the sixties were a period in which 'the old secure framework of morality, authority and discipline disintegrated' (Marwick, 1998 p.1). These anxieties have given rise to another key sixties mythology, which has been constructed in the media both at the time and subsequently- the 'permissive society'. Social activist Mary Whitehouse was foremost among those who condemned the sixties as an 'age of moral decline and collapsing traditions' (Sandbrook, 2005 p.xx), opinions which would be repeated during the following decade by Conservative politicians and journalists 'keen to contrast the achievements of Thatcherism with the alleged failures of the past' (Sandbrook, 2005 p.xviii).

Writing Women's Histories

With regards to histories of the sixties, as BL Tischler notes, the canon is dominated by 'big books by big men about big movements' (cited in Whiteley, 2000 p.10). Male historians have tended to focus upon men's activities in the public sphere, and taken the

experiences of men, particularly young men within spectacular male-dominated subcultures, as in some way representative of the British youth experience in general (Osgerby, 1998, p. 50). The experiences of women, meanwhile, have been minimised, ignored, or characterised as a deviation from this norm. This has led to historical generalisations based on the experiences and achievements of men (Purvis, 2004 p.40).

Where male historians do speak about the experiences or activities of women in the sixties, discussion tends to be confined to the burgeoning women's movement and the emergent 'dolly' stereotype. This new, young, fashionable, and supposedly liberated feminine ideal was interpreted by moral conservatives as symptomatic of Britain's moral decay, but she was also incorporated into 'golden age' mythologies of the sixties, both at the time and subsequently. Where women appear in Marwick's account, for example, they are usually relegated to side notes, their 'liberation' defined in terms of whether they wore the miniskirt, took the pill, or danced the twist. Marwick's salacious recollection of mini-skirts – 'on a young woman with shapely legs, they were ravishing' (Marwick, 1998 p.410) – betrays his nostalgic and sexist attitude towards women in the sixties. But there is also a tendency for male historians to overstate the extent of changes to women's lives during this period.

Coined by American feminist, Robin Morgan (1970), the term 'herstory' was taken up by second-wave feminists in the seventies and eighties as an answer to the male-dominated nature of history as an intellectual enterprise. But the term is controversial; Christina Hoff Sommers has controversially argued that 'herstory' presents a kind of feminist revisionism, which can exaggerate women's achievements to the detriment of historical fact. She asserts that 'Any history that is faithful to the facts must acknowledge that in the past women were simply not permitted the degree of freedom commensurate with their talents' (1994, p. 57). While I do see the merit in working to reinstate women's historical achievements where they have been neglected in previous historical accounts, this thesis does not present a revisionist political or cultural 'herstory' of the sixties. Rather, this study draws more closely on the work of British socialist feminists working in the early 1970s, such as Sheila Rowbotham, who have sought to document the history of women's oppression and resistance.

Inspired by the efforts of English historian, E. P. Thompson, to instate a humanist element within social history, British socialist feminists were keen to write a 'history from below', which focused on the lives of working-class women and the history of class struggle. Rowbotham's book *Hidden from History: 300 Years of Women's Oppression and*

the Fight Against It (1973) became 'a catalyst for the development of women's history' (Purvis, 2004, p. 40), defined by its subject matter: the experiences of women in history, the impact of historical events on their lives, and the contributions and achievements of women (Ibid.).

By documenting the lives of those who might otherwise be 'hidden from history' women's history can be used to contest accepted historical narratives and mythologies. For example, Marwick claims that, during the sixties, young women could reasonably expect that when they married, their husband would help with the household chores (1998 p.480). But his unsubstantiated claim is an indication of expectations and not of reality. The testimonies of the young women interviewed in Sara Maitland's *Very Heaven* (1988) suggest that the wives and girlfriends of young college-educated men still found themselves saddled with the same household chores as their mothers before them. The testimonies of the groupies interviewed in this thesis support Maitland's findings.

Very Heaven also features an interview with British actress Julie Christie, known at the time for her portrayal of the quintessential 'dolly' on screen *(Darling*, Dir, John Schlesinger, UK, 1965). She recalls the pressure she felt during the sixties to conform to a certain ideal, while at the same time feeling like she was 'on the outside' of Swinging London 'looking in' (Maitland, 1988 p.170). Such a testimony- particularly from someone who not only appeared to have been in the best possible position to enjoy and experience 'Swinging London' but also conformed so eminently to the dolly ideal, in fact disrupts rather than feeds into these mythologies.

Other key works which may be used to contest accepted historical narratives and mythologies include those of writers, novelists, and journalists who have reflected upon their own experiences and recorded the experiences of other women during the period, such as Jenny Diski (2010), Sara Davidson (1977) and Mary Ingham (1981). Meanwhile, playwright Nell Dunn made attempts to chronicle the experiences of working-class life in fiction (1963) and women's lives in oral history (1965). It is worth noting, however, that these non-academic works were produced by privileged middle-class, university-educated women, who were usually concerned with the experiences of their own peers.

While Sheila Rowbotham has also retrospectively reflected upon her experiences of the sixties (2001), her scholarly historical work has been concerned with drawing attention to the experiences and roles of those individuals who have been 'hidden from history' (1972; 1973; 1977; 1997; 2010; 2014). In *Only Halfway to Paradise: Women in Postwar Britain: 1945-1968* (1980), feminist researcher Elizabeth Wilson also provides a

scholarly perspective in her attempt to reconstruct the ideologies and discourses which created the ways in which the category of 'women' was understood in the post-war period.

By drawing upon such a range of texts, from the scholarly to the autobiographical, this historical study of the groupie places at its centre the experiences and position of women in British society in the sixties. Furthermore, by examining a group of women who have historically been largely silent, and defined in terms of their media representation, this study seeks to revaluate this extensively mythologized period and challenge male-centric historical narratives, thus fulfilling a feminist agenda, rewriting history, and providing a new contribution to the field of women's history.

Groupie Mythologies

The figure of the groupie is integral to present-day ideas of 'sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll' (Larsen, 2017, p. 1) - a largely male-defined rock mythology, which emerged from the British and American countercultures in the late sixties and continues to endure in the imaginations and attitudes of budding young male musicians the world over. 'Legendary' musicians of the classic rock era continue to be celebrated in popular culture, for, not only their 'creative genius' but in many cases, their excessive and destructive behaviour both on and off the stage.[2] Indeed, 'sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll' can be understood as a highly libertarian fantasy, in which the social, economic, and even legal constraints that regulate the behaviour of ordinary people are thought, in the case of the rock star, to no longer apply. Told and retold tales of decimated hotel rooms, drug binges and orgies abound in rock documentaries, biographies, and biopics, which offer vicarious thrills and perpetuate notions of rock star exceptionalism. But, sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll mythology, like 'golden age' mythologies of the sixties, are not universally celebrated. For many, this kind of behaviour is linked to a much darker mythology- the moral breakdown and decadence of the permissive society.

Reynolds and Press identify 'ambivalence towards the feminine domain' as 'the defining mark of all classic instances of rock rebellion' (1995, p. 3). If the male rock rebel is the 'hero' of rock mythology, where women are present, they fall into one of two categories. On the one hand, there is the category of established girlfriend or 'rock chick'

[2] For a recent example, see Netflix film, *The Dirt* (Dir, Tremaine, USA, 2019) based on collaborative rock autobiography *The Dirt: Confessions of the World's Most Notorious Rock Band* (Lee et al. 2002), which charts the antics of American heavy metal band, Motley Crue

(Powers, 1997, p. 181), an ornamental and idealised role, reserved only for the most beautiful, glamourous, and socially well-connected young women, usually models, actresses and socialites, typified by Rolling Stones' consorts, Anita Pallenberg and Marianne Faithfull. On the other hand, there is the groupie, an abundant, interchangeable, and anonymous figure, an object of use and abuse, whose whole existence, according to rock mythology, centres upon satisfying the rock hero's sexual fantasies and endless appetite for interchangeable sexual partners.

By examining groupie representation in the media between 1965 and 1974, this study traces the historical relationship between the figure of the groupie and rock mythologies. Further, by privileging the lived experiences of groupies and in doing so, reinstating groupie subjectivity, it presents a counterpoint to the anonymous, objectified groupie stereotype perpetuated in macho rock biographies and related media, and a challenge to rock mythologies.

Twenty-first century fashionable reconstructions

I was first motivated to embark on this study in 2017, in part, by what O'Sullivan has identified as a revival of interest in the groupie phenomenon, which has been in evidence within popular and fashionable print and digital media since the turn of the millennium (2015, p. 183). At the outset of this research project, my feminist positioning was conflicted; on the one hand I understood that these women were enacting sexual agency in the pursuit of their desires, while on the other, I could see how, from the outside, feminists might perceive groupies as objects of exploitation (Millett, 1969) or argue that, for women, the groupie legacy has been more damaging than empowering (Farber, 2015; Hill R. L., 2014; Larsen, 2017). But I was also troubled by what I saw as a series of uncritical, and highly romanticised twenty-first century reconstructions and feminist reappraisals, which obscured the groupie phenomenon's more disturbing aspects and neglected any consideration of how power and its assemblage through the structures of gender and class positioned groupies and regulated their sexual behaviour.

Over the last two decades, American films *Almost Famous* (Dir Cameron Crowe, USA 2000) and *The Banger Sisters* (Dir Bob Dolman, USA 2002) and the writings and public appearances of American groupie, Pamela Des Barres (1987; 1992; 2007) have been instrumental in changing public perceptions of the groupie on both sides of the Atlantic. These twenty- first century reconstructions draw upon 'golden age' mythologies of the

sixties, which characterise the period as a 'cultural renaissance that encompassed tolerance, freedom and, above all, love' to reimagine the figure of the sixties groupie as a sexually liberated 'free spirit'. The classical feminine archetype of the 'muse' also resonates through these fictional and biographical reconstructions, which reframe the groupie as 'important, special, inspirational, strong and productive' (Larsen, 2017, p. 44). But as Larsen has argued, in doing so, this 'groupie as muse' discourse reinforces a genius artist/muse binary, which is inherently gendered male/female, thus marginalising women to a supporting role in creative work (ibid.).

In the absence of substantial archival groupie imagery, fashionable recreations, meanwhile, have conflated the figure of the groupie with the rock chick (Coates, 2003, p. 87) and these reconstructions have harnessed the glamour associated with the jet-setting rock consort, to reposition the groupie as a style icon for the twenty-first century. [3] The revival of the groupie in popular and fashionable culture has also, arguably, been sustained by the exchange and circulation of images and ideas online by a younger generation of women from around the world, who are fascinated by the sixties groupie.[4] Some members of this younger generation of women self-identify as modern-day groupies and have sought to express their fascination with the sixties groupie by fashioning their own appearance to recreate groupie imagery on social media. Others have sought to express their fascination creatively through a range of media, from fanzines (*Star Seed,* US 2018-Present; *Groupie, A Magazine,* UK 2020-Present) and podcasts (Muses Podcast, Chanty & Lynx, 2016-Present) to fashion films.

While *Almost Famous and The Banger Sisters* were both written and directed by men looking back with nostalgia to the sixties groupie phenomenon, the fashion film *Midnight Ramblers* (2018) was written and produced by creative duo Wiissa, two young women reportedly inspired by the writings of Pamela Des Barres and *Almost Famous* (Mikus, 2016). Significantly, the figure of the male rock star is conspicuously absent from many of these fashionable and cinematic recreations, which, perhaps anticipating feminist critique, foreground female friendship between groupies over heterosexual

[3] With the exception, perhaps, of photographer, Baron Wolman's groupie portraits for American *Rolling Stone* recently reproduced along with the original 1969 cover story, 'Groupies and Other Girls' in a coffee table format book titled, *Groupies and Other Electric Ladies* (Wolman, 2015).
[4] For an example, see @groupiesoutrageously [Instagram] Available from https://instagram.com/groupiesoutrageously?utm_medium=copy_link [Accessed 25 February 2022]

romance.[5] Small online fashion brands, such as Sugarhigh Lovestoned (US), Fan Club Clothing (UK) and GroupieU (US), represent another site where the sixties groupie has been reconstructed, but also commodified in the form of fashion imagery and groupie T-shirts, sometimes sold alongside 'feminist' T-shirts, by a younger generation of entrepreneurial women.

Feminist reappraisals

In parallel with this development, journalists, historical participants, and members of a younger generation of women have suggested the groupie was a 'sexual pioneer' and should be celebrated as a feminist heroine (Des Barres cited in Farber, 2015) (Rymajdo, 2015). Previous historical studies, which argued the groupie should be restored to the history of feminism (Fenn, 2002; Rhodes, 2001; 2005), can perhaps be understood in relation to this wider shift within cultural discourse, which took place around the turn of the millennium. As Andi Zeisler, editorial/creative director of the feminist media company Bitch, has observed, 'sex positivity has permeated mainstream dialogue, particularly among people who have the benefit of growing up with social media' (cited in Farber, 2015). While sexual freedom has become the lynchpin upon which all feminist reclamations of the groupie have been hung, historically, some feminists have also rejected the groupie. 'I was on a TV show, and Gloria Steinem didn't even want to be on the stage with me. I was seen as a submissive slut' Pamela Des Barres told the New York Times in 2015, 'But I was a woman doing what I wanted to do. Isn't that feminist?' (Farber, 2015).

Since I first began researching the sixties groupie phenomenon in 2017, a fascinating shift has taken place within cultural discourse towards a more critical feminist appraisals of the groupie phenomenon. Recent Sky Arts documentary, *Look Away* (Dir, Cunningham and Steele, UK, 2021) examines the dark side of rock culture; here, American groupies, rock chicks and female musicians give powerful first-hand accounts of the historical abuses they suffered at the hands of male rock stars and music producers, including rape, statutory rape, and sexual battery.

[5] Real-life affirmative groupie girl gangs have also been documented in the writings of Pamela Des Barres, who performed in groupie singing troupe, the GTOs, while American groupie, Penny Trumbull and her groupie gang, the 'Flying Garter Girls Group' were the inspiration for fictional groupie Penny Lane and her groupie girl gang, the 'Band Aids' in *Almost Famous* (Rhodes, 2005)

While the #MeToo movement has emboldened the women in *Look Away* to speak out, other groupies of the sixties generation have begun to reappraise their experiences in light of recent conversations the movement has sparked around consent. American so-called 'baby groupie', Lori Mattix, for example has historically described her relationship with Jimmy Page, which began when she was 13, and he, 28, in glowing terms; 'he was so romantic and wonderful', she told Pamela Des Barres in 2007 (Des Barres, 2007, p. 182). But in a more recent interview, she reflected 'I don't think underage girls should sleep with guys, I wouldn't want this for anybody's daughter. My perspective is changing as I get older and more cynical' (de Gallier, 2018).

Emma and Jenny Fabian were 18 and 24 years old respectively, when they had their first groupie experiences, and their accounts are largely positive; nevertheless, archival evidence suggests there were also underage groupies on the British pop/rock scene. The shocking abuses detailed in *Look Away* are acknowledged here, not only because they have become the focus of recent feminist attention, but because these abuses were undoubtably a brutal lived reality for some women and young girls involved in rock culture, who, it should also be noted, are less likely to come forward and share their stories in an academic study such as this.

A younger generation of radical feminists have also been galvanised by the #MeToo Movement and have taken to social media to actively shine a light on historical and contemporary abuses of women and girls within the music industry. 'There are no baby groupies', declares one post, on Instagram account, @Misogyny_in_music, only 'trafficked victims of sex crimes.'[6] Here, young feminists publicly 'call out' contemporary and historic 'sexual predators' within the music industry. But they can also condemn other women in music, and groupies, who do not live up to their ideals by failing to publicly denounce artists accused of historic abuses. This approach can be divisive. The tendency to describe groupies as either exploited victims, or complicit in a culture of rock misogyny, can also be devoid of nuance and diminish groupie agency.

The fissure in twenty-first century feminist reappraisals of the groupie identified in this introduction is by no means a recent development; this study traces these divergent feminist tendencies back to the sixties. The nature of these differing feminist

[6] Available from https://instagram.com/misogyny_in_music?utm_medium=copy_link [Accessed 8 September 2020]. @Misogyny_in_music is frequently suspended for violating Instagram's Terms of Use policy. @Misogyny in Music can also be found on Twitter here https://twitter.com/misogynymusic?lang=en

interpretations, and the relationship of the groupie phenomenon to feminism is a key concern in this investigation.

Theoretical approaches

Neo-feminism

By drawing on the concept of 'neo-feminism', formulated by feminist theorist Hilary Radner (2011), this study investigates the feminist implications of the groupie phenomenon. This concept was developed to understand a cultural climate in the 2010s, in which the more individualistic elements of feminism, and feminist catchphrases, such as 'empowerment' and 'self-fulfilment', appeared to have been incorporated into political and popular culture. While some feminist theorists have conceptualised this contemporary situation as 'post-feminism' and argued that the ultimate goal of this political discourse is the undermining or 'undoing' of feminism (McRobbie, 2009; Negra, 2008; Tasker & Negra, 2007), Radner disagrees. In her book, *Neo-Feminist Cinema: Girly Films, Chick Flicks and Consumer Culture* she argues that, while neo-feminism shares some aims with liberal feminism, such as the importance of female financial independence and woman's right to fulfilment defined on her own terms (2011 p.13) it is 'indifferent to the kinds of social and political concerns that set feminists apart from the general group of female strivers seeking to achieve the ideals of neo-liberalism' (p.192). The ultimate goal of neo-feminism is the pursuit of happiness (ibid.).

Rather than a reaction against feminism, Radner sees neo-feminism as a paradigm which developed in tandem with second-wave feminism in the sixties. She argues that both neo-feminism and second-wave feminism emerged in response 'to a single historical moment, a moment at which - as a result of a combination of factors, from an evolving economic structure to changing sexual mores - men and women began to develop different kinds of expectations about marriage and career' (ibid. p.197). This thesis argues that these socio-cultural and economic developments also produced the groupie phenomenon.

Radner identifies Helen Gurley Brown's self-help guide *Sex and the Single Girl* (1962), which exemplified the 'single girl' as the new feminine ideal, as crucial to establishing the neo-feminist paradigm in the sixties (Radner, 2011 p.11). She goes on to suggest that two strands of neo-feminism can be identified in Gurley Brown's rules for the

single girl: an emphasis on fiscal responsibility and an emphasis on constant self-improvement (ibid. p.23). Through the analysis of groupie testimonies, this thesis draws comparison between the emergent 'single girl' ideal, and the groupie and argues the groupie phenomenon can be understood in relation to the highly individualistic form of female liberation, conceptualised by Radner's neo-feminist paradigm, which emerged in the sixties.

Respectability

As already noted, the orientation of this study is rooted in the idea that the concepts of gender and class are of central importance to the groupie phenomenon. The writings of British feminist and sociologist, Beverley Skeggs, have been indispensable in this regard. Skeggs argues that 'the category of woman is always produced through processes which include class' (1997, p. 9) and identifies 'respectability' as a key mechanism by which the working class has been historically 'othered' and pathologized. Drawing upon the work of Marilyn Strathern (1992) and Lynda Nead (1988), Skeggs traces judgements about respectability to the Victorian period, when respectability became the property of worthy middle-class individuals who defined themselves against the immoral working-class masses. She finds that, although class relations have been refigured through different historical periods, respectability continues to embody moral authority. Working in the Bourdieu tradition, Skeggs argues that white working-class women continue to be represented as dangerous and pathological and this contributes to the devaluing and delegitimating of their capitals, which maintains positions of social inequality.

Contemporary reconstructions of the sixties groupie tend to be classless, or upper-class, a by-product of her conflation with the rock chick, but this study finds that groupies came from different social backgrounds. Moreover, when the figure of the groupie first came to public attention in the mid-sixties she was initially constructed in the media as a promiscuous working-class young woman. By using 'respectability' as an analytical tool, this study interrogates how the legacy of class relations and anxieties defined groupie representation in the media, but also how the category of respectability regulated the behaviour and lived experiences of groupies from some backgrounds and not others.

Forms of Capital

The privileging of groupie subjectivity is central to this thesis, but to understand how structures underlie the groupie pattern of behaviour, this study also utilises Bourdieu's 'structurationist' paradigm, which seeks to mediate between subjectivism and objectivism to explain social reproduction and social transformation (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 17). Key to this formulation is Bourdieu's concept of class habitus, the 'internalised form of class condition' (Bourdieu, 1984 2010, p. 95), which describes how social conditions act upon and shape individuals' actions at the level of practical consciousness, but also how individuals are capable of creative responses to situations they find themselves in- within limits. It is the practices produced by 'habitus' which, Bourdieu argues, reproduce or transform social situations.

To examine the groupie phenomenon in terms of the power relations this practice embodied, this study engages with Bourdieu's field theory, which formulates an understanding of the relation between fields, (social contexts), and his metaphor of game playing, to describe the practices and strategies carried out by individuals at the level of practical consciousness in competition for resources within these fields (1993). His concepts of social, economic, and cultural capital (1989), which are fundamentally connected to habitus, and create an individual's position within a given field, are employed to map how groupies were born into structures of inequality which provided them with differential volumes of capital; while some groupies had access to the kind of capital which could be traded to accrue value, and converted through institutional systems into symbolic capital- 'the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognised as legitimate' (1989, p. 17), other groupies had their movements through social space circumscribed as they attempted to utilise their limited and delegitimised capital to advantage.

Subcultural scholarship

Previous scholarship has suggested the sixties groupie phenomenon presented a distinct subculture (Fenn, 2002), but engagement with subcultural theory has been cursory at best. This study finds that the figure of the groupie was constructed in the media as a sexual deviant and social problem. But as McRobbie and Garber (2006) observe, women and girls have generally been excluded from radical sociological theories of deviance,

which have tended to focus upon the more violent aspects of subcultural activity, which attract intense media attention, and from which women and girls are usually excluded. Stanley Cohen's (2011) moral panic framework does present useful theories of deviance amplification, self-fulfilling prophecies and 'folk devils', (composite stereotypes), but this study finds that while groupie representation incorporated some elements of moral panic, there is little evidence of a sustained amplifying cycle. The influence of radical theories of deviance on this study is a matter of perspective; rather than take concepts and descriptions, such as 'deviant' or 'social problem' for granted, this study is informed by the tradition of sceptical sociology (Becker, 1963), which asks, 'deviant to whom?', 'deviant from what?' and 'problematic to whom?' (Cohen S. , 2011, p. 5).

Forged at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Birmingham, early British subcultural scholarship aimed to put class at the centre of subcultural theorising to explain social action and social reaction (Hall & Jefferson, 1976). CCCS scholars used semiotic and rhetorical methods to interpret the spectacular, male-dominated, working-class subcultures of the post-war period as imaginary solutions to problems related to class, and symbolic forms of resistance to cultural hegemony (Hall & Jefferson, 1976; Hebdige, 1979). Style has been conceptualised by CCCS scholars as an essential subcultural component (Williams, 2007, p. 579), and while this study finds that their personal style was important to groupies, it generally corresponded with the 'hippie' style prevalent within the underground at that time, rather than a unique and identifiable groupie style. While the concept of class is also central to this study, 'classic' subcultural scholarship has been criticised for overstating the explanatory value of the working-class background (Cohen, 1987), and failing to recognise that subcultural forms can involve young people from a range of class backgrounds (Griffin, 2011). The groupie phenomenon crossed class positions. This complexifies any attempt to conceptualise a distinct groupie subculture by engaging with class-deterministic subcultural scholarship.

Classic subcultural scholarship has also been criticised for its lack of attention to gender, which has seen young women and girls marginalised within subcultural theory and seen to occupy a marginal position within subcultures (McRobbie, 1990; 1991). This study draws upon McRobbie and Garber's assertion, that the way in which girls are present suggests that their cultural subordination is retained and reproduced within 'spectacular' male-focused post-war subcultures (2006, p. 183). It is also founded upon their argument that, once the dimension of sexuality is accounted for, 'girls can be seen

to be negotiating a different space, offering a different type of resistance to what can at least in part be viewed as their sexual subordination' (2006, p. 188).

Leblanc has criticised CCCS semiotic readings for failing to represent accounts of intent in the construction of resistance (1999, p. 16). Rather than characterise girls in punk subcultures as passive victims of gender socialisation, she has drawn upon the work of anthropologist James Scott and cultural critic Henry Giroux, to develop a reconceptualization of resistance which reinstates 'human agency in the struggle against domination' (p.17). This study draws upon this reconceptualization, which requires three distinct moments -a subjective account of oppression (real or imagined), an express desire to counter that oppression, and an action (broadly defined as word, thought or deed) intended specifically to counter that oppression (p.18).

This was a national phenomenon involving a proportionate minority of female music fans. Evidence presented in this study suggests there was a groupie contingent within the crowds that congregated around local live music venues across the UK. In London, where there was considerable overlap between these live music audiences and the largely middle-class British counterculture, a groupie contingent was also present amid the diverse crowds that congregated around the network of 'underground' live music venues, and nightclubs at which 'underground' groups were known to socialise.

These diverse manifestations might lend themselves to a neo-Weberian post-subcultural approach, which asserts the postmodern argument, that modernist structural relations of class, gender and race are no longer relevant, to dispense with models of subordination and resistance. Instead, post-subculturalist theory focuses upon the phenomenological level of analysis, and the meaning of social interaction to participants (Muggleton, 2000) to emphasise fluidity, individualism, fragmentation, and pleasure. This development has subsequently seen a range of conceptual frameworks employed, most notably 'neo-tribe' (Maffesoli, 1995), 'lifestyle' (Chaney, 1996) and 'scene' (Straw, 1991). While this study is concerned with how groupies make sense of their own experiences, the empirical patterns and divergences evidenced in groupie representation, and the oral histories of the working-class and middle-class young women involved calls for structural concepts which make it possible to scrutinize power, dominance, and hierarchical differentiation.

To describe the social milieu in which groupies moved, this study instead employs Thornton's reconceptualization of subcultures as 'taste cultures', as 'crowds which generally congregate on the basis of their shared taste in music, consumption of common

media, and preference for people with similar tastes to themselves' (1995, p. 3). To understand how youth cultures are stratified within themselves, Thornton adapts Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital to develop the concept of subcultural capital, which insiders use to not only differentiate themselves from outsiders, but also differentiate themselves internally, creating internal hierarchies.

Drawing upon Bourdieu's (1984/2010) work on the social logic of taste, which holds that 'cultural capital is the lynchpin of a system of distinction in which cultural hierarchies correspond to social ones, and people's tastes are predominantly a marker of class' (Thornton, 1995, p. 25), Thornton identifies three principal overarching distinctions which organise cultural hierarchies and form the basis of subcultural capital within club cultures: the authentic vs the phoney, the hip vs the mainstream, and the underground vs the media, 'all unified by the unbroken concern with the problem of cultural status' (p. 4). She asserts that two kinds of authenticity can be seen at play within subcultural ideologies; artistic authenticity, which involves issues of originality and aura; and subcultural authenticity, which is 'about being natural to community or organic to subculture' (p. 30). 'Hipness' also works as a form of subcultural capital which 'confers status on its owner in the eyes of the relevant beholder' - it can be 'objectified' (clothing, record collection) or 'embodied' (using but not overusing current slang, being in the know) (p. 11). This study finds equivalent principal overarching distinctions at play within the underground field.

Thornton also draws upon the work of Huyssen (1986), who argues that since the nineteenth century, high cultural theorists have perpetuated a critical divide, with mass culture characterised as feminine, derivative, and superficial on one hand, and high art characterised as masculine, serious and virile on the other. Thornton argues that clubber ideologies are 'almost as *anti-mass culture* as discourses of the art world' (1995, p. 5) and the feminisation of the mainstream within subcultural ideologies suggests that 'subcultural capital would seem to be a currency which correlates with and legitimizes unequal statuses' (p. 104). Within youth cultures, she identifies a process of 'double articulation' at work, as '*other* cultures are characterised as feminine, *and* girls' cultures are devalued as imitative and passive. Authentic culture, by contrast, is depicted in gender-free or masculine terms *and* remains "the prerogative of boys"' (p. 105).

Thornton notes that 'subcultural capital is not as class bound as cultural capital- which is not to say that class is irrelevant- but it does not correlate in any one-to-one way with levels of youthful subcultural capital' (p. 12). But she has also been criticised for

avoiding the 'habitus' concept (Sandberg & Pederson, 2009) and failing to recognise that while 'class is wilfully obfuscated by subcultural distinctions' (Thornton, 1995, p. 12), this could be viewed as evidence of the heightened significance of class (Griffin, 2011, p. 12). Griffin suggests that attempts to obfuscate class 'can be viewed alongside derision of the "inauthentic" mainstream' and points towards the uneasy coexistence within club cultures, of 'the much-vaunted core values of PLUR (peace, love, unity and respect)' and 'a parallel set of more coded elitist values or practices that were classed, gendered and racialised' (ibid.). This study finds an equivalent relationship between core values and coded elitist values and practices within the British underground.

Jensen acknowledges that the concept of subcultural capital is important because 'it directs our attention towards criteria of recognition in subcultures' (2006, p. 265). But he also criticises Thornton for neglecting the relation between the unequal positioning of agents in social space, and the unequally distributed ability of agents within the subculture to exercise the classificatory power to categorise others as 'mainstream' and define the nature of legitimate subcultural capital. Drawing upon the work of sociologists working in the Bourdieu tradition, such as Skeggs (1997), Jensen emphasises the importance of intersections between gender, class, and race. He argues that by examining the nature of subcultural capital and relating it to the social position, gender, and race of subcultural participants, it should be possible to 'grasp the relation between subcultural recognition and central socio-structural differences and forms of power' (2006, p. 265).

This study of the groupie phenomenon draws upon Jensen's efforts to (re)integrate the concept of subcultural capital within a sociological framework inspired by Bourdieu. By engaging with the concept of habitus, as socially constituted, and constituting, it examines how groupie agency was carried out. At the same time, this study also interrogates the hegemonic currency of subcultural capital to formulate an understanding of how the intersection between gender and class worked to hierarchically differentiate groupies within the underground field.

Sexual capital

This study also formulates an understanding of how subcultural capital operated together with 'sexual capital' in relation to the organisation and differentiation of groupies within the underground field. The sociological concept of sexual capital was initially developed by John Levi Martin and Matt George (2006) and Adam Isaiah Green

(2008). It has been popularised, more recently, by Catherine Hakim who defines this form of capital as 'erotic capital' (2010; 2011). While Bourdieu recognised that cultural capital and social capital are ultimately derived from economic capital (1986, p. 24), Hakim argues that erotic capital is the exception and exists 'completely independent of social origin' (2011, p. 23). But as Green has pointed out, by defining erotic capital as a portable 'personal asset' with value across all fields (Hakim, 2011 p.19), Hakim dispenses with Bourdieu's broader field framework, which holds that all forms of capital are appropriate to a specific field where they have currency (Green A. I. , 2012, p. 149). In doing so, Hakim ignores how power and its assemblage through the structures of a given field, such as race, age, and class, systematically organise what constitutes 'desirability' within that field (ibid.)

This study, instead, draws upon Green's 'sexual fields approach' which is derived from Bourdieu's broader field framework (Green A. I. , 2008, p. 28). Green (2008) develops the concept of 'erotic habitus', which, like Bourdieu's concept of habitus, is a socially and historically constituted and constituting force. The erotic habitus operates beneath the level of consciousness, as the subjectively embodied social order, which orients sexual desires to the 'social world'. At the same time, it operates at the level of collective life, when 'overlapping erotic habitus produce structures of desire that establish a hegemonic currency of erotic capital in a given field' and hierarchically differentiate actors within the field's tiers of desirability (p. 30). While Green's theoretical framework is founded upon empirical work in the North American metropolitan queer community, he suggests that in heterosexual sexual fields, there may exist two parallel structures of desire, or heterosexual female and male systems of valuation. The combination of capitals which determine men's and women's status, however, will depend upon the given field and vary according to the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants, such as class and age (2011, p. 264).

Drawing upon Erving Goffman's (1959) social psychological focus on situational negotiation and presentation of self, Green asserts that erotic capital can be increased through 'front work'; by manipulating one's personal appearance, or through careful 'impression management' by performing a field-relevant demeanour, which, over time, may become 'second nature' in the embodied dispositions of the habitus (Green A. I. , 2011, p. 248). Sexual capital is also mutually convertible with other forms of capital, including social and economic capital (Martin & George, 2006). By examining the hegemonic currency of erotic capital within the underground field, this study develops an

understanding of how some groupies were able to render their sexual capital field relevant, increase their sexual capital, and mutually convert their sexual capital with other forms of capital, including subcultural capital, while others were not.

Aims and Objectives

Aims

1. To re-evaluate the extensively mythologized period, 1965-1974, through examining a particular phenomenon within music: the 'groupie'
2. To investigate the feminist implications of the groupie phenomenon and determine whether, in the light of contemporary feminist concerns, a reconciliation can be reached between different feminist interpretations

Objectives

1. To explore the relationship between the nature and organisation of groupie subcultural hierarchies and the position of women in wider society
2. To explore how theoretical and political debates and discourses contributed to representations of the groupie produced at the time
3. To record and evaluate the experiences of groupies and how they see their own actions in relation to feminism
4. To examine how the actions of groupies were observed and interpreted by different kinds of feminist at the time

Research Questions

- How did different actors, including the media, groupies themselves and different kinds of feminist make sense of the groupie phenomenon at the time?
- How can different understandings of the groupie be used to both re-write histories of the sixties and de-mystify the groupie?

Summary of Chapters

Chapter 2 provides an overview and rationale for the different qualitative research methods employed in this study. Oral history participants are introduced, the implications of conducting both online and face to face interviews are explored, before moving to consider how and why this study has adopted a feminist approach to interviewing. A

rationale for the methodological decisions made during the transcription process, and the measures taken to protect the confidentiality of participants is provided, alongside a detailed account of how the oral history transcripts were subject to analysis and interpretation. This chapter also gives an account of how archival data was collected and considers how different kinds of data provide different perspectives on the groupie phenomenon, before describing how data was subject to analysis and interpretation.

Chapter 3 traces the preconditions for the emergence of the groupie phenomenon to the post-war period; by interweaving groupie oral histories with other historical accounts, it is argued that, while groupies were part of the first generation to directly benefit from the introduction of the welfare state, the post-war economic boom saw teenage girls become a powerful new consumer demographic, to whom young seemingly accessible pop groups were marketed. Changes to public and private morality, meanwhile, saw some relaxation in sexual attitudes and behaviours, but also the increasing sexual objectification of young women. It is argued that these developments fed directly into the emergence of the groupie phenomenon in the mid-sixties.

Chapter 4 is concerned with the themes and imagery established in groupie representation produced between 1965 and 1969. By examining newspapers, the music press, a novel, and a documentary, this chapter argues the groupie phenomenon was initially defined in relation to a traditional form of female, working-class sexual deviancy embodied in the 'scrubber' stereotype. It finds that the discursively constructed figure of the early groupie embodied cultural anxieties and latent desires regarding the correlation between the growing economic independence and sexual autonomy of working-class girls.

Chapter 5 draws upon groupie testimonies to dismantle groupie stereotypes, reinstate groupie agency, and explore groupie motivations. It finds that, in cognizance with the new cultural emphasis on personal fulfilment, both Emma and Jenny Fabian articulated the groupie pattern of behavior as a form of resistance to the restrictive traditional feminine role, and a means to negotiate pleasure without responsibility. By drawing chiefly upon Emma's oral history this chapter explores the risks attached to the groupie pattern of behaviour and finds that while the groupie phenomenon crossed class positions, the sexual behaviour of working-class groupies was curtailed by the category of respectability.

Chapter 6 draws upon Jenny Fabian's oral history to trace the emergence of the British underground groupie phenomenon. By examining groupie representation in

newspapers and fashion magazines, it is argued that, from 1969, the discursively constructed figure of the groupie underwent a process of 'bourgeoisification'. While this 'new' kind of groupie was treated as potentially political and aligned with the wider disaffiliation of middle-class youth in the mainstream media, this chapter finds that within the underground press, some influential individuals made moves to embrace the figure of the groupie, aligning her with countercultural ideas of sexual radicalism.

Chapter 7 explores how groupies navigated the underground field. By drawing upon groupie testimonies, it is argued that, within this highly competitive field, classed and gendered cultural capitals held different convertible values. Structures of class and gender, meanwhile, established the hegemonic currency of subcultural capital to position and determine which groupies were able to advance their social status by trading their sexual capital and which were not. This chapter finds that while Jenny Fabian's middle-class cultural capital made it possible for her to advance her status within the underground field, those groupies who failed to successfully convert their sexual capital or deviated from male-defined ideas of female sexual liberation, risked reputational damage.

Chapter 8 draws upon groupie representation in the underground press, mainstream press, and cinematic recreations produced in the early-to-mid seventies. This chapter argues that, against a historical backdrop marked by economic woe, countercultural disillusionment, and feminist ascendancy, the more political tendency within the underground reappraised the figure of the groupie in relation to forces seen to undermine the countercultural project. It also finds that, by the close of this cultural decade in the mid-seventies, the groupie phenomenon had been partially reconciled with an evolving patriarchal structure which was increasingly shifting focus from the onus on feminine chastity to female sexual availability.

Chapter 9 is concerned with how different kinds of feminist, and women in rock culture made sense of the groupie phenomenon, and how groupies made sense of feminism. By examining the music, underground and feminist press, this chapter traces the intellectual rift, which has divided subsequent feminist appraisals of the groupie to the early seventies. It also finds that, while Emma and Jenny Fabian have divergent perspectives on the feminist project, both perceive feminism to be 'difficult'. It is argued that, while feminist utopianism calls for political discipline, the groupie phenomenon more closely corresponds with the highly individualistic form of female liberation

conceptualised in Radner's neo-feminist paradigm, which offers a pragmatic model for women to pursue happiness and advance their status within the existing system.

Chapter 2 Methodology

This chapter provides an overview and rationale for the different qualitative research methods I have employed. Beginning with oral histories, it describes how I located participants, how I collected data through face to face and online interviews, how I approached interviewing and transcription, and how I thematically analysed and interpreted the interview data. It then moves to discuss the different kinds of data I collected through archival research, highlighting the different perspectives different kinds of data can provide on the research topic, and how I thematically analysed and interpreted these different kinds of data.

The orientation of this qualitative inquiry is explicitly 'feminist'. A feminist perspective has been instrumental in determining not only the focus of inquiry, which is founded upon the notion that gender is of central importance to the groupie phenomenon; it has also been instrumental in selecting an oral history research methodology. Oral history is spoken history; it refers to both the process of recording/collecting historical data (the interview), and the output of data collection, be that in the form of an audio recording, transcript, or a written work (secondary document) based on the data. Oral history has proved extremely useful to women's history because women's lives have 'so often passed undocumented' (Thompson, 2000 p.111) and these techniques have been employed in the past by feminist historians such as Sheila Rowbotham and Jean McCrindle (1977). As Thompson notes, oral histories 'make a fairer trial possible: witnesses can now also be called from the under-classes, the unprivileged, and the defeated' (2000 p.7).

While British groupies represent a historically maligned, and silent group, this study privileges the voices of these women to understand how groupies make sense of their own behaviour. The introduction of oral evidence can also open up new areas of enquiry, challenge the assumptions and accepted judgements of historians, widen the scope of historical writing and change the social message of history: 'history becomes, to put it simply, more democratic' (ibid. p.8). By centring these women's lived experiences this study works to demythologise the sixties, dismantle groupie stereotypes, foreground human agency, and in doing so, present a contribution to the field of women's history.

Triangulation

Understanding the ways in which different actors, including the media, and different kinds of feminists, have made sense of the groupie phenomenon at different times is also key to this study. To capture different dimensions of the same phenomenon and build a more in-depth and complex picture, I have used methodological triangulation to gather different kinds of qualitative data using different data-collection procedures (Denzin, 1970). In addition to groupie oral histories, I collected data from groupie memoirs. Different kinds of data have also been collected through archival research, including print media, films, television programmes, (fictional recreations and documentary) and a novel.

Some of these sources have been produced by groupies, female music journalists, and feminists, or feature mediated reflections on the groupie phenomenon by groupies, other female fans, and women in rock. Most of these sources, however, are interpretations of the groupie phenomenon by male film directors, male authors, and male journalists, who draw upon the mediated reflections of male pop stars. These reflections are interpreted in relation to groupie perspectives; their analysis gives valuable insight into the social and cultural background against which these women lived their lives. Their inclusion, therefore, works with, rather than against, the feminist orientation of this study, which seeks to privilege women's voices.

Groupie perspectives; Oral histories

Participants and access

Unlike their American counterparts, British groupies of the sixties are not known to have written or spoken publicly of their experiences, either at the time or subsequently. The exception is Jenny Fabian, who was catapulted to fame in 1969 when the semi-fictional memoir she penned with Johnny Byrne, *Groupie,* was published. Over subsequent years her notoriety has diminished, but she remains a public figure, and has spoken of her groupie experiences to chroniclers of the underground (Green J. , 1998), journalists (Needs, 2022; Riley, 2013) and written of them herself for newspapers (Fabian, 2001). When I made contact with her through Facebook, she was more than happy to participate and kindly gave up her time to tell her story in a face-to-face interview conducted at her home.

Finding other participants proved more challenging. The 'groupie' label is

contentious. In correspondence with the ethical principal of respect for persons, which recognizes the capacity and rights of all individuals to make their own choices and decisions, I decided at the outset of this study that interviews would only be conducted with women who self-identify as former groupies and were active in British music culture between 1964 and 1974. As a musician, I initially attempted to use my own contacts within the revivalist sixties London psych scene to find groupies to interview, but I only encountered male musicians of that generation who were willing to speak on the subject. The inclusion of such testimonies risked diverting attention from the women with which this study is concerned.

At a 'Women and the Counterculture' event held at the Regent Street Cinema I was introduced to an influential male promoter and DJ of the era, who I was told 'organised the groupies for the groups'. Upon learning the nature of my research, this promoter, some forty years my senior, immediately sexually propositioned me ('fancy a shag?' he asked, which I misheard as 'fancy a chat?', and duly responded, 'yes, that would be really helpful, thank you'). Evidently, access to the inner circles of the sixties counterculture continues, to some degree, to be regulated by male gatekeepers ever hopeful that a system of exchange, where feminine sexual capital can be traded for subcultural admittance, might be revived.

After our initial misunderstanding (and my mortification), this promoter did put me in touch with a former groupie, who was, initially, interested in participating in this study, but I believe she became evasive when her husband learned she might take part. Indeed, I suspect that social and spousal disapproval discouraged former groupies from coming forward to share their stories. This became apparent when I began to advertise for participants online, posting on Instagram, Facebook, and in various Facebook groups frequented by the so-called 'baby-boomer' generation. Male group admins tended to refuse my requests to advertise in their groups, presumably because they did not approve of the research topic or wished to exclude material which they thought might incite a conflict of views, while female group admins were more accommodating. Advertisements were ultimately not met with any negative public response; instead, they generated some lively discussion, and some reminiscences - in one instance a woman commented that she had had the 'best sexual experience' of her life with a musician in 1976.

Finally, 'Emma' responded to an advertisement placed on social media. During our initial correspondence it became apparent that she wished to share her story, but she also expressed concerns about the risk of social disapproval and reputational damage

should her identity be revealed in this report. At the point of data collection Emma agreed to participate in this study on the condition that her name be replaced by a pseudonym, but she was also made aware that, in the final report, it may still be possible to identify her from information she may have given during the interview. To protect Emma's identity, and the identities of individuals she spoke about in our interview, further measures were taken through data cleaning and dissemination of research results, which will be discussed in due course.

Data gathered during this interview was so rich and offered such a powerful counter perspective to Jenny Fabian's interview, it became apparent, very quickly, that not only *could* this thesis be written by drawing upon just these two oral histories in conjunction with the data collected during the archival research stage, it *should* be. As a groupie from a white working-class, provincial background, Emma's experience was starkly different to white middle-class, metropolitan Jenny Fabian's.[7] The contrast between these two women's stories illuminates the class dimension which, like gender, has come to define this study. But at the same time there are also significant commonalities with regards to their motivations and desires. The significance of these divergences and commonalities informs much of this study and will be expanded upon throughout the chapters that follow. Oral history interviews are in depth by design, a successful interview will generate large quantities of data. Emma's story was so rich, so personal and so revealing, I felt that, by actively continuing to search for more participants, I would have risked, not only potentially collecting an unmanageable quantity of data, but in doing so, I might also risk failing to do justice to the women who had already shared their life story narratives with me.

Though class differences dominate the comparison of Emma and Jenny Fabian's groupie experiences, it has also been noted that these women are both white. As Richard Dyer notes, 'as long as race is something only applied to non-white peoples, as long as white people are not racially seen and named, they/we function as a human norm. Other people are raced, we are just people' (2017, p. 2). While I found no evidence of Black or Asian groupies in British pop/rock culture during this research project, this certainly does not mean that there weren't/aren't any. As a white researcher, I acknowledge that the social networks I was able to exploit to locate groupies are populated by predominantly white individuals, which have almost inevitably produced two white respondents. It goes

[7] 'Provincial' is a loaded term. It is used in this thesis in the straightforward sense, to distinguish groupies who lived outside London from metropolitan groupies who lived inside London.

without saying that Emma and Jenny Fabian do not speak for all groupies. Another researcher, from a different background, with access to different social networks might more easily locate Black or Asian groupies, the recording and analysis of whose experiences would only serve to further enrich the historical picture of the groupie phenomenon.

Online Interviewing

While the interview with Jenny Fabian took place in her home in the summer of 2019, the interview with Emma took place in June 2020 when the UK was in lockdown at the height of the coronavirus pandemic. Given the circumstances, I elected to hold the interview over Zoom, Emma's preferred video conferencing application. I opted for a video interview rather than telephone to replicate the face-to-face interview as closely as possible and decided to record only the audio on Dictaphone to produce consistent data sets.

It has been suggested that video interviews are only marginally inferior to face-to-face interviews (Bratt & Saarijärvi, 2021) but there are differences. A successful video interview depends upon reliable technology- a good quality camera and microphone, and a stable internet connection (ibid.). Although neither of us were very experienced in using video conferencing technology at that time, lockdown had galvanised many people, like Emma and myself, to grapple with technology we might have avoided under normal circumstances. Fortunately, after some initial difficulties joining the meeting, the technology worked well throughout our interview and did not interfere with the conversational flow.

Even if technological difficulties do not interfere with an interview, however, it has been noted that the interviewer can only observe the interviewee partially, in Emma's case, from the waist up. This can make it difficult to observe and interpret facial expressions and body language which might be visible in face-to-face interaction (Irani, 2019). Previous research has suggested that building rapport can be difficult during online interviews due to a lack of visual cues (Chen & Hinton, 1999) and has asked whether it is even possible to 'connect' on an emotional and mental level when communicating online (Mann & Stewart, 2000). But there has also been some suggestion that participants can be more relaxed when interviewed by video because they are often in their own home (Irani, 2019), and this form of communication lends itself well to the exploration of

sensitive subjects because it can be more socially desirable than face-to-face interaction and allows for more reflective responses (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014). Personality is, of course, an important factor (ibid.); Emma was a responsive interviewee, rapport was built quickly with the help of a preliminary phone call and in our video interview she required very few prompts from myself yet took her narration in fascinating directions.

Visual cues are also particularly important when sensitive topics are broached. As Anderson and Dana observe, 'the researcher must always remain attentive to the moral dimension of interviewing and aware that she is there to follow the narrator's lead, to honour her integrity and privacy, not to intrude into areas that the narrator has chosen to hold back' (2006, p. 141). By reading and responding appropriately to non-verbal communication it is possible for the interviewer to direct the interview in a manner which allows the narrator the freedom to express themselves without being intrusive. Given the sensitive nature of the subject matter, I addressed these limitations by reminding Emma that she need not answer any question she was not comfortable answering before the interview began and by observing her facial expression and body language, albeit partially, via video link.

Feminist interviewing

Traditional interview practice has been criticised by feminists because 'extracting information is more to be valued than yielding it: the convention of interviewer-interviewee hierarchy is a rationalisation of in-equality' (Oakley, 1981, p. 40). To remedy these methodological issues, feminist and sociologist Ann Oakley realigns the role of the interviewer 'from being a data-collecting instrument for researchers, to being a data-collection instrument for those whose lives are being researched' (p.49). The principles of feminist inquiry should, therefore, include a sense of equality between researcher and researched, the placing of value on the experiences and perceptions of women and going beyond the generation of knowledge for its own sake to engaging in the use of knowledge for positive change and the liberation of women (Guerrero, 1990, pp. 16-17). A desire to uphold and enact these feminist principles has informed my decision to conduct feminist interviews when conducting oral histories.

Oakley has criticised text-book advice that urges interviewers to adopt an objective attitude, and to only receive and not elicit information. She saw this practice, which essentially objectifies interviewees as merely sources of data, as not only

unworkable, but also morally indefensible. Instead, she advocates a form of 'feminist' interviewing, in which the interviewer adopts a non-hierarchical approach to the interviewee, answers questions and gives personal information: 'a different role, that could be termed 'no intimacy without reciprocity' (Oakley, 1981 p.49).

The groupie phenomenon is a controversial issue. As a public figure who has been the target of media scrutiny, Jenny Fabian is aware of how her groupie experiences might be sensationalised and condemned. As a private individual who has never spoken publicly of her groupie experiences, Emma expressed concerns about social disapproval and reputational damage. Understandably both women were initially wary about taking part in this project; while Jenny Fabian agreed to the interview, but suggested we meet for a coffee in a public place before going to her flat to conduct the interview, Emma and I had a phone conversation before she agreed to participate. In Emma's case, this informal conversation may have helped overcome issues associated with building rapport over a video call, but these preliminary encounters also gave both women an opportunity to ask questions about the interview and the nature of my research. Given the sensitive and deeply personal nature of this research topic, I believe these informal conversations, which involved a degree of self-disclosure, on my part (Collins & Miller, 1994), also gave Emma and Jenny Fabian an opportunity to find out about what kind of person I am before admitting me into their personal physical or online space. Establishing a rapport, between interviewer and interviewee in this way, was absolutely necessary if these women were to feel comfortable sharing their stories without fear of moral judgement, and for them to feel confident their stories would be used respectfully and responsibly. For as Oakley observes, 'finding out about people's lives is much more readily done on a basis of friendship than in a formal interview' (1981, p. 52).

As a woman from a different generation, I was not directly familiar with Jenny Fabian and Emma's worlds, I was also able to assume an 'outsider' position of relative naivety, in which the narrator was the expert. Emma, for example, gave vivid accounts of the music venues she frequented in the sixties and the musicians she encountered. If I had been a member of her generation, she might well have skipped over these evocative descriptions under the assumption I already knew first-hand. But as a fan of the music of the era and a woman involved in the music industry and contemporary taste cultures, it was also possible for me to engage with both women from the position of an 'insider'. This was advantageous when seeking to encourage an atmosphere of reciprocity during our interviews. As Paul Thompson observes, a life story may 'be told differently to various

audiences in different situations' (2000, p. 133). I have no doubt that both women were able to speak more freely about their sexual experiences and desires with me than they would have a male interviewer; I suspect this is because they felt that, as another woman, I would relate to them. For example, when Jenny Fabian recalled how she had 'really wanted to die' when her heart had been broken, she asked me, 'have you not had that?'; in doing so, she called upon me to look to my own personal experiences as a woman to understand more fully how she had felt at that time.

Emma recalled several traumatic incidents, and such was our rapport, that she expressed some surprise during our interview at how much she was sharing - 'can't believe I'm telling you it', she remarked after recalling how, in her first job at a supermarket, the butcher she worked with used to simulate sexual intercourse using his finger and the heart of an animal. Some of the experiences that Emma shared with me were so awful, their retelling necessitated a compassionate response from myself, as a woman and an interviewer. In such instances, the 'neutrality' of silence advocated in traditional interview practice was, for me, rendered an entirely inadequate, insensitive, and unworkable response.

These examples illustrate how these oral histories were not simply narrated and recorded, they were produced at the moment of encounter between me, as interviewer, and each narrator. Feminist researchers have suggested that, when women interview women, they bring to that interaction a tradition of 'woman talk', (DeVault, 1990, p. 101) 'they help each other develop ideas, and are typically better prepared than men to use the interview as a "search procedure" (Paget, 1983) cooperating in the project of constructing meanings together' (DeVault, 1990, p. 101). When Jenny Fabian called upon me to look to my own experiences to understand her heartbreak, and I felt compelled to respond to the traumatic experiences Emma shared with me, we invoked this tradition of 'woman talk' to construct the meaning of these experiences together.

Traditional interview practice has also ignored the personal meaning interviews have in terms of social interaction (Oakley, 1981). But an emotional and mental connection was not only necessary to establish the foundation of trust, which made it possible for Emma to share these intimate traumatic experiences with me, a relative stranger; in the process of the telling and listening, our emotional and mental connection was strengthened, even cemented. This implicit foundation of trust was established even though Emma and I had never met in person, a fact which was brought into focus when at one point during the interview, a vehicle backfired in the street outside my house and

Emma, for a brief moment, expressed concern that someone else could be in the room with me, listening but unseen. After I had assured her that this was not the case, Emma appeared to be satisfied, and recommenced with her narrative; had we not established a foundation of trust, things might have gone differently.

In the spirit of non-hierarchical feminist interviewing, which advocates partnership between researched and researcher, both interviews were also consciously intended to be a collaborative process. Although I went into each interview with a number of themes (see appendix i) which I wished to cover in line with my research goals, the open-ended nature of the questions I asked were also designed to encourage each narrator to speak as freely as possible, when recounting their life-story narrative. This approach allowed for the form and themes of each interview to be subject to co-negotiation between interviewer and interviewee, as the interview was taking place. In doing so, Emma and Jenny Fabian had space to draw out the other life experiences which they understood their groupie phases in relation to, and thus, illuminate how they make sense of their groupie experiences. Emma, for example emphasised how her relationship with her father was a defining feature of her adolescence, and how she understood her groupie phase as a reaction to this relationship. A structured interview which focused upon Emma's groupie experiences, rather than her life-story narrative, would perhaps have missed these important insights.

Transcription

Given the confidential details disclosed in these interviews, I decided at the outset of this study that the original audio recordings should be destroyed once the thesis was completed. Oral evidence was, therefore, transcribed from Dictaphone recording, but this practice presented some unexpected challenges and choices. As Oliver et al observe 'transcription is a powerful act of representation' (2005, p. 1287), each decision made during this process, results in the loss or retention of some aspect of the interview (DeVault, 1990, p. 105).

To allow participants to speak for themselves, my initial instinct was to adopt a 'naturalised approach' to transcription practice (Oliver, et al., 2005, p. 1275), which reproduces the interviews as accurately, and in as much detail, as possible, including every utterance, repetition, pause, and involuntary vocalisation. But any discussion of accuracy is problematic because all transcriptions, no matter how detailed, are

incomplete interpretations and re-presentations of the interview event (Macauley, 1991, p. 282). This approach can also produce vast quantities of largely irrelevant information and render the text difficult to read and comprehend (ibid.). Spoken language is different to written; it is messy, littered with conversational repairs, after the fact corrections and incremental repetitions. This becomes particularly apparent when transcribing verbatim. Jenny Fabian's, Emma's, and indeed, my own habitual speech patterns were highlighted during the transcription process; conversational repairs, after the fact corrections, and incremental repetitions rendered the transcript untidy and difficult to read. The tendency for this naturalistic approach to employ phonetic spelling to capture regional or class dialect, can also be problematic; it can render the transcript difficult to read, but it can also be potentially offensive to interviewees who might find their way of speaking caricatured or counterpoised beneath standard English within an implicit hierarchy (Oliver, et al., 2005, p. 1279).

Denaturalised transcription practice, on the other hand, values the informational content of speech rather than working to record every utterance as accurately as possible (MacLean, et al., 2004). To restore meaning, this approach might see the transcriber 'correct' irregular grammar and diction to more accurately convey the speaker's meaning, but this practice can erase regional and class specificity and dishonour the spirit and individuality of speech. A highly readable transcript might also be produced through the omission of messy conversational repairs, after the fact corrections or incremental repetitions, among other speech characteristics, but this can also result in a loss of meaning (Oliver, et al., 2005, p. 1286).

For example, Jenny Fabian made frequent conversational repairs, she would begin sentences and change her mind mid-way-through and begin again. Emma and myself used incremental repetitions, 'sort of' in my case, and 'y'know' in Emma's, to buy time while we formulated our next sentence. Both habits are hardly noticeable in conversational exchange but appear prominent when speech is transcribed. Nevertheless, they are not meaningless; Jenny Fabian's style of speech suggests a confident way of speaking, one which plunges into a response which is not yet cognitively fully formulated, while Emma and I were both more tentative. In my case, I believe this tendency reflected my efforts to choose my words carefully when giving interview prompts; in Emma's, I believe her repeated refrain 'y'know' held a deeper significance.

In her essay, 'Talking and Listening from Women's Standpoint: Feminist Strategies for Interviewing and Analysis', Marjorie Devault writes of how, when interviewing women

about housework, she found that her transcripts were filled with notations of women using the words 'you know'. Devault draws upon the work of feminist scholar, Dale Spender, (1985) to argue that language reflects male experiences therefore 'distinctive features of women's speech should not be seen as deficiencies in linguistic skill, but as adaptive responses to these constraints on their speech' (DeVault, 1990, p. 98). This incidental feature, Devault holds, is therefore 'not as empty as it seems', the words 'you know' occurred in places where they were consequential for the joint production of talk in her interviews, the words, therefore, do not reflect 'stumbling inarticulateness', but signal a request for understanding, on a woman-to woman-level (p. 103).

With these insights in mind, I have borrowed elements of both naturalism and denaturalism in my attempt to produce a transcript which holds to the feminist principles and orientation of this study. To allow space for the 'unspoken' and for participants to speak for themselves, I have chosen to retain the 'messiness' and distinctiveness of the conversational mechanics of speech; I have used ungrammatical commas to indicate where the narrator has paused, and I have retained hesitation forms used by narrators, such as 'um' and response tokens, such as 'uhuh' (Oliver, et al., 2005, p. 1283). I have employed italics to give the reader an idea of how the speaker placed emphasis on particular words or phrases, and I have retained involuntary vocalisations (ibid.) such as laughter, in an attempt to retain the original spirit of what were, in both cases, animated oral testimonies.

I have chosen not to 'correct' self-corrections and incremental repetitions. Nor have I chosen to correct irregular grammar, a part of everyday speech which can offer 'important insights into a participant's life and meaning-making' (Oliver, et al., 2005, p. 1286). In Emma's case, the inclusion of irregular grammar also helped to capture the regional and class specificity of her speech, not as a working-class counter to middle-class Jenny Fabian's 'well-spoken' testimony, but as a way of speaking, which is as legitimate as any other, and in no need of academic 'correction'. This approach also corresponds with the feminist orientation of this study, which seeks to understand how groupies from different backgrounds make sense of their own behaviour in their own words. On the other hand, to be sensitive to class difference and uphold the principles of feminist research- that research should be *for*, as well as *about* the women with which it is concerned, I have employed phonetic spelling minimally, limited, in large part, to the incidental feature, 'y'know'. These decisions, I hope, have helped to produce a readable transcript which, at the same time, captures the spirit of the spoken language.

Following transcription, I addressed participant and third-party confidentiality through data cleaning (Kaiser, 2009). I replaced Emma's name and the names of all the individuals and groups she spoke about in her interview with pseudonyms, to produce a second interview transcript or clean data set. Two groupie friends featured prominently in her account, their names have been changed to 'Tina' and 'Susan'. Group names have been changed to letters (Groups C to L) in alphabetical order according to the order of their appearance in the transcript. There is one exception, which featured prominently in Emma's account; to make the transcript and thesis easier to follow for the reader, this group has been given the pseudonymous name 'Vagabond'.

Jenny Fabian did not request anonymity. During our interview she was careful not to directly name the private individuals she sometimes spoke about, but she did identify some of the groups and public figures she encountered in the sixties by name. When she and Byrne published *Groupie,* in 1969 they used thinly veiled pseudonyms to describe these groups and individuals, but today, anyone who might be interested can easily ascertain their identities by employing a quick Google search. Considering the public accessibility of this information, I decided that, in Jenny Fabian's interview transcript, third party identifiers should remain intact. Where it is necessary for purposes of clarification, I have also provided the character names which correspond with third party identifiers mentioned in her testimony.

Transcripts were then submitted to each participant for their approval. Both women were given the opportunity to correct errors made in the transcription process, to ensure validity, and withdraw statements they had made during the interview; Jenny Fabian and I both agreed that some of the diversions her interview took, which saw her speak about aspects of her personal life today, which are not relevant to the study, should be redacted. As a seasoned journalist, Jenny Fabian was also familiar with the messy nature of an interview transcript and untroubled, but despite my efforts to balance accuracy with readability, Emma found her transcript hard-going and difficult to read. Given how important it was that she review this transcript fully, I produced an edited version, which removed some conversational repairs, after the fact corrections, and incremental repetitions to make it more digestible, while retaining the original spirit and content of what she had said.

While the transcripts provide a naturalised record of the interviews, where I have quoted oral histories in the text, some false starts and conversational repairs have been edited for the sake of readability. Efforts have been made to present oral testimony

quotes as fully as possible, but some conversational diversions which are not directly relevant have also been removed. In such cases I have used '[…]' to signify where material from the original interview transcript has been removed and '…' to indicate where the speaker paused in the interview. Irregular grammar, incremental repetitions, response tokens, involuntary vocalisations and emphasis indicated by italics, have all been retained to convey the spirit of spoken language while appearing in written language. Censored transcripts can be located in Appendix 2 of this thesis[8].

Confidentiality

The participant review stage also provided a second opportunity for the issue of confidentiality and informed consent to be discussed with Emma, who had requested anonymity at the point of data collection. Her interview contained rich descriptions of her life, which presented a risk of 'deductive disclosure', where the traits of individuals or groups can make them identifiable in a research report (Sieber, 1992). Following her review of the transcript, Emma asked that personal details such as her father's occupation, and the town where she lives, be censored in conjunction with her request for anonymity.

As Kaiser observes, the risk of deductive disclosure presents an ethical dilemma which involves 'the conflict between conveying detailed, accurate accounts of the social world while simultaneously protecting the identities of the individuals who live in that particular social world' (2009, p. 1632). To retain the regional and class specificity of Emma's testimony, I have, with Emma's consent, substituted these details for the more general descriptors 'master tradesman' and 'town in the North of England' respectively. I have also redacted equivalent details regarding Emma's two groupie friends, Tina and Susan from the transcript, and carefully chosen Emma's quotes about these two women for inclusion in the body of the thesis. These measures have, I hope, minimised the chances of anyone, who knows Emma, Tina or Susan but does not know about their groupie past, from identifying them from this report; Tolich (2004) describes this as 'external confidentiality'.

Despite these efforts, the risk of an internal confidentiality breach (Tolich, 2004) where 'insiders', those who know about Emma's groupie past because they were there at

[8] Interview transcripts and other correspondences with both Emma and Jenny Fabian have been redacted from this publicly available version of the thesis

the time, might recognise Emma, or, indeed, themselves, from details Emma imparted during her interview, does remain, as with any oral history. But it is also perhaps worth noting that, as a PhD thesis with an academic audience, it is very unlikely that anyone who knows Emma, Tina or Susan will read this report in this form. Although they are censored, interview transcripts inevitably contain more details than the carefully selected quotes included in the body of this thesis. In the event this thesis is published and made available to a wider audience, interview transcripts will not be included, to further minimise the risk of an internal or external confidentiality breach.

Analysis and Interpretation

Once the transcripts had been approved by study participants, I evaluated the oral evidence in the three basic ways identified by Thompson (2000 p.272): first, the transcription was read through as a text in order to discern its overall meaning and identify repeated comments and images; next, an attempt was made to disentangle the different types of content in the interview, distinguishing between subjective parts, such as how the respondent felt or perceived events, from objective parts, such as factual information including dates and locations; finally, the interview was evaluated in terms of its 'reliability' in order to determine the extent to which memories are censored or mythologized. This last point is contentious, for as Portelli observes:

> Oral sources are credible, but with a *different* credibility. The importance of oral testimony may lie not in its adherence to fact, but rather in its departure from it, as imagination, symbolism, and desire emerge. Therefore, there are no 'false' oral sources. Once we have checked their factual credibility with all the established criteria of philological criticism and factual verification which are required by all types of sources anyway, the diversity of oral history consist in the fact that 'wrong' statements are still psychologically 'true' and that this truth may be equally as important as factually reliable accounts (2006, p. 37)

Efforts to determine self-censorship and mythologising have therefore not been undertaken to discredit these oral testimonies as 'untrue', rather, to reach a deeper understanding of how these women make sense of their experiences. For, as Samuel and Thompson observe, 'myth is a universal constituent of human experience'; it is the omissions and shaping of life stories which make them myth (1990, p. 6). On one hand, 'any life story, written or oral, more or less dramatically, is in one sense a personal mythology, a self-justification' (ibid. p. 10). Attention has therefore been paid to how

these narrators draw upon universal patterns of monomyth. On the other, oral histories can be both myth-incorporating and myth-busting. By juxtaposing oral histories with mythologies of the sixties, this study also explores how both Emma and Jenny Fabian's oral histories, not only disrupt, but also incorporate elements of sixties mythologies in fascinating and divergent ways.

As a public figure, and active participant in the British underground, Jenny Fabian has written and spoken of her groupie experiences many times over the years. Her life-story narrative is public. In its telling and retelling, it has been formalised and fossilised to some extent. This presented challenges during the interview and its subsequent analysis. During our interview she would slip between 'I' and 'she' when discussing the real-life events which informed her novels or refer to her novels to supplement her oral account, 'when you read that, you'll see' she told me at one point, in reference to the transcript for her semi-fictional novel, *One Too Many Mornings.* During the interview, it was possible, to some degree, to unpick personal memory from public narrative, by asking Jenny Fabian direct questions about events in her semi-fictional novels, and how these compared to her personal memories. But Jenny Fabian's oral history life story narrative also overlapped and interweaved with her written accounts, to the extent that it could become difficult to determine where 'Katie' or 'Tiptree', her semi-fictional proxies' narratives ended, and Jenny Fabian's narrative began. Rather than seeking to determine which account is most 'real', I have evaluated Jenny Fabian's oral testimony and written testimonies in relation to one another and identified commonalities and divergences to understand the complex interplay between personal memory and public narrative.

More recent shifts in the concerns of oral historians mean that the way in which a life story is told is often as important as what is actually told**,** the structure and *style* of storytelling can be evidence in its own right. Portelli speaks of oral history as a narrative genre because 'what is spoken in a typical oral history interview has usually never been told *in that form* before' (1997, p. 4). This genre depends upon a 'shifting balance between the personal and the social, between biography and history' (ibid. p. 6). Portelli, then, calls for a stratified critical approach to interpreting oral history, because oral history functions on several shifting levels of meaning; as a performance-oriented narrative which is outward-facing and co-constructed between interviewer and narrator; as a content-orientated document which can be mined for factual information; as a subject-oriented life story- a series of sequential, but not necessarily linear, events in the life of the narrator; and as a theme-orientated testimony. Groupie oral histories have

been interpreted in line with this stratified approach. The nature of the life story interview as a co-construction produced at the moment of encounter between interviewer and narrator have already been discussed. Factual information mined from the interviews, such as dates and locations, was verified via email correspondence with participants, or by using secondary historical sources. To contextualise these life story narratives, I then produced a timeline mapping significant events in Emma and Jenny Fabian's life stories against historical events.

To identify recurring and common themes or imagery I then applied the six-phase approach to thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2012) to each interview transcript. To capture both the obvious and latent meanings in the data, I combined an inductive approach, which sees codes and themes derived from the content of the data itself, with a deductive approach, which sees the researcher bring a series of concepts which they use to thematically analyse the data (ibid.). For example, having already familiarised myself with the data (Phase 1), I noticed, during the coding phase (Phase 2) that both Emma and Jenny Fabian spoke of having strict fathers and Emma returned to this idea several times during her testimony. Derived from the data, I generated the code 'strict fathers'. During the next phase, 'searching for themes' (Phase 3) I reviewed the coded data to detect patterns within the data set and noticed areas of similarity between the code 'strict fathers' and other codes which arose across both data sets, such as 'controlling husbands', 'strict teachers' and 'strict (male) bosses'. From this cluster of codes, I drew upon the feminist framework I brought to this data set to generate the theme 'female subordination and restriction'. I then reviewed the themes generated in relation to the entire data set (phase 4), before moving to define, name and map themes (phase 5). At this stage I linked 'female subordination and restriction' to another theme 'resistance' and mapped both themes beneath the broader, overlapping theme of 'power'. The themes I generated during this stage of analysis have informed the content and structure of this report (Phase 6).

It is, of course, important to note that these reflections also look back on the groupie phenomenon. Oral histories, by their nature, are subject to retrospection, the tendency to project present views on past events. Through careful questioning, it was possible to distinguish between past and present feelings during the interviews. Both women were able, to some degree, to separate their present selves from their younger selves; Jenny Fabian did this from a position of irony and wry bemusement, particularly when describing the pains her younger self had taken with her personal appearance.

Emma was self-reflexive - for example, she spoke of how her sexual encounters with groups had made her 'feel special' at the time, but quickly countered this with her present, retrospective feelings, 'although, probably I wasn't, probably they weren't even bothered'. Despite these attempts to separate past and present feelings, oral histories are ultimately, always reflections back on the past from the vantage point of the present. Whenever groupie testimonies are cited in the chapters that follow, I have, therefore, taken care to clarify whether these are reflections on the groupie phenomenon at the time, or whether they are looking back on the phenomenon. Indeed, Jenny Fabian's written and verbal testimonies have made it possible for me to compare how her attitudes and perceptions have changed, or not, over time.

The performance of personal narrative is a fundamental means by which individuals comprehend their own lives and present a 'self' to their audience. Both women are invested in their groupie experiences; during our interviews it became apparent these were treasured memories which have been relived many times. As already noted, Jenny Fabian has been positioned in the media as an authority on the groupie phenomenon and the British underground, and she is comfortable in this role. Emma, on the other hand, clearly enjoyed recounting her youthful antics, but, in a conversation outside the interview, also confessed that she wished the names did not have to be censored, so she could 'get her own back' on the groups for 'treating us like groupies'. While many of the groups Emma encountered in the sixties continue to be celebrated, with the exception of Jenny Fabian, British groupies have been largely forgotten. The performance of Emma's personal narrative then, may be understood, on one level, as a personal act of defiance and legitimation which aligns with the aims of this thesis- to write a 'history from below' of the groupie. Like Jenny Fabian, she has told her story, it has been recorded; Emma will not be forgotten.

During my interactions with both women, I came to identify with them and relate to their experiences through my own life experiences; I became emotionally involved. As already mentioned, some of the experiences Emma shared with me in our interview were particularly personal, sensitive, and upsetting. I came away feeling angry about what she had been through as a young girl. This interview brought into sharp focus the ethical issues around interviewing women. In her essay, 'Interviewing Women: a contradiction in terms' (1981), Oakley describes how 'cognitive, intellectual or rational dimensions of experience' are defined in society 'as superior to being emotional or sentimental' (p. 40). Citing Hochschild (1975), Oakley argues that one reason for the sociological neglect of

emotions may be the discipline's attempt to be taken seriously as a 'real science' by focusing upon 'objective and measurable features of social life. This coincides with the values of the traditional "male culture"' (Hochschild, 1975 p.281).

According to the principles of traditional sociological inquiry, my emotional involvement with these women, and my emotional response to their life story narratives, would be characterised as researcher bias. But Oakley advocates a feminist methodology of social science which replaces the 'mythology of hygienic research' which mystifies the researcher and researched as 'objective instruments of data production', with the recognition that personal involvement is more than dangerous bias- it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives' (Oakley, 1981, p. 58). To acknowledge my own subjectivity, I have written this thesis in the first person. Furthermore, my identification and emotional involvement with these women has aligned with the feminist positioning of this study, and feminist principles of inquiry, to inflect my interpretation and analysis of groupie oral histories with a heavy sense of responsibility to these women, to ensure that their voices be heard, and they are recognised as authorities on their own experience.

For Rowbotham and McCrindle 'a series of oral testimonies does not make a history. History is worked over more consciously' (1977, p. 1). The interpretation of oral evidence presents several choices for the researcher: testimonies can be presented with minor comment or employed in a historical interpretation, and histories which draw upon oral evidence can be approached through biography or through a wider social analysis (Thompson, 2000 p.269). In this case, an analysis of the groupie phenomenon is the prime aim; therefore, testimonies have been employed in a historical interpretation which is governed, principally, by the inner logic of the argument. At the same time, the feminist positioning of this study and my sense of responsibility to the narrators has informed my decision to the retain the life-story form of this oral evidence as much as possible. Therefore, I have interwoven Emma and Jenny Fabian's life-story narratives with a wider social analysis. I have also favoured longer quotes, to communicate and privilege the experiences and perceptions of these women.

Despite these efforts to foreground and preserve the life-story narrative form, however, I have ultimately decided what to use and what to discard from the oral evidence collected. My interpretation is a second-level narrative, which shapes the first by looking inward, to my own experience of the performance, outward to the audience, and to fulfil the aims and objectives of this enquiry (Borland, 1991). In doing so, this study

presents an academic narrative, a feminist narrative and a narrative of narratives which encompasses not only biographical narratives, but also historical and media narratives.

Because meanings cannot be grasped directly, interpretation is necessary, but an insensitive scholarly interpretation can also constitute an attack on the narrator's carefully constructed sense of self. Care must therefore be taken. Josselson proposes hermeneutics (a branch of knowledge which deals with interpretation), as a disciplined form of moving from text to meaning in narrative research (2004, p. 3). It can be approached in two ways: The hermeneutics of faith, like denaturalised transcription, aims at the *restoration* of meaning. This is characterised by a willingness to listen, to absorb as much as possible of the narrative in its given form, to unearth its inherent meaning, while remaining faithful to the (multiple and layered) intention of the narrator. In adopting this approach, we accept people's accounts as a more or less true representation of their experience – to them, this is their truth- this approach is important when we are aiming to give a 'voice' to marginalised groups. For example, Emma described how it 'used to make you feel really good if you'd been with one of the groups or got off with them'. To 'restore meaning', one might equate the feelings Emma describes here with contemporary ideas of female 'empowerment'. But this approach can also risk compromising intellectual rigor in favour of taking the text at face value.

The hermeneutics of suspicion, on the other hand, can be approached as the *demystification* of meaning. This approach assumes that any story told, refers to an untold one as well. It is the interpreter's job to tear away illusions of consciousness by reading between the lines and searching for signs of unconscious processes such as silences, omissions, contradictions, and inconsistencies best illustrated through naturalised transcription. As Josselson observes, a feminist conceptual stance may frame the reading of a life story text, but this approach also risks objectification by denying the narrator's privileged claim to knowing whether the analysis is right or wrong (2004, p. 14). To return to Emma's claim, that it 'used to make you feel really good if you'd been with one of the groups or got off with them', a radical feminist reading might identify the feelings Emma describes as a form of false consciousness, a quest for male validation, which concealed her own sexual exploitation within a wider system of patriarchal oppression.

Paul Ricoeur (1970) suggests it is possible to interpret from both positions, to oscillate between a willingness to listen and restore meaning, and to suspect and demystify meaning, as long as the researcher makes it clear when and how these shifts

occur. In doing so it is possible to interpret multiple levels of meaning- both intended and unintended. To alleviate the contradiction, between my feminist conceptual stance, and my sense of responsibility as a feminist researcher, I have employed such an approach in this study. The problem of interpretative conflict has not been resolved, but by oscillating between the restoration and demystification of meaning, it is my hope that, should Emma and Jenny Fabian disagree with elements of my interpretation, they will still find that their intention has been restored and respectfully presented. My adoption of this approach has also made it possible to foreground the agency of these women, while at the same time, mounting a feminist critique of broader systems of power, and in doing so, reach a more nuanced understanding of the groupie phenomenon.

Oral histories are, of course, deeply subjective; for the historian, this can make it impossible to make historical generalisations. As already noted, the experiences of Jenny Fabian and Emma are not representative of a homogenous groupie experience; their oral histories emphasise the variety of experience within groupie culture but, at the same time, how each individual draws on a common culture. Furthermore, as Thompson argues, by placing oral sources in their broader context, it is possible to understand how that context itself is constituted through cumulative individual pressures (2000, p. 298). In the chapters that follow it will be argued that the groupie phenomenon emerged in response to certain socio-economic changes which were taking place in Britain during the sixties. Emma and Jenny Fabian were part of a generation of women for whom the self-sacrificing nature of the homemaker role was increasingly challenged by the new ethic of self-fulfilment. The emphasis both women placed on their desire for fun and freedom in their oral histories illuminates how groupies were agents as well as objects of social change.

Groupie perspectives; semi-fictional accounts

Groupie memoirs present another source of groupie perspectives. This study draws upon three semi-fictional novels, all of which were written by Jenny Fabian. The first, and most famous of these, *Groupie* (1969) was written at the time, in collaboration with Johnny Byrne. This book charts the rise of 'Katie' (stand-in for Jenny Fabian) from groupie novice, to established figure within the British underground. A sequel, *A Chemical Romance* (1971), which Jenny Fabian penned solo, followed two years later. This instalment follows groupie turned successful author, 'Triptee' (stand-in for Jenny Fabian), as she grapples

with her newfound fame and fortune, embarking on a publicity tour which takes her from London to Munich, New York, LA, and Ibiza. Jenny Fabian then reconnected much later with Johnny Byrne, to write *One Too Many Mornings* (2002). Unpublished at the time of writing this thesis, she kindly lent me a copy of the transcript of this semi-fictional memoir, which picks up where *Groupie* left off in the early seventies, with Katie, now a successful but increasingly disillusioned author, who, along with a group of friends, retreats from the London scene to a country house where she begins to unravel.

It is important to note that while *Groupie* and *A Chemical Romance* are reflections on the groupie phenomenon written at the time, *One Too Many Mornings* is a reflection back on the groupie phenomenon written three decades later. Inspired by Jenny Fabian's real-life experiences, all three books might best be described as 'semi-fictional'. In our interview she described how her friend, journalist Ann Barr, helped her get started:

> Ann made it possible, apart from Johnny, who sort of prodded me, Ann made it possible for me to write on my own without… the first chapters I wrote of *Groupie*, I had to talk into a machine, because I didn't think, I couldn't work out how to write it, and I just used to go round, cos she lived five minutes from me, I used to go round with my tape machine, and, 'Ann, I'm going to tell you what I did last night', and I'd talk into it and she, 'oh did you do that?! Oh!' she'd get very excited, because she was very straight, you know? And then I'd go home and I'd type it up. And I think I did this two or three times, and then suddenly I realised that I could actually type it straight out from my mind anyway (Fabian, 2019)

Later in the interview she described how she worked with Byrne to turn her experiences into her first novel, *Groupie:*

> I did the first splurge, he [Byrne] did a, sort of, edit and possible bit of a rewrite, and then I'd do a final, what I wanted, without, keeping it, cos he had to manipulate, the storyline to a certain extent, can't just have, I mean it is a lot, just incidents, but we had to give her some form of direction, in a way (Fabian, 2019)

No doubt, any biographical account undergoes a similar process of reconfiguration before publication, for as Jenny Fabian observes, a series of incidents with no narrative arc does not make for compelling reading. As already noted, oral histories too, are subject to omission, exaggeration, and narrative manipulation. This does not diminish the value of these narratives as historical sources which allow us to understand how different people made sense of the groupie phenomenon at the time or make sense of it today.

Jenny Fabian's groupie memoirs were evaluated in a similar manner to the groupie oral testimonies; I read them through repeatedly, first to discern their overall meaning, then to disentangle different kinds of content; the subjective from the objective

parts. Next, I evaluated them in terms of 'reliability', this involved reflecting upon where the novels might have been subject to self-censorship, mythologising, exaggeration, and narrative manipulation. I did, of course, also take advantage of my relationship with the author to directly question Jenny Fabian, both in our interview, and afterwards by email correspondence, about how accounts in the novel reflected or diverged from her real-life experiences, as she recalls them today. Finally, to identify recurring and common themes or imagery I applied the six-phase approach to thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2012) to each novel.

Archival research

As Das, et al. note, archival data can add 'empirical depth' to a research project in several ways; it can enable the verification of data gathered from other sources; it can also generate new data, which can help develop an understanding of processes of change, and be used to challenge existing theories (2018, p. 139). But as Liz Stanley observes, 'documents, whatever their kind or type, and whether written or oral or visual, do not "speak for themselves" but were produced purposively, from a particular viewpoint or position, and their author/s had particular purposes in mind (which may or may not come to fruition)' (2016, p. 54). The analysis of groupie representation in the media, therefore, reveals as much about attitudes and expectations prevalent in the sixties, particularly with regards to sexually active young women from different social backgrounds, as it does information about the groupie phenomenon itself.

To explore how theoretical and political debates and discourses contributed to representations of the groupie and understand how different actors made sense of the phenomenon, I gathered historical documents across a range of different mediums, including print media, television, and film –both fictional recreations and documentaries. To conduct archival research effectively, I employed a five-stage archaeological process summarised as discovery, access, assessment, sifting and cross-checking (triangulation) (Welch, 2000). During the discovery phase, I identified relevant archive collections at the London College of Fashion library, the British Library, BFI National Archive, and several archives online, all of which were either publicly accessible (with or without a small fee) or accessible to students at the university, such as myself. Once I had accessed these collections and began to review the documents, I undertook a process of assessment, which involved evaluating the relevance of archival sources to this study of the groupie.

The criteria for relevant documents were their explicit representation of the groupie pattern of behaviour and/or use of the 'groupie' label, and production or distribution within the UK between 1964 and 1974.

Newspaper Databases

As McCausland notes, the increasing availability of archives online has meant significant changes in the ways users access the archival records they seek for their research (2011, p. 309). To gather a wide range of perspectives on the groupie phenomenon, I used two online databases, Gale and The British Newspaper Archive, both of which provide access to digital surrogates of physical newspapers. To identify relevant data across these databases, I initially used two key search terms: the 'groupie' label, and Jenny Fabian's name. The groupie label's earliest appearance in the British print media dated from 1967 ('Local group's facelift', *Reading Evening Post*, 4th March 1967, p.5) when it was used to describe, not young women seeking sexual encounters with musicians, but the musicians themselves. The term was not used to describe the groupie pattern of behaviour in the British media until 1967 ('The Ravers' *Man Alive* Dir, Unknown, UK). This research finding would have been missed by a time-consuming archival research programme in the physical world, which focused upon a necessarily small number of newspapers.

Indeed, newspaper database searches yielded a wide range and high volume of historical data, from, not only four national newspapers (*The Times; The Daily Mail; The People; The Daily Telegraph*) but also 24 local newspapers.[9] To manage this volume of data, I undertook a fourth process of 'sifting' (Welch, 2000). This involved sorting the archival material into a meaningful and systematic order through 'data reduction'' the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data' (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10). First, I 'sequenced' the data (Welch, 2000) by chronologically logging each archival source on a master spreadsheet, which captured metadata, the 'who, when, where from, archive location' (Stanley, 2016, p. 56). Next, I classified each source according to its 'relevance' in relation to my research project (see Fig. 2.1 for classifications). Then I employed another sifting technique, 'patterning', (Welch, 2000, p.

[9] Aberdeen Evening Express; Acton Gazette; Belfast Telegraph; Birmingham Daily Post; Buckinghamshire Examiner; Cheshire Observer; Coventry Evening Telegraph; Coventry Standard; Evening Chronicle; Evening Express; Evening Post; Gazette and Post; Harrow Observer; Illustrated London News; Kensington Post; Liverpool Echo; Middlesex County Times; Newcastle Evening Chronicle; Newcastle Journal; Reading Evening Post; Sunday Independent (Dublin); Thanet Times; The Birmingham Post; Wishaw Press

206), which involved coding each source according to its content (e.g., groupie film reviews; articles concerned with Jenny Fabian; articles concerned with sports groupies, etc). In doing so, I was able to identify overarching patterns in the data, such as the tendency to describe male group members as 'groupies' in the mid-sixties, and the media attention afforded to other kinds of groupies (e.g., football groupies) in the mid-seventies.

Using the British Newspaper Archive I identified 106 references to the groupie phenomenon or uses of the groupie label between 1967 and 1974. Of these, only one article, 'Silly Little Girls' which appeared in the tabloid newspaper, *The People,* (6 April 1969, p.6) was explicitly concerned with the groupie phenomenon. Here, journalist Peter Oakes quotes the views of several high-profile male pop stars. Oakes has a clear agenda, and these pop star accounts are mediated; nevertheless, this primary source offers a valuable account of how the tabloid press and some pop stars made sense of the groupie phenomenon.

Using the Gale Database, I identified 21 references to the groupie phenomenon or uses of the groupie label from between 1967 and 1974. Two of these articles 'Pop Girls TV report defended' (*The Times,* 29 June 1967) and 'When Pop Turns to Pursuit' (*The Times*, 6 July 1967, p.8) addressed the controversy generated by a documentary, 'The Ravers' (1967), which aired on BBC2. Although both columns are more concerned with the portrayal of the groupie phenomenon in this television programme (which will be introduced later in this chapter), than the groupie phenomenon itself, these articles give an insight as to how the programme was received, and how its makers justified their editorial decisions. In a third article, 'The Generation Gap', (*The Sunday Times,* 12 Oct 1969, p.51) journalist Hunter Davies not only interviewed Jenny Fabian, but also tracked down and interviewed her mother. This article provides valuable mediated accounts of how Jenny Fabian and her mother made sense of the groupie phenomenon.

Other publications

Data collection

To gain a range of perspectives on the groupie phenomenon, which extended beyond those in broadsheet, tabloid, and local newspapers, I selected 13 additional publications aimed at different demographics for archival research. These included two colour

supplements (*The Mirror Magazine; The Observer*), two music magazines, one aimed at an older audience and one at a younger audience (*Melody Maker* and *Rave* respectively) two women's fashion magazines (*Vogue; Queen*), and two magazines aimed at teenage girls (*19; Mirabelle*) all of which were accessed in the physical world at either the British Library or the Library at London College of Fashion. I also included one feminist magazine (*Spare Rib*) and two underground publications (*Oz; IT*), which I accessed by using online archives which held digitised surrogates of the original magazines and newspapers. None of these digitised archives have a key term search function, therefore my method of data collection was like that which I employed when using the physical archives- I skim read each edition from cover to cover looking for references to the groupie phenomenon. I then logged each archival source on my spreadsheet and undertook the process, already described, of sifting, sequencing, and patterning each entry.

Of these publications, *The Observer* and *Rave* did not yield any data on the groupie phenomenon, *19* and *Vogue* only featured fleeting references or uses of the groupie label. Nevertheless, this stage of the archival research program produced some of the richest accounts of the groupie phenomenon. By skim-reading physical copies of *Melody Maker* I identified early references to the groupie pattern of behaviour. In 'Pop and the Public' (25 September 1965, p.10) music journalist and self-appointed pop insider Mike Hennessy draws upon his experiences on the road with the groups to address three pop controversies: fan hysteria, pop star misbehaviour, and the groupie pattern of behaviour. Hennessy's photograph suggests that, rather than an 'insider' he belongs to an older generation than the groups and fans he writes about, but this article illuminates how the music press, which was of course, invested in pop, made sense of the groupie phenomenon. Meanwhile, in 'Scrubbers- the Facts' (*Melody Maker,* 16 December 1966, p.11), music journalist Alan Walsh 'investigates the world of the female pop fan'. A good deal of this article focuses upon the groupie pattern of behaviour; groups and other female fans are quoted providing more mediated sense-making insights on the groupie phenomenon. The attitudes of other young female fans towards the groupie phenomenon are particularly valuable, a rare insight, seldom recorded elsewhere.

As noted, the groupie label was not used to describe young women who seek sexual encounters with musicians in the media until 1967. In both 'Pop and the Public' and 'Scrubbers: The Facts' young women and girls exhibiting the groupie pattern of behaviour were labelled 'scrubbers'. This research finding -that groupies were called scrubbers, before they were called groupies- emerged directly from the data and was

supported by other historical documents (for example, the novel, *All Night Stand,* 1966, which will be introduced in due course). By engaging with physical archives, then, I was able to collect data on the groupie phenomenon that predates the use of the groupie label. This would not have been possible if I had confined my research to key term searches on archive databases. Indeed, for key term searches to be effective, one needs to be familiar with the relevant terminology, and in the case of historical research, such as this, familiarity can best be achieved by immersing oneself in the physical archive.

At the outset of this programme of archival research, I had no idea how much data I would find on the groupie phenomenon, but 5 of the 11 publications selected for physical archival research yielded articles that were explicitly concerned with the groupie phenomenon. Ultimately, such articles appeared across all 7 categories of publication, which fulfilled my aim to gather a range of perspectives on the groupie.

In 'Orpheus Received a Lute' (*Queen*, 14-27 May 1969, pp.92-95) Jenny Fabian interviews several groupies involved in the British underground; this article, which appeared in women's fashion magazine, *Queen,* provides some fascinating insights on how groupies made sense of their behaviour at the time, perspectives which are mediated by Jenny Fabian herself, as groupie insider and journalist. This article is one of a handful identified in this study, in which individual groupies played a role in the production of groupie representation.

While underground newspaper, *IT*, yielded cursory references, which contribute to a picture of how the counterculture made sense of the groupie phenomenon, 'The Universal Tonguebath: A Groupie's Vision' which appeared in underground magazine, *Oz* (19 March 1969 pp.30-33) presents an insider groupie perspective, this time, aimed at a countercultural audience. This article was written by Australian expatriate feminist and underground luminary, Germaine Greer, who proclaimed herself a 'supergroupie' here, and elsewhere ('Germaine Greer- Opinions that may shock the faithful', *The New York Times*, 22 March 1971, n.p.). Though 'The Universal Tonguebath: A Groupie's Vision' does not examine the groupie through an explicitly feminist lens, during the article Greer does air some of the ideas she would later develop in *The Female Eunuch* (1970). The groupie phenomenon was also discussed in a series of articles on 'Women in Music' written by Marion Fudger for feminist magazine, *Spare Rib,* between 1973 and 1974, and in 'Star Gazing' (17 November 1972 p.18), an article written by Joy Farren for *IT*. These accounts, in which feminists and female music journalists attempt to make sense of the groupie

phenomenon within the context of wider feminist debates regarding the position of women in music, offer fascinating divergent perspectives on the subject.

More perspectives were garnered from the conservative press; in 'Girls Who Are Going for A Song', which appeared in *The Mirror Magazine* (11 April 1970, pp.14-15), the weekend colour supplement for tabloid, *The Mirror*, journalist, Graham Peters interviews several groupies, including Jenny Fabian, and other young women in the music scene whose lifestyle he disapproves of. But these groupie perspectives are mediated by Peters, who has his own agenda, for consumption by a working-class audience belonging to an older generation. Finally, in the ironically titled, 'The Hip World of The Groupies' (26 July 1969 pp.16-17) which appeared in teen girl magazine, *Mirabelle,* journalist Paul Raven chose to interview male pop stars rather than groupies themselves. Raven, like Peters, clearly has his own agenda, and the pop star perspectives in this article are mediated and should not be taken at face-value. Nevertheless, like 'Scrubbers: The Facts', 'The Hip World of The Groupies' opens a fascinating window on the nature of some socially accepted attitudes towards groupies in the music business at that time.

Documentaries

Data was also gathered from film and television. Using the 'groupie' label as a key search term on YouTube, I located 'The Ravers' a documentary which originally aired on BBC2 on the 28th June 1967. 'The Ravers' was an episode of *Man Alive*, a ground-breaking current affairs series, which covered subjects ranging from sex and crime to flower shows. Presented by John Pitman, 'The Ravers' also allowed groupies a degree of licence to elucidate their own perspectives on the phenomenon through a series of short talking-head interviews.

Fictional Recreations

In Sara Maitland's *Very Heaven* (1988), writer Sheila Macleod spoke of how her husband, pop star Paul Jones, had been followed into the men's toilets after a show by a young female fan, and the resulting altercation had inspired Macleod and Jones to write a play which ultimately aired on television. Through IMDB I was able to identify this play, titled 'They Put You Where You Are' (Dir, Hart, UK, 1966), which aired as an episode of anthology drama series *Thirty Minute Theatre* on BBC2 on 20th June 1966. When I was

eventually able to watch the television play at the BFI archive, my hunch, that this play featured characters exhibiting the groupie pattern of behaviour, was confirmed. Written by two individuals well placed to observe groupies first-hand, this fictional account presents one of the earliest representations of the phenomenon.

Leon Hunt's *British Low Culture: From Safari Suits to Sexploitation* (1998) was also instrumental in identifying two low-budget British films which have at their centre a young female protagonist who becomes a groupie; *Permissive* (Dir, Shonteff, UK, 1970) and *Groupie Girl* (Dir, Ford, UK, 1970). These films can be categorised as examples of 'sexploitation' cinema (Hunt, 1998, p. 99) conceived by male directors from an older generation and marketed with the intention of providing a lascivious and voyeuristic window on the groupie phenomenon for a predominantly older male audience. But the production of both *Permissive* and *Groupie Girl,* also involved a degree of collaboration, between each film's director and the young people they sought to portray on screen. This complexifies a simplistic reading of these films as fictional accounts offering an outsider perspective on the groupie phenomenon. The nature of such complexities is explored further in Chapter 8. Three other films, which feature groupie minor characters, are subject to analysis: *Stardust* (Dir, Apted, UK, 1974)*; Slade in Flame* (Dir, Loncraine, UK, 1975), and *Confessions of a Pop Performer* (Dir, Cohen, UK, 1975). Although *Slade in Flame* and *Confessions of a Pop Performer* fall just outside the historical period of study, these films have been included because they reflect cultural attitudes towards the groupie phenomenon at the close of this cultural decade.

Finally, Thom Keyes's novel *All Night Stand* (1966)*,* which charts the rise of fictional Liverpudlian pop group, 'The Rack', and the 'scrubbers' the group encounters along the way, presents one of the earliest accounts of the groupie pattern of behaviour identified during the data collection stage of this study. A 25-year-old writer from a middle-class background, Keyes sought to cash in on anxieties surrounding the influence of pop music on the younger generation by sensationalising the groupie pattern of behaviour in this fictional recreation.

Analysis and Interpretation

Once the initial programme of archival research was complete, I reviewed the data I had collected. While the scope of research spanned the period 1964-1974, I found no mentions of, or references to, the groupie pattern of behaviour in any publications from

1964 and only one article from 1965 ('Pop and the Public' *Melody Maker,* 25 September 1965, p.10), on this basis, I deemed it an inefficient use of time to explore the historical period preceding 1964. The data collected indicates that media interest in the groupie phenomenon remained low until 1969, when 27 references and seven articles dedicated to the phenomenon appeared (See Fig. 2.1). Cursory references to the groupie phenomenon peaked in 1972, fanned by the UK-release of US documentary, *Groupies* (Dir, Dorfman & Nevard, USA, 1970) and the media's 'discovery' of the groupie pattern of behaviour across other cultural fields, but crucially, the frequency of articles explicitly concerned with the groupie phenomenon dropped in 1971 and remained low for the rest of the historical period of study. These findings indicate that by 1974, the groupie label was embedded in the lexicon, but media interest in the groupie phenomenon itself was waning; on this basis I decided it would also be an inefficient use of time to extend the parameters of the historical period of study beyond 1974.

Year	Total number of sources	Cursory data *	Relevant data**	Extremely relevant data ***
1964	-	-	-	-
1965	1	-	-	1
1966	6	2	2	2
1967	4	-	2	2
1968	4	-	2	2
1969	27	10	10	7
1970	37	21	12	4
1971	35	15	19	1
1972	39	18	18	3
1973	27	11	15	2
1974	26	6	18	2

Fig 2.1 Table of archival sources
* Fleeting references to the groupie pattern of behaviour or uses of the groupie label in sources primarily concerned with another subject
** Discussion of the groupie pattern of behaviour in sources primarily concerned with another subject
*** Sources primarily concerned with the groupie pattern of behaviour

Next, I submitted the data to 'surface reading', a method of analysis which reads with the grain of what is written and focuses upon the textual surface to understand how a piece of writing works (Stanley, 2016, p. 50). With regards to the films and television programmes, I watched them through once, then a second time, while making notes to describe the plot development and character names. I then re-read and re-watched the

data set again, this time ‘against the grain’ looking for inconsistencies, silences, and resistant meanings which I formulated in cognizance with political hindsight, my feminist positioning, and ideas related to academic literature, which I brought to this study.

Both ways of reading yielded valuable insights. For example, a letter purporting to be written by a young woman who had engaged in sexual encounters with group members appeared in *Melody Maker* under the headline ‘A Plea from a Scrubber’ (24 September 1966, p.15). My surface reading of this letter found that it works to discourage young women from the groupie pattern of behaviour by portraying the groups as sexually promiscuous and reminding young women that it is they alone who will suffer the consequences for engaging in this behaviour. Rereading the letter again, with political hindsight, the situation described can be identified as a sexual double standard, which permits male sexual license while at the same time punishing young women who behave in an equivalent manner. But in reading the letter against the grain, internal inconsistencies suggest that it was more than likely manufactured by *Melody Maker* itself to discourage young women from following the groupie pattern of behaviour. The meaning of this letter, then, shifts from a personal account of one young woman’s experience of the sexual double standard, to an attempt to actively reinforce that double standard, by asserting the consequences for the expression of female sexuality outside traditional gender roles.

The data set was then subject to thematic analysis according to the six-phase approach already described. As Braun and Clarke observe, this method of analysis is a way of ‘identifying what is common to the way a topic is talked or written about and of making sense of those commonalities' (2012, p. 57). I performed this analysis with particular attention to how different actors made sense of the groupie phenomenon in divergent as well as recurrent ways. Again, to capture both the obvious and latent meanings in the data set, I combined an inductive approach, which sees codes and themes derived from the content of the data itself, with a deductive approach, which sees the researcher bring a series of concepts which they use to thematically analyse the data (ibid. p. 58).

Following phase 3 - ‘searching for themes’ - I also evaluated the number of codes and themes emerging from the data and determined that the point of inductive thematic saturation had been reached, where new codes or themes were no longer emerging from the data set, only mounting existing codes (Saunders, et al., 2018, p. 1895). Given the volume of data collected and the spread of articles explicitly concerned with the groupie

phenomenon across all seven categories of publication, I decided it would not be an efficient use of time to extend the parameters of archival research to include additional publications to gather more data. As Stanley notes, 'if analysis involves taking a document or documents apart, then interpretation requires putting the components back together, but in a new way that provides an explanation of meaning, including often by connecting it with a bigger picture' (2016, p. 59). In the chapters that follow I interpret these historical documents in relation to one another, to oral histories, to mythologies of the sixties, and through theoretical means related to connected academic literature.

Chapter 3 Conditions for the emergence of the groupie

The two women with which this thesis is chiefly concerned belong to a generation who grew up in the post-war period. Jenny Fabian's credentials were assuredly middle-class. Born in 1942, she grew up in Highgate, North London, her mother, a housewife, came from an 'old-fashioned family' while her father was housemaster at a boys' public boarding school. 'I lived in a boarding house with the boys- fifty' she told me:

> I lived, essentially, their life with them, although obviously I didn't, I had my own bedroom. There were boys above, boys below, boys in the dining room. Boys everywhere, so I was surrounded by boys. And obviously, I wanted to be a boy. Today I might be known as somebody who had 'gender issues', but then it didn't really matter. I played football, I played cricket. (Fabian, 2019)

She enjoyed an 'active childhood'; holidays were spent with her grandparents down by the sea, where she 'did a lot of horse riding'. But, as an only child who had to travel an hour to get to and from school, Jenny Fabian also recalls her childhood as quite 'isolated'. 'I never really had a, sort of, bunch of, friends that I grew up with like that' she told me (ibid.)

Emma was born eight years later, in 1950, in a town in the North of England where she has spent most of her life. The second eldest of four children, Emma's father was a master tradesman, her mother, like Jenny Fabian's, a housewife. Despite coming from a larger family, Emma, like Jenny Fabian, recalls her childhood as a lonely time, 'when I was a kid, I used to love drawing… and I didn't have many friends. Didn't matter where you went, whose house you went to, to play, they wouldn't let you in' (Emma, 2020).

In the sixties, certain social, cultural, and economic conditions converged to render the groupie pattern of behaviour both possible and appealing to some teenage girls and young women, who, like Emma and Jenny Fabian, came from different social backgrounds. This chapter draws upon groupie testimonies to give a necessarily limited historical overview of the period spanning the end of the Second World war to the mid-sixties. This overview focuses upon the convergence of conditions which would produce the groupie phenomenon and sets the scene for Chapter 4, which moves to examine the groupie phenomenon and its representation in the media.

Post-War Austerity and Reconstruction

To understand why the changes which occurred in the sixties were seen as so radical at the time, (and subsequently), and why, ultimately, disillusionment towards the end of the decade was so great, it is important first to say a few things about the preceding period. Britain had been a leading industrial and imperial power in the nineteenth century, but by the end of the Second World War, with a record debt of £3.5 billion the country was on the verge of financial collapse (Kynaston, 2007, p. 20). For the parents of the sixties generation, the end of the Second World War brought no immediate relief from privation; in the early post-war years almost everything was rationed (Timmins, 2017, p. 171). Three quarters of a million houses had also been destroyed during the blitz, causing a national housing shortage (Kynaston, 2007, p. 20). Life in post-war Britain was generally governed by sentiments of duty, thrift, patriotism, and a lingering sense of national community- fostered by the pulling together of the British people during the Second World War and symbolised by the Dunkirk evacuation (Wilson, 1980, p. 15). For many of those who had 'scrimped and saved through the post-war years' it would be difficult to accept the attitudes of the younger generation who would enjoy the economic boom years that followed (Sandbrook, 2006, p. 48).

The Fifties are generally understood to have been a conformist era. While pre-marital sex and illegitimacy were by no means unheard of, this behaviour was met with strong social disapproval particularly where women were concerned; In his 1951 survey, *English Character,* Geoffrey Gorer found that 55% of men and 73% of women disapproved of women having sexual experiences before marriage (cited in Marwick, 2003, p. 45); convention dictated that 'Nice Girls Didn't' (Lewis, 1978, p. 42). During this period, sex and contraception were taboo subjects shrouded in mystery. For women and girls, losing one's sexual reputation was not only a social embarrassment; pregnant women were routinely sacked from employment, and landlords were within their rights to refuse unmarried mothers accommodation (Hall, 2014, p. 60).

Simone de Beauvoir's theoretical investigation and foundational second-wave feminist text, *The Second Sex,* was published in 1949 and translated into English in 1953, it was widely read, but failed to make an impact on the average British woman until it was reprinted in the sixties. This was a period in which it was widely believed that feminism was a 'spent force' as 'myth and ideology operated to create a counter-belief, that, having won the vote, feminists had achieved their goals, and women had gained entry to

Paradise' (Wilson, 1980, p. 3), or at the very least, their goals 'were attainable as part of the inherent progress of capitalist society' (Rowbotham, 1974, p. 168). Although single issue pressure groups continued to campaign for reforms, such as the Abortion Law Reform Association (Beaumont, 2014, p. 278), there was silence surrounding many of the issues which would later be taken up by second-wave feminists- the 'absence of women battered, or women raped, of women sexually attracted to women, of women in revolt, of women despised, of women despairing' (Wilson, 1980, p. 3).

During the war years, with the government's encouragement and support, British women had entered the workforce en masse. But with the end of the war, working women were expected to make way for returning servicemen. Their retreat to the domestic sphere was enforced by the closure of state-run wartime nurseries and encouraged by popular women's magazines, such *Woman* and *Woman's Own*, which promoted marriage as the ultimate career choice for women (Beaumont, 2014, p. 273). A range of experts, meanwhile, espoused the widely held belief, supported by Freudian theory, that woman's fulfilment lay in the mother-housewife role and career women were dysfunctional. Foremost among these experts were American paediatrician, Dr Benjamin Spock (1946/2013), and British psychologist, John Bowlby (1950). Spock and Bowlby both produced widely influential texts during the post-war period which contributed to the widespread demonization of working women, and a 'generation of guilt', as 'maternal deprivation was made the scapegoat for retarded development, anxiety and guilt feelings, promiscuity, insatiability and divorce, even for stunted growth' (Lewis, 1978, p. 45).

The dominance of 'separate spheres' ideology, which originated in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, was reasserted during this period (Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 2014, p. 8). According to this ideology, gender roles were distinct and separate; masculinity was associated with the public sphere, the world of work and politics, while femininity was associated with the private sphere of the home, family, domesticity, and motherhood. But for women, the fifties were also a decade of contradictions (Dyhouse, 2014, p. 124). Once the conscious drive to get women wartime workers back into the home saw their numbers diminish, so they began to steadily rise, as single women and older married women with children who had grown up, were encouraged to take part-time employment to counter the post-war labour shortage (Holden, 2014, p. 139). Census data indicates that over the next two decades, the

percentage of women in the labour force would rise from 31% in 1951, to 33% in 1961 to 37% in 1971 (Lewis J. , 1992, p. 65).

Before the end of the Second World War there was already a general consensus among politicians and social elites, that, 'having played so crucial a role in the war effort, the workers should not be plunged back into the economic depression of the inter-war years' (Marwick, 2003, p. 20). Influenced by the Beveridge Report (1942), which advocated 'an attack upon five giant evils', ignorance, want, idleness, disease, and squalor, on the road of reconstruction (Timmins, 2017, p. 7), the post-war Labour Party implemented a series of egalitarian social policies intended to protect and promote the well-being of all British citizens. The generation with which this study is concerned was the product of the Family Allowances Act (1945), National Insurance (1946), the NHS (1946), and the Education Act (1944). This series of ground-breaking social policies would come to be known as the Welfare State.

The 1944 Education Act expanded educational opportunities for the generation with which this study is concerned. It guaranteed free secondary education for all British children at a state comprehensive or grammar school. The latter provided a higher standard of education, ostensibly for more intellectually gifted children, places for which boys and girls from all backgrounds competed on the basis of aptitude and ability (Ingham, 1981, p. 49). But competition for entry to grammar schools and top universities was not an even playing field; social class remained a disadvantage in education attainment and a greater disadvantage to working-class girls than working-class boys (Tinkler, 2014, p. 40). This was, in part, because middle-class parents could afford to pay for the tutoring necessary to give their children an advantage in the Eleven-plus exam. Jenny Fabian's parents consciously limited the size of their family to be able to afford her private education at Francis Holland School, Baker Street ('The Generation Gap: Hunter Davies talks to Jenny Fabian and her mother' *The Sunday Times,* 12 October 1969 p.51) thus circumventing competition for a grammar school place altogether.

Emma desperately wanted to attend the local girls' grammar school and was heartbroken when she did not pass her Eleven-plus. Instead of the 'Big Girls' school, she went to a Secondary Modern where she enjoyed sewing lessons and domestic science. With encouragement from a good teacher, she also did very well in history and exhibited a natural talent for drawing 'I used to love drawing, and I was good at it' she told me, 'Used to draw no end of things, from memory y'know?' (Emma, 2020). Emma's education may have provided some opportunities for her to practice her drawing, but her artistic

inclinations were not nurtured as a viable career pathway at home or in school.

As the school leaving age was raised to 15 in 1947, the proportion of children staying at school until at least the age of 16, would rise from 22% in 1961 to 36% in 1972 (Westergaard & Resler, 1975, p. 320). But the financial pressures on working-class families, domestic commitments, and prevailing view that education was not that important for girls meant that many working-class girls left school, to find work or help in the home, before they could take their GCE examinations at the age of 16 (Tinkler, 2001, p. 41). Emma was among those girls from working-class backgrounds who left school at 15 in 1965, while Jenny Fabian left school in 1958 at the age of 16.

Throughout the fifties and sixties there were also increases in government grants to universities and state scholarships awarded to students regardless of gender. The expansion of higher education would accelerate throughout the sixties; the proportion of school-leavers going on to full-time higher education, would rise from 8% in 1961, to 19-20% in 1971 (Westergaard & Resler, 1975, p. 320). But university graduates would still represent a proportionate minority of the population, and female university students an even smaller one. Young female graduates may have received an education equivalent to their male peers, but any expectations for equivalent career prospects were not rewarded in the workplace; most employers were unwilling to invest in female graduates because they were expected to marry quickly and give up work. In the fifties and sixties, teaching remained one of the few professions open to university-educated women.

The prospect of years of further study in return for limited career prospects did not appeal to Emma or Jenny Fabian, ‘well I didn’t even think about it’ Jenny Fabian told me, ‘I wasn’t interested, I just wanted to go out there and do stuff. I didn’t want to sit and, you know, read’ (Fabian, 2019). But her parents insisted that she had to ‘have some kind of qualification’ and sent her to a cooking school, ‘which was absolutely hopeless. I loathe cooking, but I sort of faffed my way through that’ (ibid.). ‘They were preparing me to cook three meals a day and wait at home for my husband coming back from work’ she told the *Sunday Times* in 1969 (‘The Generation Gap: Hunter Davies talks to Jenny Fabian and her mother’, 12 October 1969 p.51). ‘Then they sent me to secretarial college, which wasn't too bad, because it had a journalism course with it’ (Fabian, 2019). As far as Jenny Fabian was concerned, these courses corresponded with her middle-class parents’ aspirations, ‘my parents wanted me to be a super-secretary or an international tennis star or to be married successfully’ she would later say, ‘I wasn't cut out for any of those things’ (‘The lament of the lovesick groupie’ *Daily Mirror*, 12 June 1972 p.11).

By the late fifties, an evolving economy, which saw the decline of heavy industry and the expansion of service industry meant that secretarial college was becoming an increasingly popular pathway for female middle-class and working-class school-leavers looking to work for a few years before marriage. In 1965, Viola Klein found that one third of unmarried women were engaged in office and secretarial work (cited in Wilson, 1980, p. 53); although these positions were considered glamorous and respectable, this was low-grade work. The hourly earnings of full-time women workers averaged 59% of men's across all industries (Lewis, 1992, p. 80) and opportunities for advancement were extremely limited (Klein, 1965, p. 49). As Mary Ingham recalls, you joined as a clerk and remained one 'you would never be in line for your boss's job' (1981, p. 96). For women, there remained very little opportunity for social mobility outside of marriage. Frustrations with this situation would feed directly into the women's movement at the end of the decade.

For the generation of young women who came of age in the fifties and sixties, the expansion of education and increasing number of women entering the workforce, would give rise to new, modern, seductive roles for women, new opportunities to defy social expectations, and less social disapproval for doing so. But housewifery also remained the ideal across classes; therefore, little importance was placed on girls' educational achievement and future career prospects. Like many girls of their generation, Jenny Fabian and Emma left school at the earliest opportunity, disinterested in further education and undefined in their career aspirations. Both were keen to begin their lives as adults. For Emma, this meant entering the world of work, and gaining a degree of financial independence while continuing to reside in the family home. Jenny Fabian, on the other hand, set her sights on full independence. She worked for a year in a cinema and a café to save enough money to move out of the family home and fulfil this aim. At this point in their life story narratives, both girls were some way off their first groupie experiences. I turn now, to examine the social, cultural, and economic conditions (and restrictions) which converged in the first half of the sixties, to produce the groupie phenomenon.

Changes to Public and Private Morality

As Marwick notes, the sixties are 'generally understood to be counterpoised against a rigid conformist vision of the fifties' (1998, p. 1). This period has been mythologised as one in which a rapid transformation in 'material conditions, lifestyles, family, relationships, and personal freedoms revolutionised the face of British society' (ibid. p. 15). The *Lady Chatterley's Lover* show trial, which took place in 1960, is frequently cited by historians as a landmark in the relaxation of censorship restrictions in British culture and a key moment in the wider liberalisation of sexual attitudes (Weeks, 2018, p. 264). This highly publicised trial, which became a test of the Obscene Publications Act (1959) passed the previous year, came about in response to Penguin's move to publish an unexpurgated version of DH Lawrence's novel in paperback for the first time. During the trial a host of experts, including Richard Hoggart and E. M. Forster, testified to the novel's literary merits. There were also class and gender dimensions, which were illuminated when prosecuting barrister, Mervyn Griffin-Jones, asked whether the jury would wish for their daughters, wives, and servants to read the novel (Haste, 1992, p. 178). Ultimately, the jury delivered a 'not guilty' verdict and in the wake of Penguin's legal victory, a 'paperback revolution' erupted (Sutherland, 1982, p. 2), as a range of sexually explicit novels were made widely available to the British public in paperback form for the first time and contemporary authors, publishers and playwrights ceased to self-censor (Davies, 1975, p. 46). Thom Keyes' novel *All Night Stand* (1966), which features explicit sex scenes that George Melly deemed 'pornographic' (1970, p. 241) may not have been an example of the literary greatness and artistic freedom championed by the likes of Forster and Hoggart, nevertheless, it can be seen as a beneficiary of the relaxation of censorship heralded by this trial.

The de-censorship of literature and theatre also allowed a cohort of university-educated novelists and playwrights from working-class and lower middle-class backgrounds, dubbed the 'Angry Young Men' in the media, to tackle issues relating to sex, race, and class. A corresponding relaxation of censorship within the British film industry and television meant that many of these plays and novels were also adapted for the screen. Under the guidance of John Trevelyan, secretary to the British Board of Film Censors, and Hugh Carleton Greene, Director General of the BBC, both British film and television programmes began to more closely reflect the lives and concerns of the general public (Aldgate, 1995, pp. 4-5). The resultant group of films and television plays, which, like their literary antecedents, also attempted to fuse social criticism with a realistic

depiction of working-class life, were dubbed ‘The British New Wave' or ‘kitchen sink realism’.

Man Alive and *Thirty-Minute Theatre,* both of which addressed the groupie phenomenon, and were first commissioned in 1965, can be understood in relation to the relaxation of censorship which took place during this period; both series brought hitherto-taboo social issues such as abortion, homosexuality, and, indeed, the groupie phenomenon into public discourse. Because of the relaxation of censorship, people became ‘more open, more explicit, less ashamed, less clandestine’ not only in what they read and watched, but also in what they did (Marwick, 1998, p. 145).

Like the *Lady Chatterley* show trial, the Profumo affair (1963) is frequently cited as another key moment in the liberalisation of sexual attitudes in Britain, not because there was public sympathy for the individuals involved, but because this was a sexual matter which generated a good deal of public debate and private discussion. At the centre of the scandal was Christine Keeler, a nineteen-year-old model and revue dancer, whose sexual relationships with powerful older men were widely publicised and investigated as a potential security breach, when it emerged that they included John Profumo, the Secretary of State for War in Harold Macmillan’s Conservative government, and Soviet naval attaché, Captain Yevgeny Ivanov.

If Keeler was described in Parliament as a ‘dirty little prostitute’, a ‘harlot’ and a ‘little slut’ (Sandbrook, 2006, p. 663), her treatment by the media was no kinder. The idea that a working-class woman should be having non-reproductive extra-marital sex with her social superiors generated considerable outrage, particularly once it emerged that her sexual partners included a Jamaican jazz singer. Meanwhile, Keeler’s flat-mate, model and revue dancer, Mandy Rice-Davies, who came from a middle-class background, escaped the kind of vilification that Keeler endured in the media, and was in fact able to turn the scandal to her advantage. This disparity suggests that the establishment could tolerate a degree of sexual transgression, providing the perpetrator came from the right kind of background, a situation which, this study finds, would also play out when the groupie phenomenon was brought to public attention by the media a few years later.

The introduction of the pill in 1961 is also frequently cited as a landmark in the liberalisation of sexual attitudes and behaviours. In our interview, Emma told me about the risks involved for young women, like herself, who engaged in pre-marital sex before the pill, ‘I mean the worst thing, really, was that when you went with a boy, you’d say “oh you will be careful, won’t you?” And that meant, “you will pull out before you come”, but

obviously, that is not the right way to go on, you know, *lots* of girls got pregnant'. By the time Emma and Jenny Fabian would embark upon their groupie phases in the late sixties, both women were on the pill. However, despite its liberatory potential, the effects of the pill are often overstated; initially, it was only available to married women, and while it was made available to single women through some family planning clinics in 1967, the pill was not made free to single women until 1974 (Ingham, 1981, p. 13).[10] Emma was able to secure a prescription in 1968 by convincing her doctor she had a steady boyfriend, 'then you could do whatever you like with a boy… cos we weren't worried about getting pregnant', although, she undercut the extent to which the pill actually changed her behaviour, reflecting that 'even if it wasn't for the pill, I would still have carried on having sex' (Emma, 2020).

A series of progressive reforms were also implemented in the sixties by Labour Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, which included the Abortion Reform Bill (1967), the NHS Family Planning Act (1967), which made contraceptives available through the NHS, the Divorce Reform Act (1969), and the Sexual Offences Act (1967), which decriminalised homosexuality. The Abortion Act made induced abortion legal only if two doctors were prepared to attest that the pregnancy threatened the mental or physical health of the mother. Second-wave feminists would later argue this condition reinforced male control over women, rather than enhanced women's control over their own bodies (Lewis, 2014, p. 96). Groupie testimonies presented in this thesis, meanwhile, indicate that the Act, like the introduction of the contraceptive pill, was no all-encompassing solution to the problem of an unwanted pregnancy.

The Jenkins reforms, along with the relaxation of censorship and introduction of the contraceptive pill, have been credited with the liberalisation of sexual attitudes and behaviours which would come to be known as the 'sexual revolution'. Certainly, radical changes did take place; in 1963 two thirds of the population still thought that sex before marriage was immoral. By 1973 just over one in ten still held this belief, and as attitudes changed so did behaviour (Sandbrook, 2011, p. 429). But this study of the groupie phenomenon finds these developments were far from universally welcomed, nor were they all-encompassing and transformative; the sexual revolution left many people behind, particularly the LGBT community and women (Weeks, 2018, p. 272).

[10] The Family Planning Act 1967

The Affluent Society

Alongside changes to public and private morality, the advent of the 'affluent society', was perhaps the most significant precondition for the emergence of the groupie phenomenon. This term, coined by American economist John Kenneth Galbraith (1958/1991), was used to describe an apparently booming economy in which the British people had more disposable income than ever before, and more cheap consumer goods available for them to spend it on. The fundamental basis of this development was the steady rise of average earnings and full employment in the two decades following the Second World War, supported by social security (Sandbrook, 2006, p. 109). But the reality was that Britain's share of world manufactured exports was in relative decline in relation to Europe (Kynaston, 2014, p. 123). When newly elected Conservative Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, remarked to a crowd in Bedford 'Let's be frank about it: most of our people have never had it so good…what is worrying some of us is, is it too good to be true?' in 1957, he flagged fears the economic boom was too good to last.

By the late fifties, it had also become clear that Britain could no longer afford to maintain formal colonialism (Hobsbawm, 1995, p. 221). Following the 1956 Suez crisis, which culminated in Britain's humiliating withdrawal from the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt, under American pressure, the British Empire was on 'the brink of dissolution' (Lewis, 1978, p. 144). Despite the obsession, among some pundits, with national 'declinism' (Tomlinson, 2014), for most people, living standards rose throughout the fifties and sixties. Emma's family was among those members of the working-class who benefitted from a rise in average weekly earnings which continued to outstrip inflation:

> I think it was 1965, we moved because dad was, doing very well […] And when Harold Wilson said, 'you've never had it so good?', well, this was that time, and my dad was doing really, really well, and he'd been speaking to this chap who was selling his house, and they did a deal, and my dad bought this five bedroomed house for £3,500. In 1965. (Emma, 2020)

That Emma should place Macmillan's 1957 speech in 1965, attribute it to Labour Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, and interpret his words as an optimistic endorsement of the affluent society, is significant. Public mythology inflects this personal narrative; despite the series of economic crises which marred the period, the 'high-sixties' or mid-sixties have been mythologised as the peak of post-war affluence. Evidently, in Emma's experience, this mythology rings true because her family was able to afford to purchase a

large family home- no small achievement on the wages of a single working-class breadwinner.

When Harold Wilson's Labour party was swept to victory with a narrow majority in 1964, his mandate was to modernise Britain by harnessing the power of science and technology (Sandbrook, 2007, p. xvii). This was a period in which it was thought, that as drudgery was progressively eliminated by technological advancement, Britain would become an increasingly classless society. As living standards rose, the media focused upon a small number of working-class success stories, to develop one of the central media-constructed mythologies of the decade- the idea of the 'classless society'. This was a society in which, paradoxically, the traditional distinction between classes, along lines of economic inequality, and inequality of opportunity, supposedly melted away under conditions of affluence and welfarism, while at the same time, these conditions allowed for greater social mobility between the classes.

For young people, who enjoyed full employment and high wages for the first time, the concept of disposable income was an entirely new development. There were also more of them, the consequence of a post-war baby boom, which peaked in 1947 (Marwick, 1998, p. 45). In an era of free education and healthcare, young people were bigger, healthier, and sexually mature earlier; these were the conditions which created the 'teenager' (Osgerby, 1998, p. 18). The idea of high spending teenagers first appeared in the United States 'becoming a commonplace in the press and among academic sociologists from late 1957 onwards' (Marwick, 1998, p. 41), but by 1959, when British market research expert, Mark Abrams published *The Teenage Consumer* (1959), they were increasingly acknowledged as a powerful new consumer demographic in the UK (Laurie, 1965, p. 9). As whole creative industries mobilized to capitalize upon the teenager's new-found spending power, it became clear that teenage consumers desired their own products and popular culture, distinct from that of the older generation.

During the fifties, developments in media and communications saw youth style and culture promoted and popularised with increasing speed, giving rise to a widespread, identifiable, and relatively homogenous youth culture (Osgerby, 1998, p. 40). Youth's growing importance to the music industry was symbolised by the introduction of the 7-inch, 45 RPM single in 1952, which, by 1963, accounted for 80% of British record sales (ibid. p. 38). In response to post-war changes in popular music and youth culture, the BBC and ITV also launched television programmes dedicated to pop music, such as ITV's *Cool for Cats* (1956) the BBC's *Six-Five Special* (1957). These programmes featured

revivalist Jazz and Skiffle (a do-it-yourself offshoot of Jazz and response to American rock 'n' roll). They also helped to popularise imported American rock 'n' roll, and its home-grown imitations, which proved hugely popular with British young people (Palmer, 1976, p. 223). Indeed, the internationalism of the emergent youth culture was one of its most striking characteristics (Hobsbawm, 1995, p. 327).

Unashamedly commercial and credited by George Melly as the 'first true pop explosion' (1970, p. 57), rock 'n' roll developed from American white country and western and black rhythm and blues music (Bradley, 1992, p. 58). The musical film *Rock Around the Clock* 'provoked the earliest outbursts of juvenile demonstrations in British cinemas in 1956' (Walker, 1974, p. 40) and the featured group, Bill Haley and his Comets, received a spectacular reception when they toured the UK the following year. The group featured in Emma's personal narrative; she recalled shouting their phrase 'see you later alligator' to her little brother every morning on the way to school, to which he would reply in kind 'in a while crocodile'.[11] 'Bill Haley came over from America and that would be about '56, so I was six years old then' she explained, 'and of course, we had always had the radio on, my dad *loved* music, if he wasn't listening to it, he was singing, he absolutely loved it' (Emma, 2020). Eight years older than Emma, Jenny Fabian was in her teens in the mid-to-late fifties, rock 'n' roll and Elvis made a significant impression on her 'the first thing that, sort of, blew my mind was Elvis Presley' she told me in our interview. But by 1957, the popularity of rock 'n' roll was waning (Melly, 1970, p. 57).

Writing in 1965, Peter Laurie identified 'the real dynamo behind the teenage revolution [as] the anonymous adolescent girl from twelve to sixteen, nameless but irresistible' (p. 151). By the mid-sixties, this was a major market to which clothes, make-up, fashion, magazines, and pop stars were targeted. The groupie phenomenon was contingent on the newfound, relative affluence of teenage girls and young women; pocket money and wages could be spent, not only on magazines and records, but on attending local dances, unsupervised, where it was possible to see the very pop groups pictured in those magazines, perform live and perhaps even meet them after the show. This social life, facilitated by disposable income, was absolutely key to the emergence of the groupie phenomenon. For, as Frith and McRobbie observe, 'teenage girls' lives are usually confined to the locality of their homes; they have less money than boys, less free

[11] 'See you later alligator' was a top ten hit for Bill Haley and his comets in 1956.

time, less independence of parental control. A live pop concert is, then, a landmark among their leisure activities' (1990, p. 325).

Of course, not every family could afford to indulge their daughters to the same extent. By the time she hit her teens, Emma was an avid music fan, but the family did not own a record player until she received one for her 21st birthday in 1971. Growing up, she accessed popular music through 'radio, television, and y'know, we'd record something on dad's tape recorder, and listen back to it' (Emma, 2020). Jenny Fabian, on the other hand, had her own record player, on which she was able to listen to the latest pop records in the privacy of her own bedroom (Fabian, 2019).

Girls' comics and teen magazines were key to the development of this new consumer demographic; The combination of consumption and heterosexual romance found in magazines such as *Honey* (1964), *Jackie* (1964) and *Fabulous* (1964) was key to the emerging teen girl identity (Tinkler, 2014, p. 47). While the response of boys to rock 'n' roll may have been to form a skiffle group and produce their own amateur musical interpretation, girls tended to participate in this culture differently. They became fans, consumers of records and 'teenage-hero' magazines and love comics' (McRobbie & Garber, 2006, p. 181). McRobbie and Garber describe this highly manufactured form of youth culture, typically accommodated within the tight social space of the teenage bedroom, and shared by small tight knit groups of friends, as 'teenybopper' culture (2006, p. 187). In our interview, Emma described how she and her school friend shared an obsession with Cliff Richard:

> we *loved* him. And we'd come home from school and all we'd do was talk about Cliff Richards, 'oh isn't he gorgeous!' and 'oh do you like this song?' and 'oh did you see him on the telly?' and, oh we just loved him so, we just loved him! [laughs] But of course, how fickle is youth? As soon as y'know, the Beatles burst on the screen, it was like, 'Oh… don't like Cliff now, I like the Beatles [laughs]

Before long, Emma's bedroom was plastered with pictures from magazines of the Beatles and Manfred Mann, who represented a new generation of groups. Growing up surrounded by boys, Jenny Fabian, on the other hand, was more interested in playing football than romantically yearning after Elvis. When she reflected upon her earliest experiences of music fandom, her account centred upon the radical or 'catchy' nature of the music, rather than the romantic desirability of the pop idol. These divergent early experiences of fandom offer a fascinating precursor to the different ways in which these two women would approach the groupie pattern of behaviour.

By 1964, record buying in Britain had reached an all-time peak with more than a hundred million records sold; half that market consisted of the teenage demographic (Sandbrook, 2007, p. 118). The music media continued to prove indispensable to the shaping of youth culture and popularisation of the new wave of popular music. New youth-focused television programmes *Ready, Steady Go!* (1963-1966) and *Top of the Pops* (1964-2006) were launched, while pirate radio stations, Radio Caroline and Radio London, began transmission from around 1964. Long-standing music magazines, *Melody Maker* and the *New Musical Express*, were joined by newer magazines devoted to music and aimed at a younger audience, such as *Rave* and *Fabulous,* which both encouraged, and capitalised upon, youthful enthusiasm for popular music.

The new wave of popular music, was of course, headed by the unprecedented chart success of the Beatles from 1963. In the wake of the group's phenomenal rise, the British music industry scrambled to launch a whole series of groups and solo acts, many of whom enjoyed success in the American charts, a phenomenon which was dubbed the 'British Invasion'. By the mid-sixties, the British Beat Boom was in full swing; looking back from the vantage point of 1970, Melly would describe the years spanning 1963-1967 as British pop's 'classic period' (1970, p. 123). During these years a short-lived hegemony of youth-inspired British popular culture was established, initiated by the Beatles' hugely successful first tour of the United States in February 1964 (Gould, 2014, p. 9).

With a sound derived from American rock 'n' roll singers of the late fifties, and Afro-American gospel harmony call and response girl groups, such as the Shirelles and Crystals, (Palmer, 1976, p. 241), the Beatles arrived during a period which critics have perceived as a cultural lull in the history of popular music (Melly, 1970, p. 123). At a time when the British charts were dominated by crooners and solo girl singers in the show-biz mould, much of the Beatles' appeal lay in their fresh, youthful, unaffected vitality and humour, which not only infused their music, but defined their public personas.

> Emma: Well, well they were all *gorgeous*. And they were all *young* and *funny* and they were gorgeous you know? Especially Paul…John was nice looking but he was a bit too old for me, I think with Paul, he'd got this baby face, he was cute y'know? He is. I mean I used to like George as well, but that came later on. With George, as I got older, but at the time it was Paul (Emma, 2020)

The ease with which Cliff Richard was displaced from Emma's affections by the Beatles and the wave of youthful groups which followed in their wake, is telling. For Emma, the Beatles' youth was central to their appeal, 'I mean in those days you were young, or you

were old. And y'know, if somebody was just say two or three years older than you, they were, oh they were *old'* (ibid.)

The advent of young, attractive, seemingly accessible groups like the Beatles from the mid-sixties onwards fed directly into the groupie phenomenon. Indeed, American academics have traced the origin of the American groupie phenomenon to the British Invasion and cited the Beatlemaniac as predecessor to the groupie (Fenn, 2002, p. 10; Rhodes, 2001, p. 223). A well-publicised phenomenon in both Britain and America, the term 'Beatlemania' was used in the media to describe a new, fanatical form of fandom; once convened en masse at pop concerts and public appearances, young female fans, or 'Beatlemaniacs' would scream, cry, faint, and collapse, often resulting in chaotic scenes. As we shall see in Chapter 4, the figure of the Beatlemaniac was key to early media constructions of the groupie.

Beatlemania peaked during the Beatles' touring years, between 1963 and 1966; by this time, Jenny Fabian was already in her early twenties, and much too old to be swept up by it. Emma was in her early teens, she maintained Beatles scrap books and sang along to their songs on the radio, but she never got to see the group live:

> Oh, I'd have loved to, in fact, a girlfriend of mine, one of my old school friends, she went to see them in Lincoln and that was 1963, so I was 13. But, I mean, well, it must have been when I was grounded, but I can't imagine that my mum and dad would've let me go to Lincoln. I mean Lincoln seemed such a long way away and we didn't have a lot of money y'know? (Emma, 2020)

Evidently, Beatlemania was fuelled by youth affluence, but not all teenage girls had equivalent economic resources at their disposal to pursue the group, participation was thus variegated.

Just as her love of Cliff Richard had been short-lived, within a couple of years, Emma had moved on from the Beatles:

> When it got into the mod thing, they weren't seen as cool… A lot of the mods weren't into the Beatles, more the Stones, cos they did Rhythm 'n' Blues. […] at that time, as y'know, it was like The Small Faces, The Who, The Kinks, The Yardbirds that was the main mod groups (Emma, 2020)

The Mod subculture had originated from East London in the late fifties. Fashionable trendsetters, the early mods were inspired by West Indian style (Hebdige, 1979, p. 52), and sharp modern Italian tailoring. Initially they favoured Jazz music, but by the mid-sixties, mods had transitioned through black American R 'n' B and soul, to white British R 'n' B groups.

Like the Ted and Rocker subcultures of the post-war period, the mod subculture was male dominated; there were girls, but this 'was above all an incestuously, narcissistically male environment' (Green J. , 1999, p. 48). Emma's experience of the mod subculture was articulated chiefly in terms of the mod groups whose music she enjoyed: 'we used to go to the [Empire][12] *every* Saturday if we could, all through our teenage years, and of course, when the Small Faces was on, and The Who, I was really into the mod scene then' she told me. Mod fashion also featured prominently in her reflection on this period; she recalled how her mother ran up some white hipster trousers on the sewing machine and Emma spent her dinner break stitching mod targets around the hem, so she could wear them to the Empire that Saturday, '*Oh my god I felt amazing!* You know?' (Emma, 2020).

Until the early sixties, the fashions worn by teenage girls and young women had been generally indistinguishable from those worn by their mothers; the expansion of British art schools led directly to important developments in the British fashion industry. The appointment of Janey Ironside as Professor of Fashion at the RCA was a key moment; under her direction the RCA produced key talents such as Foale and Tuffin, Ossie Clark and Zandra Rhodes, all of whom designed for the younger generation of women (Wilson, 1980, p. 174). Mary Quant did not study fashion; however, she met her future husband and business partner Alexander Plunket Greene while pursuing an art teacher's diploma at Goldsmiths College (Fogg, 2003, p. 21). Together, Quant and Greene established Bazaar in 1955, a trail-blazing boutique, intended to cater to young affluent women who wished to distinguish themselves from the older more conservative generation. Quant's designs popularised the mini skirt, but her true innovation was the 'The Chelsea Look', which incorporated stylistic elements borrowed from children's clothes and a silhouette which 'acknowledged the necessity for freedom of movement' (ibid. p. 25).

A belief in the irrelevance of the class system inflected Mary Quant's ethos of fun, irreverence and frivolity, but despite her claims that they were worn by everyone, from 'duke's daughters' to 'dockers' daughters' (Quant, 1966, p. 75) Quant's designs were beyond the economic means of most young women (Breward, 2004). It was not until another art-school graduate, Barbara Hulanicki, and her husband Stephen Fitz-Simon opened their boutique, Biba, on Abingdon Road, in Kensington, in 1964, and launched their mail order catalogue, that affordable youth fashion became available for the first

[12] The name of this venue has been changed to protect the identities of Emma and her friends

time. Biba and its subsequent imitators heralded the British 'boutique boom', credited with the 'democratisation of style' (Fogg, 2003, p. 78) but fashionable and affordable boutiques were slow to reach provincial towns. This could result in frustration on the part of young women over the gap between the fashionable ideal promoted in magazines and personified by newly famous models, such as Jean Shrimpton and Twiggy, and the meagre range of youth-orientated fashions stocked in their local department stores. As in Emma's case, many girls and their mothers attempted to reproduce the boutique look from sewing patterns; meanwhile pilgrimages to London's primary shopping destination, Carnaby Street, also became a necessity for many fashion-conscious young women.

Developments in the British fashion industry, art world, pop world, and other cultural industries drew international attention during this period and London was increasingly recognised as a fashionable city and centre of cultural innovation. When American magazine *Time* dubbed London the 'Swinging City' on the 15th of April 1966 ('You Can Walk Acrosss it on the Grass'), it was followed by a plethora of self-congratulatory British newspaper and magazine articles which breathlessly detailed the capital's social and cultural highlights. This was a key moment in the Swinging London myth-making process. As Booker would write from the vantage point of 1969, a 'peculiar collective dream' came to dominate England in the mid-sixties (1969, p. 30). At the heart of the media-constructed Swinging London myth lay the young women who shopped in London's boutiques and wore the latest fashions. An earlier article written by American journalist, John Crosby, which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* Weekend Magazine, on the 26th April 1965, belies an obsession with London's emerging fashionable young women and an emphasis on eroticism, 'the girls…they're more than pretty; they're young, appreciative, sharp-tongued, glowingly alive…Young English girls take to sex as if it's candy and it's delicious' (cited in Green J. , 1999, p. 71).

Dubbed the 'dolly bird', this new kind of woman rapidly became a figure of media fascination in her own right. In this single icon, the culture of fun, frivolity and hedonism associated with Swinging London cohered; as novelist and journalist Linda Grant observes, 'she symbolised everything that was new, liberated, daring, sexually abandoned, independent and free' (1993, p. 88). But the dolly image was also restrictive; achieving the intricate eye makeup was difficult and time-consuming and the necessity for long straight hair and a thin figure caused many young women a great deal of grief (Diski, 2010, p. 18). As John Berger has noted, these pressures and restrictions were part of a wider developing trend which saw women increasingly survey their bodies and judge

their own femininity against media images (1972, p. 63). The irony is that such regimented ways of looking for women should emerge during a period in which women were supposed to be enjoying new freedoms.

The idea of the sixties dolly was also ‘classless’ (Melly, 1970, p. 144), a notion which was central to Swinging London mythology. As *Time* informed its readers, the Swinging London scene was one in which socialites rubbed shoulders with fashion photographers, film stars and pop stars who were thought to have working-class origins, such as David Bailey, Michael Caine and the Beatles, as well as entrepreneurs and creative innovators like Mary Quant (Halasz, 1966). This meritocratic milieu was quickly dubbed the ‘New Aristocracy’, references to which began to appear in the press from around 1965 (Booker, 1969, p. 19). But for all but a very few, Swinging London was a fantasy (Hewison, 1986, p. 78). Sixties model, Celia Hammond, who easily fit the dolly bird mould, found the Swinging London scene to be a ‘closed set-up, a clique, hard to break into’, in which everyone needed to be successful (cited in Sandbrook, 2007, p. 274). The definition of success also differed for men and women. As Melly observed 'success in a given field is the criterion and, in the case of girls, physical beauty’ (1970, p. 95). Within the Swinging London set, then, there were very few women whose success was not dependent upon their physical beauty, and who did not come from a middle-class or upper-class background. While some were the girlfriends of male actors and pop stars, most were also models, actresses or socialites. Such barriers to women would also be replicated within the upper echelons of the underground.

While the so-called ‘pop aristocracy’- the Beatles and Rolling Stones- sat at the pinnacle of the Swinging London scene (Green J. , 1999, p. 73) within the British music industry there were also restricted roles for women. Women musicians were almost entirely absent from the British Beat Boom, except for Honey Lantree, drummer in the group, The Honeycombs, and Megan Davies, bassist in the Applejacks. There were also a small number of all-girl Beat and Garage groups active in the UK in the mid-sixties (Timonen, 2012, p. 71), the best-known of which, the Liverbirds, toured Europe extensively but made little impact on the British charts. American group, Goldie and the Gingerbreads, were more successful in the UK than at home, but they also had only one chart hit. These musicians were treated as a novelty in the music press, where 'discussion on gender and visual attributes frequently eclipsed discussion on their music' (ibid. p. 70).

A culture of male hostility towards female musicianship (Fudger, 1974), a lack of successful female role-models (Garratt, 1990, p. 240) and disproportionate levels of

parental control exercised over girls' leisure time (Frith & McRobbie, 1990, p. 325), would have discouraged many young women and girls from pursuing a career in music. Jenny Fabian sang in the school choir:

> that was all very successful, and I was about, I did dabble with the idea of, because I was told to go and have an audition at the, oh, some London school of music. I can't remember the name of it now. But my mother told me 'you don't want to be a singer, do you? You'll get big breasts'. I didn't want them. So anyway, I wasn't that keen (Fabian, 2019)

Evidently her mother did not consider singing a suitable career and sought to discourage Jenny Fabian from attending this audition by mobilising the self-described tomboy's aversion to 'big breasts'. When I asked Jenny Fabian why she never tried singing in a group in the late sixties, once she became involved in the London music scene, she said she 'wasn't that keen to be, that in front like that' (Fabian, 2019). Jenny Fabian had musical talent, as we shall see, she was self-assured and socially well-connected, but even she lacked the confidence to be a female front-line singer in a male dominated music business. She also cited how she had two children by this point 'you'd then have to really give your whole world to it, wouldn't you? I wasn't prepared to do that' (ibid.) she went on, highlighting another bar to women's participation in music. While children were no hindrance to the career of a male musician, their arrival would inevitably foreclose, or bring to a close, the career of a female musician.

Beside the beat groups, the British Invasion encompassed a whole range of other acts and among them were female solo singers such as Cilla Black, Lulu, Sandy Shaw and Dusty Springfield. Jon Savage has suggested 'the new era demanded a new kind of female star, one that broke with the old showbiz type, women who could be seen as representatives of the female audience itself' (2015, p. 163). Certainly, these singers were young and fashionable; Shaw broke with convention, performing bare foot and opting for a more relaxed Biba girl style, but female pop singers faced the same difficult balancing act as their teen girl audience; maintaining an image which was pleasingly 'pretty' without being overtly 'sexual'. Writing on women in the music industry in 1984, Steward and Garratt describe how 'female roles and stereotypes are far more restrictive, the standards of perfection so much higher, and the pressures on women to conform with their bodies, their faces and their clothes, much greater' than it is for male performers (1984, p. 17).

There was also some space within folk for women with sweet voices, but for all its

anti-establishmentarian associations, looks remained of central importance for the female solo folk singer (Frith & McRobbie, 1990, p. 321). Marianne Faithfull, for example, was signed by Andrew Loog Oldham, without hearing her sing a note. For him, she was an 'angel with big tits', and therefore marketable (Faithfull & Dalton, 1995, p. 28). Faithfull found it difficult to reconcile herself with her angelic public image. In the media she courted controversy, but as a middle-class young woman with roots in the Austrian nobility, she was tolerated because, as Nik Cohn reflected in 1969, 'she did it in a nice accent. She wasn't vulgar with it. She could be coped with. Even in direct disgrace, she was still a lady' (p. 170).

In addition to the pressures on women in the music industry, Steward and Garratt found that the theme of a sexist 'closed shop' recurred across all sectors of the industry in all interviews with women of the sixties and seventies generation (1984, p. 68). The opportunities simply weren't there, and if they were, they were tightly restricted. Female tour managers, promoters and engineers would not begin to appear until the early seventies. 'With so few female role models to follow' reflects Garratt, 'most of us dream of being a pop star's girlfriend: fame and recognition by proxy' (1990, p. 240). Under such circumstances, the groupie role represented one of the few spaces young women with a strong interest in popular music might occupy within a music industry riddled with institutional sexism.

Conclusion

This was a period in which the position of women within the music industry, and wider society was changing; teenage girls had become a powerful new consumer demographic, while young, unmarried women entering the workforce also had some spending power. Changes to public and private morality, meanwhile, saw some relaxation in sexual attitudes and behaviours, but also the increasing sexual objectification of young women. These developments fed directly into the emergence of a new fashionable feminine ideal, the dolly; they were also the preconditions for the emergence of the groupie. But these developments were far from universally welcomed, a degree of sexual and financial independence was more easily obtained by some women and girls than by others, and roles for women and girls within the workplace and music industry remained restricted. Sexual attitudes, particularly in relation to female sexual behaviour, could also lag woefully behind. Nevertheless, the new openness around sexual matters meant that it

was possible, by 1965, for the media to begin to address and define, the groupie pattern of behaviour. The construction of the figure of the groupie in the British media in the mid-sixties is the subject to which the next chapter now turns.

Chapter 4 Scrubbers and Nice Girls: Constructing the Female Fan

The British beat boom began in 1963, but the groupie phenomenon would not begin to attract media attention until 1965. This chapter is concerned with the themes and imagery established in what I will henceforth refer to as 'proto-groupie' representation, produced between 1965 and 1969. By examining newspapers, the music press, fictional recreations and a documentary, this chapter interrogates how the media-constructed figure of the proto-groupie embodied cultural anxieties around issues of class and gender during a period characterised by rapid social change.

Judgements about respectability; constructing the proto-groupie

As already noted, the earliest journalistic and fictional accounts (Pop and the Public', 1965; 'Scrubbers: The Facts', 1966; *All Night Stand,* 1966; 'They Put You Where You Are', 1966), describe or depict young women and girls who seek sexual encounters with male pop musicians, but the groupie label is not used, and would not be used to describe this pattern of behaviour in the media until 1967 ('The Ravers'). These early accounts indicate that the groupie pattern of behaviour preceded the groupie label. For example, in 'Pop and the Public' Hennessey writes:

> In Britain there is a legion of eveready [sic] girls known by various names including scrubbers. In the new pop culture that has swept the Western Hemisphere, the home-grown scrubber has been duplicated in every beat trodden path abroad. These active, eager, alive pop-followers make it quite clear they are "available". Just for the glory of it. They are scalp hunters who wish to boast to their friends- "I was with Joe- lead guitarist of the ___ last night" (*Melody Maker,* 25 September 1965, p.10)

The speech marks around the word 'available' and reference to 'eveready girls' in this passage connote the sexual availability of these girls to pop stars, which corresponds with the groupie pattern of behaviour. Several codes and themes, which will come to define groupie representation, are already in place (indiscriminate sexual availability and groupie abundance; reflected glory; the violent imagery of scalp-hunting; boasting), which will be explored during the course of this chapter.

Significantly, Hennessey describes the girls concerned as 'scrubbers', a label which the archival record indicates was frequently applied, between 1965 and 1967, to young women and girls exhibiting the groupie pattern of behaviour. Further evidence suggests

that as early as 1959, the label was used to describe 'very young girls who follow jazz bands round the country' (*Encounter* May 30 cited in Simpson, et al., 1991, p. 1685). A slang term with a strong class connotation, 'scrubber' has subsequently fallen out of fashion, but it was commonly used at the time to refer to 'a prostitute, a tart, an untidy, slatternly girl or woman' (Simpson, et al., 1991, p. 1685). The label's use also predates the behaviour of these fans. It can be traced to the Victorian period when it was used to describe domestic servants who worked in middle-class homes (ibid.).

The Victorian definition of respectable middle-class femininity was constructed in opposition to the perceived immorality and sexual deviancy of the prostitute, who, according to the bourgeoise, was indistinguishable from other working-class women (Nead, 1988, p. 77). This included the domestic servant, or 'scrubber', who could be subjected to the sexual demands of middle- and upper-class male employers (Conley, 1986). Between 1965 and 1967, then, the groupie pattern of behaviour was defined in relation to a traditional form of female, working-class sexual deviancy embodied in the scrubber stereotype. In addition to being working-class and promiscuous, this traditional stereotype was subject to some modification; the figure of the scrubber is constructed in the media as young (between 14 and 17 years of age), uneducated, loud, provincial, and identified as a minority contingent within the predominantly female audiences that attended local pop concerts (known as 'dances') which were held in church halls, and other music venues up and down the country.

While the scrubber label signifies all that is not respectable and without value, its deployment in the mid-sixties by male journalists, pop stars and others, to describe female fans who exhibit the groupie pattern of behaviour, constitutes a moral judgement, whereby these young women and girls are 'othered' and 'pathologized'. In this way, the scrubber label simultaneously works to code these girls as working-class sexual deviants and invoke their working-classness to *explain* their sexual deviancy foreclosing on any deeper investigation into why these girls do what they do. This circular, common-sensical logic, which essentially rationalises that 'scrubbers are scrubbers, because they are scrubbers', can be seen at work in references within the music press to 'plain straightforward scrubbers', 'scrubber morality' ('Sex, Love and Pop', *Melody Maker*, 10 May 1969, p.17) and one female pop fan's assertion that 'the scrubber type of girl would be immoral whether it was with a pop star or not' ('Scrubbers - the Facts', *Melody Maker,* 16 December 1966, p.11).

Judgements about respectability are central to not only the labelling, but also the construction of the figure of the 'scrubber'. From the very earliest accounts of the groupie phenomenon, the theme of dirt and contagion features prominently:

> What these girls know about washing could be engraved on one side of a threepenny bit (*All Night Stand,* Keyes, 1966, p.15)
>
> 'The real scrubber is disgusting' - Tony Hicks, The Hollies ('Scrubbers - the Facts', *Melody Maker,* 16 December 1966, p.11).
>
> 'Scrubbers need scrubbing'- George Harrison, The Beatles ('Pop think in George Harrison' *Melody Maker,* 27 January 1966, p.7)

Zhong and House (2014) have argued the concept of morality is founded upon the conceptual framework of dirt and pollution. 'Hence how people think about social and moral deviants, and individuals who commit sexual transgressions in particular, parallels how they think about dirt- as tainting, contagious and harmful' (2014, p. 22). As George Harrison's quote above clearly illustrates, the scrubber label itself conjures the image of an individual engaged in a vigorous attempt to remove dirt. It connotes immoral behaviour as a permanent taint on character and reputation. By constructing the proto-groupie body as repellent and signalling her deviant sexuality through the moral euphemism of 'dirt', this mode of representation draws upon what Skeggs describes as the 'historical-representational moralising, pathologizing, disgust-producing register attached to working class women' (2005, p. 967) to code the proto-groupie body as working-class. Anthropologist, Mary Douglas (2002), has famously suggested that dirt is matter out of place. Claims about the personal hygiene of proto-groupies imply that these young women and girls do not stay in their 'place'- the subordinate and lowly position assigned to them, as working-class women and girls, within the social hierarchy. Instead, they use their bodies to transgress approved gender roles by engaging in premarital sexual activity- a male privilege- and transgress class roles, by engaging in sexual activity with potentially middle-class pop stars.

Poovey (1984) traces to the eighteenth century the production of femininity as a textually mediated sign, which corresponded with the middle-class habitus, defined, in the words of Skeggs, by 'ease, restraint, calm and luxurious decoration' (1997, p. 99). This feminine ideal was produced as a sign of distinction from working-class women. More specific claims about the supposed appearance of proto-groupies present the antithesis of this feminine ideal:

> [A scrubber] is a young girl who is usually pretty tatty ('Scrubbers - the Facts', *Melody Maker,* 16 December 1966, p.11)

> 'Usually, you can tell a groupie because she has thick make-up' – Steve Ellis, Love Affair ('The Hip World Of The Groupies', *Mirabelle,* 26 July 1969 pp.16-17)

> 'Usually, they look horrible and tarty and that's one thing I can't stand'- Keith Moon, The Who ('The Hip World Of The Groupies', *Mirabelle,* 26 July 1969 pp.16-17)

Judgements about respectability are implicit in these statements about the supposed appearance of the proto-groupie. As Skeggs observes, by the end of the nineteenth century, 'to look was *to be'* as:

> appearance and conduct became markers of respectability, although these had to be seen to be coded in the correct way: too much concentration on appearances was seen to be a sign of female deviancy […] This legacy remains (Skeggs, 1997, p. 100).

'Thick make-up' and a 'tarty' appearance, then, connote the excessive sexuality of the working-class woman. A tatty social presentation, on the other hand, can be read as a straightforward sign of impoverishment, but it also suggests the carelessness of a young woman who has dressed quickly, post-coitus, or whose clothes have been torn in the sexual act. Pop star David Dee made this link between judgements about personal appearance and sexual impropriety explicit when he told *Melody Maker* that 'Like most pop groups, we are too broadminded to be disgusted by what the slags get up to. But they look just what they are- and that's enough to put anyone off' ('Scrubbers- the Facts', *Melody Maker,* 16 December 1966, p.11).

Media strategies; Regulating female sexual behaviour

Diametrically opposed to the discursively constructed scrubber stereotype, was the 'nice girl'. In his attempt to distinguish 'respectable' fans from the scrubber minority, Alan Walsh invokes this ideal: 'she was about 17, with blonde hair, a mini-skirt, not too much makeup', he writes, before going on to suggest that 'most girls' only "sin" is that they like the music of today and that they dress differently though usually smarter and less ludicrously than their parents ever did' ('Scrubbers - the Facts', *Melody Maker,* 16 December 1966, p.11). He was not the only commentator to draw this distinction.

Journalist, Dawn James gives a more detailed description of the 'nice girl' in her interview with pop star Paul Jones: 'the sort of girls he does like are rather quiet, simply dressed, without a great deal of make-up and who have something interesting to say' she writes ('Paul Jones talks about Pretty Flamingo and other birds', *Rave,* June 1966 pp.22-24).

These passages present a mirror image of the scrubber stereotype. Although sexual behaviour is not explicitly mentioned, respectability is, again, central to judgements about women's appearance and conduct, but here, the nice girl's simple and restrained appearance, and her quiet, calm disposition, signal passivity, chastity, and obedience. This figure embodies ideas of middle-class respectability. Furthermore, the categories of 'nice girl' and 'scrubber' are coded by class, just like the wider historical distinction between good 'normal' women and bad 'sexual' women (Tolman, 1996, p. 256). But the groupie label could work differently because it did not have the same working-class connotations and historical associations. Some pop stars would defend groupies. Carl Wayne of The Move, for example, told *Mirabelle*:

> I meet lots of girls who are commonly termed as groupies. I don't look down on them, in fact I just realise they're out for a good time as many blokes are. If a nice girl came along and she was a groupie, I don't think I'd hesitate going with her. Just cos she's a groupie, doesn't mean she's not a nice girl, in fact some of the groupies I've met- and I've met quite a few- have been the nicest chicks about ('The Hip World Of The Groupies', *Mirabelle,* 26 July 1969 pp.16-17)

In BBC documentary, 'The Ravers' Simon Dupree also suggests that a groupie can, indeed, be a 'nice girl':

> Dupree: There's always a crowd of girls outside, you'll usually find the ones that want a lift [laughs] it's as simple as that [shrugs shoulders laughing]
>
> Percival: And they just ask for lifts?
>
> Dupree: Well as well as other things, yeah
>
> Percival: And what happens then?
>
> Dupree: [looks embarrassed] Well, depends on what they look like [laughs] if they're nice girls, yeah, we'll give them a lift

These quotes suggest that, among the groups, the distinction between 'nice girls' and 'scrubbers' was not made on the basis of sexual behaviour alone; it was also made according to how well the social presentation and conduct of the girl in question was judged to conform to the middle-class 'nice girl' ideal.

As Greer Litton Fox observes, the "good girl," "lady," or "nice girl" are all value constructs, which work as a form of normative restriction and social control, to regulate the freedom of women (1977, p. 805). Mediated pop star testimonies suggest that those girls who failed to comply with the demands of the nice girl construct could, in the words of Fox, become 'the target of ridicule, ostracism, and psychological punishment directed not so much at her behaviour as at her person' (ibid. p. 817):

> Ric Rothwell of the Mindbenders summed up most groups' attitude to the scrubber minority when he said: 'We laugh at them most of the time. We arrive at a place, see the scrubbers and mutter to each other 'look what's turned up' ('Scrubbers - the Facts', *Melody Maker,* 16 December 1966, p.11).

The use of the word 'what', rather than 'who' when speaking of 'scrubbers' recurs in mediated pop star testimonies and serves to dehumanise these fans. The disgust with which some pop stars describe those girls they have judged to be immoral and without value, is palpable. Others strenuously deny their involvement with such fans. 'I'd never have dreamt of marrying a groupie, and I don't know anyone else in the group business who would', Colin Peterson told *The People* ('Silly little girls!' 6 April 1969 p.6). While these views were probably widespread, the dissenting voices of a handful of pop stars, who maintained that groupies could, in fact, be nice girls, suggest that contempt for the groupie phenomenon was not universal among male musicians.

It is also important to consider that these pop star perspectives were mediated by a mainstream media with its own agenda- to discourage young female fans from adopting the groupie pattern of behaviour. For those individuals involved in the music business and music media, which had sprung up to both encourage and capitalise upon continued public enthusiasm for popular music, a great deal was at stake. Faced with the groupie phenomenon, and anticipating public outrage, some male music journalists evidently sought to establish and control the narrative surrounding the groupie pattern of behaviour before the girls themselves, their parents, and even the police, had an opportunity to weigh in.

It was, of course, generally assumed that groupies, like Beatlemaniacs and other teenyboppers, dreamt of one day marrying a pop star. Such fantasies were actively encouraged by magazines aimed at teenage girls, such as *Rave* and *Mirabelle,* which held up fashionable beautiful pop star girlfriends such as Jane Asher and Patti Boyd, as the feminine ideal to which teenage girls should aspire. But as the decade progressed and the groupie phenomenon became a matter of public concern, some male journalists made

attempts to shatter this media-constructed fantasy. In his article for teen magazine *Mirabelle,* titled 'If you're thinking of marrying a pop star think again!', Paul Raven writes:

> Most of you girls would give your right arm to be seen socially with a pop star. Their lives seem all glitter. Your friends would envy you. And you could be there standing beside him while screaming girls rush up for his autograph. Truth is it wouldn't be half as great as it sounds (14 Jun, 1969 p.28-29)

Another media strategy involved minimising the extent of the groupie phenomenon by denying reciprocity on the part of pop stars. 'The message to "the groupies" is quite clear', summarises Oakes, 'from the groups themselves, and the people who run the dances. It is the title of a pop hit of not so many years ago "Go away little girl"' (Silly little girls! *The People,* 6 April 1969 p.6). But without pop star reciprocity, the groupie phenomenon was no phenomenon at all, and it is worth noting that some of the pop stars who railed against these fans in the press at the time, are today known to have participated in sexual encounters with groupies.

Elsewhere, in publications which sought to appeal directly to teenage girls, pop star reciprocity was acknowledged, but the sexual double standard was invoked. *Melody Maker,* for example, printed a letter, apparently penned by a young female fan, beneath the heading, 'A plea from a scrubber' (24 September 1966 p.15). Its author reports that the 'top group' she travelled around with 'last year' have fathered countless illegitimate children, and although two are married 'you'd hardly think so, they have a different girl every night'. She signs off the letter with the following paragraph:

> You may wonder just why I'm writing like this. It's simply because I'm sick of being treated like dirt and called a 'scrubber' because of that one night. Boys will be boys, and as soon as you're classed as a 'scrubber' by one group, it's off on the grapevine and your reputation is ruined- 'A SCRUBBER'

This passage describes how a girl's social value could be instantly and irrevocably diminished, should her sexual encounter with a group member become publicly known. It also gives a clear account of how the 'scrubber' label worked to stigmatise these young women. Paul Willis found just such attitudes among the working-class 'lads' he interviewed in 1977. 'After you've been with one like, after you've done it, well they're scrubbers afterwards, they'll go with anyone' one participant told Willis (p. 44). Groupie testimonies, which will be the subject of analysis in Chapter 5, confirm that reputational damage and unplanned pregnancy were, indeed, real risks for the girls concerned. But as already noted in Chapter 2, internal inconsistencies suggest that this letter is more than

likely a fabrication planted in the paper to discourage female fans from adopting the groupie pattern of behaviour.[13] If this is the case, the risks attached to this behaviour are articulated here as a threat, intended to regulate the sexual agency of these fans through internal policing. In doing so, this letter works to reinforce, rather than challenge, the sexual double standard.

A degree of 'sexual indulgence' on the part of male musicians was also tolerated in the music media. Hennessey, for example, defends the musicians, arguing they are no less and no more immoral than the average young man:

> Pop musicians – like bank clerks, builders' labourers, and sub-editors – when confronted by a willing and affectionate girl will very often succumb to temptation. It's as simple and old-fashioned as that ('Pop and the Public' *Melody Maker,* 25 September 1965, p.10).

Although pop musicians came from a range of social backgrounds, in the mid-sixties they were widely thought to be working-class and upwardly mobile. But unlike the 'scrubber' stereotype, whose sexual promiscuity is 'explained' by her working-classness, Hennessey takes pains to iterate that *male* sexual promiscuity is not defined by class. Nor is it immoral. In the scenario outlined here, male desire is framed as natural, inevitable, and constant. Hennessey advocates tolerance, understanding, and the benefit of the doubt for the young male musician who, under such circumstances, acts upon this desire:

> Pop musicians and singers are young people. Young people have an entirely natural interest in the opposite sex. And today more and more young people, including pop musicians, indulge their sexual appetites before marriage (ibid.)

Adopting the posture of progressiveness, he accuses those who might criticise this behaviour of moral hypocrisy ('sickening prejudice'), but nowhere in Hennessy's journalistic account or any other, are the sentiments of tolerance and understanding extended to the 'scrubber'. Nor is female sexual desire acknowledged or legitimised. Instead, Hennessey catalogues a series of farcical anecdotes, detailing the outlandish efforts of girls to initiate sexual encounters with group members:

> In the South of England, one famous beat musician leaned back in his private train seat and found himself staring into the beautiful eyes of a sixteen-year-old fan lying full length in his luggage rack. She pounced and nearly had half his clothes off before the road manager ejected her.

[13] The letter's author claims to have 'travelled around' with a group long enough to have observed their behaviour first-hand, but also states that 'more often, girls are picked up after a show, as was my case' before going on to claim that her reputation was ruined because of 'one night'.

> …In a London dressing room recently, a group were watching telly when a seventeen-year-old fan ran into the room stripping her clothes off. She, too, was ejected.

These scenarios read like scenes from an instalment of British comedy film franchise, *Carry On,* (UK, 1958-1992) or *A Hard Day's Night* (Dir, Lester, UK 1964) a film which featured iconic scenes of the Beatles in flight, pursued by a mob of screaming Beatlemaniacs. They also invoke the image of another historical stereotype, the nymphomaniac. Variously described as excessive feminine sexual desire or activity, nymphomania has been simultaneously seen as a symptom, a cause, and a disease in its own right (Groneman, 1994). 'Moral insanity', the definition of madness not as a loss of reason, but as deviance from socially accepted behaviour 'was a cornerstone of Victorian psychiatric theory and practice, that could be stretched to take in almost any kind of behaviour regarded as abnormal or disruptive by community standards' (Showalter, 1985, p. 29). Despite the work of sexual educators in the post-war period (Kinsey, et al., 1953/1998), the belief that female sexuality was passive and responsive still held sway in the sixties. Active sexual desire was the province of men; active female sexual desire was therefore abhorrent and unnatural. These ideas, which coalesce in the pathologized figure of the 'scrubber', are underscored in proto-groupie representation by the mobilisation of the historical stereotype of the nymphomaniac.

Ideas of natural male desire and pathological female desire are also implicit in the theme of groupie as sexual temptation which recurs in music and mainstream journalistic accounts. 'The beat boy or pop singer today doesn't have to seek out temptation' writes Hennessy, 'It's lying in wait for him on every gig; temptation will be waiting for them tomorrow night, and the night after that, and the one after that. In the shape of pretty and young eager girls' ('Pop and the Public' *Melody Maker,* 25 September 1965, p.10). Central to this construction of groupie as temptation is the idea that women are responsible for the virtue of men, a means for men to avoid responsibility for their own actions with its roots in Victorian discourses which designated women responsibility for the purity of the home and, by extension, the moral condition of the nation (Nead, 1988, p. 92). This construction of the groupie as sexual temptation to legitimate male desire works to protect male musicians from moral outrage by deflecting responsibility for the groupie phenomenon from the groups to their pathological teenage fans.

As the mainstream media began to acknowledge the possibility that some of these young girls were also below the age of consent, underage groupies would be described in

equivalent terms. In 1970, the *Daily Mail*'s Don Short interviewed Mary Travers, of American folk trio Peter, Paul, and Mary, about the recent conviction and sentencing of group member Peter Yarrow for taking indecent liberties with a 14-year-old schoolgirl in the United States. In the subsequent article 'The peril that trapped Peter', Travers told Don Short:

> You see, older people now realise the provocations the young can cause, and I think that the public is a lot more intelligent than it is credited for […] Peter was a bachelor when it all happened, and when we were on tour, he attracted the groupie element […] although groupies mainly pursue the rock groups there were many girls who were out to hound Peter. To musicians who are on tour, groupie girls have become a real peril… (19 September 1970 p.13)

Her assessment of the situation is presented with very little comment from Short, whose article is overwhelmingly sympathetic to Travers' predicament. In citing Yarrow's bachelorhood and the sexually aggressive behaviour of groupies, Travers, mediated by the *Daily Mail,* minimises and excuses Yarrow's crime. In speaking of 'provocations', she echoes the words of Yarrow's defence counsel, who had in court defined a groupie as 'a girl who deliberately provokes sexual relationships with pop stars' ('Singer's offence against girl' *The Times,* 15 September 1970 p.5). In suggesting the 14-year-old girl in question 'provoked' the assault, Yarrow is absolved of his personal responsibility for what in this case amounts to the sexual assault of a minor. The use of words like 'peril' and 'trapped' in the article's title only serves to reinforce this narrative.

In his article 'Silly Little Girls!' Oakes took a similar approach to the problem of underage groupies:

> Teenagers – many of them only schoolgirls – are hanging around the dressing-rooms offering themselves so that they can boast that they have slept with a pop star- some of them are only 13 or 14 but even the youngest of them make no bones about what they want (*The People,* 6 April 1969 p.6)

Accountability for the consequences of 'hanging around the dressing-rooms' is firmly and entirely deflected from older male pop stars to these schoolgirls who are constructed as sexually experienced women, rather than children.[14] For all the outrage and disgust the groupie phenomenon generated in the mainstream media, very little attention was paid to the risk of statutory rape attached to encounters between underage female fans and

[14] This practice continues today, for a more recent example in which working-class underage girls were treated by the police as adult perpetrators rather than child victims of sexual abuse see the Rochdale grooming scandal which took place between 2008 and 2010 (Bindel, 2022).

older male pop musicians. This crime was incompatible with a dominant discourse, which constructed the groupie as working-class sexual deviant, and the pop star as hapless 'victim'.

In February 1968, a letter appeared in *Melody Maker* which perhaps proves an exception to this rule*:*

> Can something be done to stop long-haired thugs molesting young girls who are unfortunate enough to have schoolgirl crushes on pop groups? I heard from my daughter of a girl who was dragged into a van by a well-known pop group. She was forced to take off all her clothes. Only when the police were called did they let her go. I agree some girls ask for trouble by hanging around stage doors. But when innocent youngsters cannot go to a dance for fear they will be assaulted, something has to be done. And it had better be quick before a fan is raped by a pop star – Mrs F. J., London (17 February 1968 p.28)

In a departure from journalistic accounts, this letter makes allegations of sexual assault, positions the male pop star as sexual deviant, and demands the groups be held to account. The following week two readers' letters appeared under the headline 'Rape? what rubbish!' (*Melody Maker*, 2 March 1968 p.28) 'Mrs F. J's' remarks about rape attempts among pop groups were ridiculous' writes musician David Greer. 'In our group we don't have anything to do with girls at all […] and if they come to see us, they are treated with respect'. In the second letter, Mrs S. H, whose son plays saxophone in a group, demands to know 'why parents allow young girls to stay out all hours of the night with the groups?' before recounting how her son has been 'robbed of clothes and equipment by so-called fans'. The editorial decision to print two letters, which emphasise the respectful behaviour of the groups on the one hand, and the delinquent behaviour of young female fans on the other, under such a provocative and dismissive headline, works to not only dismiss Mrs F. J's allegations, but reconfigure the male pop star as victim and the young female fan as offender.

While Mrs F. J.'s letter highlights the risks to young female fans, it is far from a protectionist feminist call for action. The distinction she draws between 'innocent youngsters', and girls who 'ask for trouble by hanging around stage doors' draws upon the nice girl/scrubber dichotomy. Neither of the groupies I interviewed described pursuing the groups in this manner, but Emma did tell me about an occasion when a venue's management allowed her backstage to meet the Yardbirds. Emma was 13 at the time, and still four years off her first groupie experience:

> So, I took my little pictures of the Yardbirds and that, and we queued up and went in to see them, and I passed them these pictures, to get them signed, and it was amazing. But I never said a word. I was so quiet, so shy! Funnily enough. I was. I used to get this big lump in me throat, and I couldn't speak I used to be so shy, and of course, they didn't say anything, they just smiled at us, and then they were [laughs] looking at the pictures and giggling, but they signed them (Emma, 2020)

Emma's testimony undercuts the assumption that girls found 'hanging around dressing rooms' were sexually available, but it also brings into focus how a system of classification which identifies some girls as 'innocent' and others as 'asking for trouble' can threaten the personal safety of all young girls.

'The Ravers' was described by reporter John Percival as 'an attempt to show people, and particularly parents the dangers which their daughters can face when they pursue pop stars' ('Pop girls TV report defended' *The Times,* 29 June 1967). The documentary opens with dozens of teenage girls waiting outside a church hall in Gloucestershire to see British psychedelic group, Simon Dupree and the Big Sound. As the camera lingers on the girls' faces, miniskirts, and hairstyles, a male voiceover, in a tone reminiscent of the kind employed on nature programmes, introduces the subject of this instalment of *Man Alive*:

> Girls between 14 and 17, everybody's daughters, everybody's wives-to-be, out for a bit of excitement, a bit of a thrill. But all of them, most of them innocently, are already familiar with a world their parents know nothing about, a world with its own jargon, its own morality, where the social pattern their parents thought was entirely natural, has been turned on its head, and the girls have become the hunters, the boys, the hunted. It's the world of the ravers.

The phrase 'everybody's daughters, everybody's wives-to-be' reflects how teenage girls, and young women, were seen at this time: as adjuncts to male breadwinners, their social fate determined by kinship ties. What is implicit in this introduction, and, indeed, throughout the programme, is the idea that respectable families might be rendered unrespectable by the behaviour of their daughters at a local dance. In his interview with front man Simon Dupree, Percival attempts to elicit judgements about the respectability of his teenage fans, but, perhaps mindful that the girls might be watching, Dupree refuses to be drawn:

> Percival: You said that you don't feel any loss of respect for them, but would you like, you have a sister, would you like your sister to behave in the way that some of these ravers do?

> Dupree: I wouldn't, seriously, I wouldn't worry, I know it must be natural, it must be normal, because all the girls do, so it's easy, they all do, most of the young girls go to dances, and most of them will treat a pop group, or idolise a pop group or a star, and I wouldn't disrespect that, have any disrespect for it at all
>
> Percival: You don't think their parents should have better control over them?
>
> Dupree: I don't see how they can really, I mean they're always on television, and on the radio and always in magazines, they have to idolise something […]
>
> Percival: Idolising somebody doesn't necessarily mean you want to go to bed with them
>
> Dupree: You'd be surprised with these young girls, it does, you know, well some of them, I'm not saying all of them, I'm sort of generalising, I'd say 20 percent of these girls who come after us will go to bed with them
>
> Percival: Like collecting autographs?
>
> S: Yeah

The programme-makers repeatedly draw upon the idea of a 'generation gap' to convey a sense of crisis in parental authority. While the world of the teenage pop fan is presented as disorientating and unrecognisable to the older generation, promoter Harold Rudman tells Percival that parents have no idea what their daughters get up to at these dances:

> Percival: Do you feel that their parents should probably keep closer control of them maybe?
>
> Rudman: I think if their parents knew, I don't think their parents are with them at all, I don't think their parents realise what is happening. Their parents just think they're going to a dance to just dance and look at the group. I think if they knew what happens they would be horrified.

The subtext here, of course, is that parents should not only be made aware of the 'dangers' but be galvanised to act – to reinstate control over their daughters, who, it is made clear, are out of control. The theme of a crisis in parental authority also recurs in the music and mainstream press, where journalists hold naive or neglectful parents responsible for the groupie phenomenon:

> If there is any blame to be apportioned in this situation, some, at least, must be attached to parents, particularly to those of teenage daughters. Because, in my view, many mothers and fathers are hopelessly out of touch with the teenage world… but do their parents know? Do they even care? If they don't, then it's time they woke up to the fact that sometimes fanatical fan worship can lead a teenage

girl into physical surrender ('Pop and the Public' *Melody Maker,* 25 September 1965, p.10).

Such accusations were sometimes accompanied by more explicit calls for the reassertion of parental control, and perhaps more accurately, paternal authority, within the home. This point is clarified by Oakes when he writes 'perhaps now that [parents] have been warned a firm father's hand will keep some foolish girls away from the dressing room door' (Silly little girls! *The People,* 6 April 1969 p.6). This was a period in which norms of restrictive masculinity dictated fathers should 'protect and exercise guardianship of family members' and 'dominate sexual and reproductive choices' (OCED, 2021). Oakes's description of a 'firm father's hand' equates paternal authority with strict discipline, but it also implies that physical force or violence might be appropriately used to keep these girls in their place.

Fig 4.1 Autograph seekers compete to out-do each other in 'The Ravers' (28 June 1967) *Man Alive.* BBC.

It could be argued these predictions of imminent catastrophe and calls for action correspond with the inventory phase of Stanley Cohen's (2011) moral panic model. As we have seen in Hennessey's account, exaggeration and distortion take place. A process of spurious attribution also occurs, as it is inferred that all female fans are potential groupies. In the first part of 'The Ravers', for example, Simon Dupree and the Big Sound perform to an audience almost exclusively made up of teenage girls who dance to the music, reach for the group, and attempt to rush the stage. Later, some of the 'ravers' recognisable from the audience, invade the group's dressing room backstage in pursuit of autographs, a situation which appears to be common practice, and rapidly escalates as the girls compete to out-do each other with requests for autographs on breasts and legs, and kisses from frontman, Simon Dupree (Fig. 4.1). 'Some of them, called by the others, "groupies", want more than Simon's autograph, they want Simon' observes Percival, as the camera fixes on a group of quieter girls (Fig. 4.2). But only one of these girls admits on camera she has 'got off' with pop stars, the others are judged to be guilty by association. While the groupie contingent is described as a minority element among the ravers, the distinction between raver and groupie remains unclear. There is a

sense that all this behaviour, from the unruly audience to the autograph seekers who present legs and breasts for signatures, to the girls who, later in the documentary and with Percival's ethically questionable encouragement, boast of how they 'go to bed' with members of the group, exists on a sliding scale of the morally unacceptable.

Fig 4.2 'But some of them, called by the others, groupies, want more than Simon's autograph, they want Simon'. Spurious attribution takes place as it is inferred these girls are groupies in 'The Ravers' (28 June 1967) *Man Alive.* BBC.

Despite these elements, media reporting on the groupie phenomenon was, however, limited and failed to initiate a sustained amplifying moral panic cycle. This is perhaps in part because alarmist media coverage was consistently countered, often within the same articles, by strategies of deflection, minimisation, and denial, which worked to pre-empt public outcry. Moreover, as McRobbie observes the "entertainment value" attached to rampant female promiscuity could also balance out the potential for moral outrage (1991, p. 15). Certainly, some accounts of the groupie phenomenon, such as Hennessy's farcical tales of sexually rampant groupies, and Thom Keyes' cynical novel *All Night Stand* (1966) unashamedly sought to simultaneously capitalise upon both public outrage and a prurient interest in sexually active teenage girls. Groupie representation in the media can, therefore, be understood as the expression and exploitation of latent desires and mass anxieties surrounding the increasing sexual autonomy of young women and girls in the sixties. This cultural obsession is the subtext behind these representations, which seek to not only curtail female sexual activity by reasserting the consequences for the girls concerned, but also neutralise the threat that female sexual agency posed to the social order in a number of ways.

The eradication of autonomy; neutralising the threat of female sexual agency

From the very earliest journalistic accounts, a strong link was made between the groupie pattern of behaviour and fan hysteria, typified by the figure of the Beatlemaniac. 'Scrubbers: The Facts' (*Melody Maker,* 16 December 1966, p.11), for example is accompanied by images of screaming teenage girls, mouths agape (Fig. 4.3). The word 'hysteria' connotes female sexuality. In antiquity, hysteria was attributed to a 'wandering womb' and this belief has formed the basis of western understandings (Showalter, 1985, p. 130). Historically, hysteria's aetiologies, symptoms, and treatments often overlapped with those of nymphomania, both concepts construct female sexuality that is totally out of control, both literally and figuratively: out of control of the patient, her kin, her doctor, and out of control of the 'natural laws' which supposedly determined woman's passive response to male desire (Groneman, 1994).

Fig 4.3 Mouths agape; the proto-groupie is conflated with the hysterical fanatic in Walsh, A. (1966) 'Scrubbers-the facts', *Melody Maker,* (16 December), p.11.

Confronted by the spectacle of masses of uncontrollable Beatlemaniacs in 1964, it is not surprising that the media should interpret it as a sexual phenomenon (Ehrenreich, et al., 1992, p. 89) and proceed to voyeuristically eroticise the girls' lack of self-control (Andrews, 2000, p. 256). As Jane Ussher has observed, if 'sexually nonconformist women could be treated as madwomen their threat to the discourse of femininity was neutralised' (1991, p. 73). The mobilisation of the figure of the screaming hysterical fan in groupie representation implies that the groupie, like the Beatlemaniac, is a victim of her womb. This mode of representation works to further pathologize the proto-groupie.

Fan hysteria was also associated with more destructive and violent forms of behaviour. Filmmaker Tony Palmer, for example, equated fan hysteria with violence and destruction when he cut footage of screaming fans with footage documenting war atrocities in his controversial pop documentary *All My Loving* (UK, 1968). This violent imagery also recurs in groupie representation – the girls are described as 'scalp-hunters', obsessive collectors who aggressively pursue sexual encounters with pop stars as if they were trophies. In 'Scrubbers – the facts', Walsh begins his investigation into 'the world of

the female pop fan' by discussing the groupie pattern of behaviour, but quickly and seamlessly moves on to describe when fans turn 'nasty':

> Herman has seen the destructive side of teenage girls at work. 'One night I parked my car miles away from the theatre, but there was another car just like mine near the stage door. A gang of girls ruined it. They scratched it, broke the mirrors, and scrawled all over it (*Melody Maker,* 16 December 1966, p.11)

Hennessey's article is also accompanied by an image of pop star Scott Walker mid-flight from fans, his T-shirt torn, a hunted look in his eye, conjuring up the Greek legend of Orpheus torn to shreds by the Maenads (Fig. 4.4). In these examples, the groupie pattern of behaviour is constructed as an extreme, aggressive form of sexual agency. But in framing this behaviour as an extension of destructive and violent forms of fan hysteria, it is reduced to a matter of bodily compulsion; an individual loss of self-control which serves to neutralise the threat posed by female sexual agency to the discourse of femininity and system of patriarchy.

Fig 4.4 Scott Walker, mid-flight from Fans, T-shirt torn, a hunted look in his eye in Hennessey, M. (1965) 'Pop and the Public', *Melody Maker,* (25 September), p.10.

These examples also appear to mobilise the image of the raging hysterical revolutionary mob and draw upon historical middle-class anxieties surrounding unchecked working-class female sexuality as a catalyst for mass revolt (Nead, 1988, p. 91). They may also draw upon left-wing anxieties around the lumpenproletariat – the uneducated, unruly, working-class mob vulnerable to bourgeois manipulation. Left-wing critics suspected 'Beatlemania was a deliberate plot to brainwash the working-class young' (Melly, 1970, p. 5). But perhaps the most damning condemnation of the Beatlemaniac came from British journalist Paul Johnson, in his article 'The Menace of Beatlism', which appeared in left-leaning magazine the *New Statesman* on the 29th of February 1964:

> Those who flock around the Beatles, who scream themselves into hysteria, whose vacant faces flicker over the TV screen, are the least fortunate of their generation, the dull, the idle, the failures… a bottomless pit of vacuity…the huge faces bloated with cheap confectionery and smeared with chain store make-up, the open, sagging mouths and glazed eyes, the hands mindlessly drumming in time to the music, the broken stiletto heels, the shoddy stereotyped 'with it' clothes: here, apparently is a collective portrait of a generation enslaved by a commercial machine (29 February 1964)

The Beatlemaniacs' social presentation, like the proto-groupie's, is characterised as tatty, their makeup is heavy, coding these bodies as working-class. But Johnson goes further; he draws upon the traditional left-wing critique of mass culture, to describe everything these girls consume as cheap, mass-produced and shoddy, from their sweets to their shoes, to the Beatles. This critique had been mounted by members of the Frankfurt School, (founded in 1929) and developed by critical theorists Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (1947/2020), who argued that the production of popular culture was standardised to manipulate the masses into passivity. Confronted with the emergence of a national pop culture and Britain's first identifiable and relatively homogenous 'youth culture' in the late fifties, theorists such as Richard Hoggart (1957/1992) and Raymond Williams (1958) rearticulated this critique. They were concerned that traditional working-class culture should be preserved in the face of the excesses of conspicuous consumption and shallow commercial popular culture derived from America.

Johnson's evocative description of the girls' 'open, sagging mouths and glazed eyes' not only illustrates his charges of vacuity and vacancy but calls to mind the image of the living-dead zombie, mindlessly intent on consuming, not brains in this case, but mass-produced consumer products. These themes also recur in groupie representation, where 'the pathetic zombie-like nature of the groupies' existence' is characterised as 'sad', even pitiful ('Jumping on the bandwagon' *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, 16 February 1973 p.16). As Larsen (2017) and Coates (2003) have noted, the historical aesthetic discourse identified by Huyssen (1986), which genders mass culture and the masses as feminine, underlies critiques such as Johnson's, in which young female fans serve as a receptacle for displaced anxieties around popular culture and consumerism (Huyssen, 1986, p. 52). By framing the groupie pattern of behaviour as an extension of Beatlemania, proto-groupie representation draws upon the discourse of mass culture as feminine to construct the figure of the groupie as a duped consumer and inauthentic fan. The expression of sexual desire and authentic fandom are positioned as mutually exclusive, discrediting groupies and Beatlemaniacs alike.

Johnson also makes explicit what he perceives as the link between sexual abandon and commercial manipulation. Quoting academic, novelist and literary critic, David Holbrook, he explains that the Beatles are an unconscious masturbation fantasy '…the cries, the shouted names, the climax, exploited by the economic interests, through the new media of distraction such as television' ('The Menace of Beatlism, *New Statesman,*

29 February 1964). While the Beatlemaniac was constructed as an enslaved consumer, her behaviour framed as a bodily compulsion instigated by manipulative market forces, this critique was extended to, and mapped onto understandings of the proto-groupie's *sexual* behaviour. She is described as 'idolising' the groups, and consistently constructed as indiscriminate in her choice of sexual partner. As pop star, Dave Dee, explained to *Melody Maker,* Groupies are 'girls who will follow any group that happens to be in their town' ('Scrubbers - the Facts' 16 December 1966, p.11). The recurrent theme of reflected glory and imagery of scalp hunting, meanwhile, reinforces the idea that groupies are motivated by the same manipulated desires which fuel conspicuous consumption.

Female autonomy is neutralised in these journalistic accounts, but it is eradicated further in those which also construct the proto-groupie as a sexual commodity. In *All Night Stand* (1966)*,* for example, Keyes capitalises on left-wing theories of alienation to portray the pop world as cynically commercial and cold-bloodedly amoral. Central to his vision is the succession of 'scrubbers', with whom Liverpudlian group, The Rack, engage in a series of sexual encounters. Vacuous, soulless, afforded no inner life or individuality, Keyes' 'scrubbers' resemble Johnson's portrait of the Beatlemaniac. While middle and upper-class women had been treated as aspirational sexual commodities associated with social mobility in the films of the British New Wave (Hill, 1986, p. 157) the figure of the working-class proto-groupie is discursively constructed as not only sexually available, but interchangeable and abundant. These qualities correspond with both capitalist fantasies of plenty, and male fantasies of infinite, interchangeable sexual partners. But, like female sexual activity itself, these qualities also diminish the proto-groupie's market value, rendering her disposable.

The discursive construction of the proto-groupie as both duped consumer, and disposable commodity, coincided with a period in which consumption was increasingly becoming the primary locus of identity and economic responsibility. Cultural anxieties regarding the growing power of a young, female working-class consumer demographic and the relationship between this development and the growing sexual autonomy of these young women and girls are brought into focus in 'Scrubbers, the Facts', when Walsh suggests that 'one of the charges levelled at young people is that they have too much money to spend' (*Melody Maker,* 16 December 1966, p.11).

Financial independence, a social life outside the family home, and sexual autonomy had all traditionally been privileges confined and assigned to the male worker, but economic developments were beginning to undercut traditional gender roles. As Paul

Hoch has suggested, the new emphasis on consumption combined with the increasing involvement of women in the labour force and a de-emphasis on production saw the range of activities that yielded masculine status begin to narrow during this period (1979, p. 98). Anxieties surrounding the status of the male worker as head of the family and sole breadwinner inflect calls for the reassertion of patriarchal authority in the home. The groupie phenomenon, therefore, was made sense of within the mainstream media as not only a threat to structures of class, but the system of patriarchy, the structures of which assign women and girls, across class, a subservient position in relation to their father or husband.

Conclusion

In Chapter 3, it was argued that changes to public and private morality, and the emergence of a powerful young female consumer demographic were preconditions for the emergence of the groupie phenomenon. This analysis of groupie representation indicates that the discursively constructed figure of the proto-groupie embodied cultural anxieties regarding the correlation between the growing economic independence and sexual autonomy of working-class young women and girls. It has also revealed how the category of respectability could be mobilised, historical stereotypes and classist labels deployed, and cultural anxieties surrounding mass culture and consumerism capitalised upon, to regulate and neutralise the threat to patriarchy posed by female sexual agency.

In these accounts, male journalists, male pop stars, male promoters, male novelists, and male 'experts' weigh in on the groupie phenomenon, but, with the exception of 'The Ravers', the voices of groupies themselves are entirely absent.[15] These are outsider perspectives on the groupie phenomenon mediated by a mainstream press with its own agenda- to sensationalise, and capitalise upon the behaviour of these girls, while at the same time reasserting the consequences of their expression of female sexuality outside traditional gender roles. By privileging groupie testimonies, the next chapter seeks to reinstate groupie agency, and contest the stereotypes and assumptions about groupies established in these mainstream media accounts.

[15] The mediated accounts of groupies interviewed in 'The Ravers' are the subject of further analysis in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 Reinstating groupie subjectivity; Female subordination and groupie resistance

This chapter draws chiefly upon Emma's life story narrative, but comparisons are also drawn with Jenny Fabian's testimony and supplemented by the mediated accounts of the groupies interviewed in 'The Ravers'. To understand what motivated Emma to embark on her groupie phase at the age of 18, and how she makes sense of that phase in her life today, this chapter first draws upon her lived experiences as a working-class teenage girl, in school, in the family home, in the workplace, and at leisure, before moving to examine Emma's groupie experiences. This chapter finds that both Emma and Jenny Fabian conceived of the groupie pattern of behavior as an alternative to the patriarchal restriction they experienced elsewhere in their lives. It also develops an understanding of how some groupies navigated the category of respectability, the 'nice girl' value construct, and the risks attached to the groupie pattern of behaviour in their own day to day lives.

Female Restriction and subordination

While journalists linked the groupie phenomenon to a perceived crisis in paternal authority, groupie testimonies tell another story. Domineering fathers featured prominently in the oral histories of both women:

> Emma: He ruled the roost y'know? So very strict – but loving in other ways … I don't know if it just happened in our family, but in those days, people showed love by actions, rather than being…demonstrative you know? So […] my mum was loving, but my dad was always so strict, and *scary* to be honest y'know? But he mellowed as he got older, but at the time, well you know. I didn't really think about it when I was a kid but, when I got to my teenage years, I absolutely hated him… which is sad to say, but I did.
>
> Jenny Fabian: My mother, she came from quite a, sort of, old-fashioned family. They were all extremely straight, put it like that. And we went to church and, she was really nice, my mother, but she was very much in love with my father, and consequently, when there was confrontation between me and my father, which there was quite a lot of, it put her in a difficult position and she, sort of, tried to not take sides, but inevitably she had to let him dominate the situation. So, I was basically, in revolt against my father most of the time. He was very strict.

In these passages both women describe how their mothers would defer decision making and matters of discipline to their fathers, who were 'strict', and in Emma's case also 'scary'. Emma found her father's attempts to police her sexuality particularly overbearing:

> He wouldn't let me *do* anything, wouldn't let me talk to boys, you know, the first time I went out when I was 13, I was so *excited* to go out, I was going to a dance, my dad said, 'don't talk to any boys and don't leave the dancehall'. Well, what did I do? Got off with a boy and went for a walk and didn't get home till… well it must have been about midnight and my dad had been to collect me as he thought, and my friends, and I wasn't there. I mean now I can understand he must have been terrified, to think what could have happened to me... you know at the time you just wanted to be like everybody else you know? Well, I did. And so, I got into awful trouble for that. I was grounded. And then for years it was always, 'don't talk to boys', so of course, what did I do? (Emma, 2020)

Emma's father may well have been concerned for his daughter's personal safety. But he also would not hear of her mother taking on work outside the home, even in 'lean times' (ibid.) This suggests his policing of Emma's sexual behaviour may have had more to do with maintaining outward appearances of middle-class ideas of respectability, which were in many cases a working-class preoccupation and aspiration, since 'to not be respectable is to have little social value or legitimacy' (Skeggs, 1997, p. 11).

The problem with this restrictive form of masculinity is that it sustains the disempowerment of women and girls (OCED, 2021). In our interview, Emma shared a traumatic and very personal experience which illustrates how, in keeping girls ignorant about sex, and cultivating in them a disposition to submit to male authority, overbearing paternal authoritarianism can render them *more* vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation:

> But even my *first ever* sexual encounter, was terrible when I think about it now. Because, like the groups that visited town, there was a fair, that used to come to town every May, and the fair boys, well we just couldn't stop looking at them. And they were all really good-looking. Most of the girls in [town in the North of England], got pregnant by fair boys. Because it came in May, and the babies was born in February. […] Anyway, we left the fair, cos they used to close, close for teatime, and I was still at school I know I was 15[…] and this one that I had been eyeing up all day, y'know, and flirting with and all that, when the fair closed for teatime, we was hanging about the gate, me and my friend, and he called her over, […] he called [Mary] over, and you know she shook her head. So, she come over to me, and she said 'oh' she said, 'that boy wants to ask you something' I says 'oh right', so I went over […] he says 'are you coming for a walk?' and I said 'yeah alright then'. And he took my hand, and he said, 'do you shag?' and I just, all shy and all that, and of course, I didn't, I was a virgin. Anyway, we went into this cattle market, that was all stalls and private and everything, and he took me in there, and we was kissing and everything, and the *next* thing I knew, he was having sex

> with me, and it *hurt* like *hell*, I'd *never* been with a boy before. And he was rough, you know what I mean? He just *assumed* that I was a, that I wasn't a virgin, and because I was so young and naïve, and showing off, and just wanting to be with somebody, I just let him. And it was awful. Really, really awful when I think about it now, he would've got in *serious* trouble for that. I was still at school and oh it was awful. And what was worse, his mate was stood over us, and I don't know *where* he come from, and when he got off me, he says, 'd'you want a go?' and he straddled me, and was going to, and I was saying 'No! No! No! No! I found me bloody voice then, and y'know, I got hold of his arms, and I ripped his shirt, and he knew then, that I really didn't want to. And I was really upset, I was crying, and it was awful. Why the hell did I do it Ellie? I just don't know. I think really, as much as mum and dad tried to protect me, they did it all the wrong way y'know? And you know, that was awful wasn't it, really?

This passage makes for upsetting reading. Today, Emma recognises that what this boy did to her was wrong but crucially she does not describe this incident as rape. This is extremely sensitive material, and, out of respect for Emma, and how she makes sense of her own lived experiences, I will not describe it as such either. In the early seventies, second-wave feminists would begin to advocate sex education, challenge patriarchal domination within the family, advance female sexual autonomy and shatter the silence surrounding sexual violence. But in 1965, the legacy of Victorian discourses which holds women responsible for the virtue of men still held sway; after all the warnings from her father about not talking to boys, Emma feared she would be blamed for what happened to her, and her silence ultimately benefitted this boy.

Emma hated school, 'as I got to about the age of 14 I *really*, really hated it. But they were so *strict* and so many rules and everything, and always being scared, you know, being frightened of being in trouble and the teachers and everything was horrible' (Emma, 2020). She left at the earliest opportunity and went straight into a full-time job at a supermarket, but as she explains, her first job was not much better:

> Emma: When I first went to this supermarket, just after leaving school, I went to work in the butchery department, and what you had to do was wrap the meat and bacon in cellophane in trays, and then weigh it, and price it up. Well, I absolutely *hated* it. The smell of meat, I'm sure it made me a veggie after that. It was disgusting. And of course, there was a man that worked in there. Oh, I don't know if I should tell you this Ellie, when I think about it. There were always sexual innuendos from older men, y'know? And there was this bloke who was the butcher, who, normally, I would respect y'know and everything, and he used to say, 'look at this', and he'd get like an animal's heart, and he'd put his finger in it like that [gestures finger going into closed fist] and he'd say 'look at that, look at that'. Oh it was *disgusting!* I can't believe it. Can't believe I'm telling you it
>
> EF: That's horrible

> Emma: It is horrible. Anyway, I soon got out of there, oh it makes me want to be sick. Anyway, sorry about that!
>
> EF: That's ok
>
> Emma: I know, but a 15-year-old girl, y'know? And then I quickly got out of there […] And I was working on the check-out tills. And another thing you know that I've often thought about, there was this young manager, and I always remember him because his shoes used to clatter, he'd got tacks in them, and it used to go 'click click click click' as he come along. And I was upstairs in the staff room one night, one day, and, I could hear his, his clicks as he come across the floor and into the staff room, and he assaulted me, sexually […] I was sat on a chair, between a cupboard, and a sink, and I couldn't get away from him and he forced his hands up me
>
> EF: That's awful
>
> Emma: I laddered all my, I'd got stockings on, thick winter stockings, I laddered all my stockings…you know, I pushed him away, and he went. Then when I went downstairs again, he was leaning up against this counter with this other bloke that worked in the butchers and they were giggling and that, and I think he'd told him what he'd done. And of course, I should have reported it, but I *didn't*, you just *didn't*, you know? (Ibid.)

Like many girls of her generation, Emma was raised to be passive and obedient, but these 'nice girl' qualities did not protect her from sexual harassment and sexual violence. Instead, older male colleagues in positions of relative power, took advantage of her timidity and respect for male authority, to sexually assault, and sexually bully her. Just like her encounter with the fair boy, Emma did not report these incidents. Furthermore, sexual harassment in the workplace would not be outlawed as a form of discrimination in the UK until 1986, so there was little recourse available to her, a situation which must have left her feeling powerless. These incidents are not isolated, they are among the set of various practices which constitute the patriarchal social structure of male violence which has consequences for women's actions (Walby, 1989, p. 224). For Emma, this sexual assault left her feeling vulnerable in the workplace, and to this day, the sound of clicking heels sets her on edge.

Fortunately, she was soon fired from this job for laughing at something and falling over backwards while crouching down to 'face up' goods on the bottom shelf 'and the manager tapped on the window, […] And yeah, he sacked me! Best thing he ever did!' (Emma, 2020). In her next job, she went to work at a knitwear factory:

> I started on the pressing. There was a presser, and you got like, oblong pieces of knitted fabric, and you had a frame, the same, and you had to pull them and stretch them and pull them over and make them to that size and then steam them, oh it was boring as hell, and really hot. And I didn't get on too well in that job. I don't know if it was because I wasn't quick enough or what it was, but anyway, all it did was rub the skin off my knuckles. It was awful. So, then I got a job in the sorting department, and you had to sort things into what they were, and then stack them, and that wasn't too bad […] And yeah, made a lot of friends and really enjoyed it there. Course I was always getting told off, either for being late, or not quick enough or something like that, but yeah, I was 16 then, and I can't remember when it was that my friend came to work there, but we used to have the factory radio on, all day, and that was *fantastic*! That was the best thing about working there […] they used to play all the music, everything that was in the hit parade y'know?[…] and course, my friend […], who was the groupie, she'd walk along to go for her tea break, she'd look at me and smile and she'd go [raises eyebrows] meaning 'can you hear what's on?' Yeah, all the chart music, fabulous! (ibid.)

This was low grade, low paid factory work of the kind typically available to working-class women who were segregated from the skilled, higher-paid work available to their male equivalents. For Emma, pop music and female friendship made otherwise uninspiring menial labour tolerable, even enjoyable. In contrast to her oppressive home-life and the tedium of work, the pop world offered escapism and excitement. Emma explained that her cousin was in a local pop group:

> I always remember there was a gig, and my auntie and my mum had cooked it up with my cousin, that because it was my birthday, they would do a dedication for me, at this dance. Well, I was so excited, 'cos was at the dance anyway, and it was my birthday, and I always remember my cousin, he was the drummer, but he used to sing as well, y'know, a lot of the drummers did in those days, and he said, 'our next number, is for a girl called [Emma], and it's her birthday today'. Oh my god! *I was so excited! I was so excited!* I couldn't believe it. And then, I don't even know what song they sang, but of course [Sandy] was the singer and I was in awe of her as well, and, it was amazing, it really was! So, y'know, the only time I really got any happiness or excitement was when I was with bands [laughs] ah dear (ibid.)

In our interview, as the italics in this passage suggest, Emma recalled *and* expressed the sense of excitement she felt at this concert; indeed, whenever she spoke of live performances her teenage enthusiasm was palpable. As Frith observes, music carries 'a sense of possibility denied in the labour market; it suggests the solidarity of comradeship, the abandon of sensuality, the grace and joy lacking in work' (1978, p. 205). For Emma, her 9 to 5 factory job was necessary, not only to contribute to the household finances, but to finance her *real* life outside of work, on the weekend, at gigs.

This was a period in which the traditional bourgeois values of thrift and deferment of gratification were undermined as it became necessary to promote the pleasures of rampant consumerism, in order to maintain full production and employment (Clarke , et al., 2006, p. 50)**.** The generation with which this study is concerned were the most visible gauge of this reassessment. For Emma, the pleasures offered by engagement with popular culture offered a reprieve from the responsibilities and strictures of school, work and homelife. Jenny Fabian was also far more interested in leisure than in further study, choosing a career, or pleasing her parents. Like many of their generation, these young women placed a high value on excitement, fun and newness of experience.

In our interview Emma spoke at length and with great enthusiasm about another memorable night out with her friends:

> Emma: When I was 14, there was this place at [redacted] called the [Empire] and they had dances on every Saturday night, and there was a coach, used to go from [town in the North of England]. And the very first gig I went to there, I went with my friends, and it was to see the Kinks at the [Empire]. And I had a new dress, and I'd got my hair up, in like a, I called it a chignon, it was like a little French plait, and a bit backcombed. And little mod shoes. My dress was gorgeous, it was royal blue, fitted, and it'd got a big, white lace collar and cuffs, three quarter […] I felt brilliant, cos my brother even said I looked pretty! So that was nice. And anyway, then when we got to the [Empire], 'course, the Kinks come on, and it was a huge ballroom, it's still there now, and the stage, was a revolving stage, so when the first band had finished, it revolved around taking them off, and the next band would be coming around, playing their first number! It was *fantastic!*
>
> EF: That sounds amazing!
>
> Emma: It was! And of course, the Kinks! Couldn't believe it, the Kinks. And Ray Davies smiled at me! I couldn't believe it! He *smiled*, at *me*!
>
> EF: How did that make you feel?
>
> Emma: Absolutely brilliant! I couldn't believe it… it was, really lovely y'know? Because I was such an ugly duckling. Mousy hair, terrible spots. And a dad that made me feel *worthless* at the time… I remember y'know, that night after I'd got back home and I was in such terrible trouble, and the next day, I used to wear this little, it was like a little pendant, and if you held it, and spun round, used to say on it, it spelt out, 'kiss me', and he used to say 'you can get that off your neck!' he says, 'you've been kissed enough!'… it was *horrible* Ellie… you couldn't make it up can you? It was horrible. Oh, it's horrible. It's such a horrible reminder. But anyway, the best time, was going to see the *bands*! And Ray Davies smiled at *me!* [laughs]

This bitter-sweet excerpt suggests that, as a teenager, Emma had low self-esteem. Hancock finds that loss of self-esteem is common during adolescence, as the teenage girl

'judges herself as others judge her- against an impossible feminine ideal' (1990, p. 22). In Emma's case, her father's judgement of her appearance and behaviour against the 'nice girl' construct appears to have left her feeling acutely self-conscious. But Ray Davies' acknowledgement made her feel validated. She was still only 14 when this episode took place, and not yet a groupie, but the striking contrast she draws here, between how her father made her feel, and how Ray Davies made her feel, lays the groundwork for her later groupie experiences:

> Emma: Well, a groupie was a girl who would go with the groups. Y'know, have sex with them. And it was like, I don't know, it was like a feather in your cap. The more you went with, the better you felt. It was a bit addictive, y'know, made you feel *really good*, and 'oh yeah, I went with him y'know'. [16] Only said that with our friends, y'know, but yeah, used to make you feel really good, if you'd been with one of the groups or got off with them. Just made me feel like I was lovely, and I was worthwhile y'know? and, he fancied *me.* That sort of thing
>
> EF: Mm hmm. Out of everybody who was there, the whole audience, it was you?
>
> Emma: Exactly. Made you feel really good. Made you feel special... Although, probably I wasn't, probably they weren't even bothered (Emma, 2020)

Skeggs suggests that 'underpinning desirability is an implicit sexual market where exchanges are governed by estimations of relative value. The 'right' men have to do the desiring' (1997, p. 112). Emma estimated the male musician's desirability to be very high, she therefore placed a high value on his approval. The feelings she describes in this passage might, today, be understood by a younger generation of women as 'empowerment', but the boost in self-esteem which Emma experienced was fleeting, addictive, and always firmly set in relation to male approval. Of course, Emma and her groupie friends were not always successful in securing male validation through a sexual encounter with a musician:

> We used to go to Nottingham ever such a lot, we would go to the University, the Polytechnic, there was the Trent Bridge Inn, we saw [Group J] there, and they were *gorgeous,* but they were stuck up, that's what we used to say if we couldn't get off with them, if they weren't interested, they were stuck up, so no, we didn't get off with them. (Emma, 2020)

If a sexual encounter with a male musician could temporarily boost Emma's self-esteem, this interview excerpt suggests that sexual rejection could have the opposite effect. To

[16] Elsewhere in our interview, Emma clarified that 'I went with him' referred to 'either a blowjob or the full works.'

protect themselves from such knocks, these teenage girls would attempt to externalise their disappointment by dismissing the group in question as 'stuck up'. But their choice of language also implies a recognition of class snobbery, and their own social positioning as working-class teenage girls.

As Emma's testimony suggests, sexual encounters with male musicians could also enhance her esteem in the eyes of her peers – the close-knit group of female friends with whom she shared her groupie experiences. Like Emma, the groupies interviewed in 'The Ravers' also took pride in their exploits:

> Percival: Have you met any pop groups before?
>
> Groupie 1: Yeah
>
> Percival: And what happened?
>
> Groupie 1: I went with the drummer out of Jeff Beck, went with Titch too, out of Dave Dee, and snogged with all the Troggs
>
> Percival: When you say you went with them, what do you mean?'
>
> Groupie 1: Well, you know, just snogged with them and that. I stayed with the drummer from Jeff Beck for about 2 hours
>
> Percival: You stayed with him?
>
> Groupie 1: Yeah [giggles]
>
> Percival: Were you proud of doing that?
>
> Groupie 1: Yeah [giggles]
>
> Percival: Did you tell all your friends?
>
> Groupie 1: Yeah
>
> Percival: Did you tell your mother?
>
> Groupie 1: No [laughs]
>
> Percival: Would she mind?
>
> Groupie 1: I don't know really, she wouldn't but our dad would!
>
> Percival: What did you get out of it? What was the big thrill?
>
> Groupie 1: Well, everybody liked him, and I went with him, so... [shrugs shoulders]

Percival: But did you feel one up on everybody else?

Groupie 1: Yeah

Percival: Would you do that with any big pop star?

Groupie 1: Oh no, y'know, not if they weren't good looking or something like that

Fig 5.1 'Everybody liked him, and I went with him' groupie motivations articulated in terms of male validation in 'The Ravers' (28 June 1967) *Man Alive* BBC.

This transcribed interview excerpt bears striking similarities with Emma's oral testimony; groupie motivations are articulated in terms of male validation ('everybody liked him, and I went with him') and peer-group esteem, or local validation, the latter of which is emphasised by the boastful tone of this teenager's admissions. Both estimate the pop star's desirability to be high, which intensifies their sense of validation and temporarily elevates these girls' sense of self-worth above the perceived worth of their peers.

Where sexual activity generally spelled feminine devaluation in wider society, groupie testimonies suggest that sexual encounters with male musicians worked, to some extent, as a form of subcultural capital – or 'feather in your cap' - within close-knit female peer groups, and perhaps to some degree, the wider, loose-knit, predominantly female concert-going audience. But, as Skeggs observes, for capital to be legitimated by those in power, and thus converted into symbolic capital, individuals need access to power networks (1997, p. 87). Beyond their peer group, these working-class teenage girls continued to be socially ascribed low value.

Like Emma, this groupie (Fig. 5.1) also acknowledges the regulative threat of paternal authority; one can only imagine the trouble this 16-year-old girl found herself in at home when this exploitative and irresponsible documentary aired on BBC2. A second groupie (Figure 5.2) takes the precaution of donning a wig and sunglasses during her interview, presumably for just this reason. It is also worth noting that, judging from their accents, the 16-year-old groupie interviewed above appears to be working-class, while the disguised groupie appears to be middle-class. This undercuts the media-constructed scrubber stereotype and supports the argument of this thesis, that the groupie phenomenon crossed class positions.

As Hilary Radner notes, the changes in sexual mores associated with the sixties were 'the product of a slow evolution toward an economic and social structure in which the individual rather than the family became the primary locus of identity and economic responsibility' (2011, p. 14); groupies, then, were motivated, not by a sense of responsibility to their parents or community, but by a sense of responsibility to themselves, their pleasure, and the fulfilment of their desires.

Fig 5.2 'If you're looking for a sexy boyfriend, I mean, boy in a band is best', a desiring groupie subject speaks in 'The Ravers' (28 June 1967) *Man Alive* BBC.

Reinstating female desire

Groupie testimonies, such as those featured in 'The Ravers', disrupt the media-constructed idea that these young women were indiscriminate in their choice of sexual partners. Despite Percival's leading questions, the 16-year-old working-class groupie interviewed above insists that fame alone does not make a male musician an attractive prospect, he must also be 'good looking'; groupie testimonies attest to the centrality of female desire to any understanding of the groupie phenomenon. When asked what attracted her to the groups, the disguised middle-class groupie interviewed in 'The Ravers' responds:

> Groupie 2: I think the boys, the band are there to project sex, as well as music, I think that's what it is. I mean obviously if you're gonna have a boyfriend, you're gonna want a boyfriend in a band, if you're looking for a sexy boyfriend, I mean, boy in a band is best, because you see him on the stage and he's up there projecting sex all the time
>
> Percival: What is so sexy about them?
>
> Groupie 2: Um.... [smiles]... I don't know, the way they move, the way they look at you, I don't know what...

As McRobbie notes, 'while boys can quite legitimately look at girls on the street and in school, it is not acceptable for girls to do the same back' (1991 p.23). The spectacle of the on-stage performance gave teenage girls a unique opportunity to stare at length at young

men, and, in a reversal of gender roles, which Fast (2006, p. 366) suggests recalls Laura Mulvey's concept of the 'male gaze' (1975), partake in the pleasures of objectifying them.

Sexual attraction and female desire also feature prominently in Emma's oral history, where, in recalling her desire she emphasises physical beauty over a sexy performance style. In the following excerpt she described to me her first groupie experience, and the first time she met what was to become her favourite group:

> This band came from [redacted], and at the time they were called [Vagabond]. So anyway, one of the roadies, it was his birthday, and it had been mine the day before, and he was 17 and I was 18. And he was a bit drunk and he kissed me. So that would be the first time. And I just thought he was *gorgeous*. It was like, the end of the mod era, but there was still, everybody in [town in the North of England] still in the mod gear, especially the boys you know. The short mod haircuts, and a shirt and jumper, and all sort of like, not groovy y'know? And then this band come from [redacted], well, we couldn't believe it. I mean we'd seen people like them in the music magazines, because, I was working in this factory, I was there four years, and we used to get *The Melody Maker*, and course, all the bands, photos of the bands 'n' that. And then these lads came from [redacted], well we couldn't believe it, they were *all gorgeous*, and they all had *long hair*, and their guitar sound was out of this world! They was, big fans of Moby Grape, and so it was very much, a bit of like, The Byrds sound, you know, with the twangy guitars and all that, but I mean, they were just *amazing.* The drummer, he wasn't very old, he'd only be about 17, so that was [Alan], the drummer. And then there was [Brian] the bass player. [Carl], he played one of the lead guitars, and, [Dave], he was lead guitar, and they were the vocalists. And then there was [Gary], and he had like a rhythm guitar or something, like that. But they all had long hair, and they were *all gorgeous*. You wouldn't know which one to pick, they were so gorgeous. And also, the roadies, they had two roadies with them, and they were gorgeous as well. The one that I met, who was only 17, [Evan], and then, another one, [Fred], we used to call him, they were lovely! And they were *friendly!* And all full of smiles, and talked to us and all that, it was lovely.

Where Emma had been sexually objectified by the boy at the fair and older men in the workplace, in this passage she emerges as a desiring subject. Furthermore, her description of Vagabond extends beyond their pleasing physical appearance, as Emma exhibits her musical knowledge, citing the group's West Coast influences and describing their sound. Far from being duped consumers, both she and Jenny Fabian spoke of the music of the time with both enthusiasm and insight throughout their interviews.

The encounter described above took place in 1968; 'Vagabond' represented a new style of group, both in terms of their music and their social presentation. But as Haslam writes, 'long-hairs remained in a minority throughout the 1960s, apart from small towns with large university-student populations. Elsewhere the Mod look continued to prevail' (2015, p. 178). Emma was not alone in speaking of her attraction to men with long hair.

When I asked Jenny Fabian what attracted her to male musicians, she also cited 'hair' and both women expressed a preference for a lean, even skinny, physique. Emma described her shock and fascination the first time she saw The Move, at an early music festival, Barbeque '67, held in Spalding, Lincolnshire in 1967:

> Oh my *god*, they were incredible! So exciting! Everything they were wearing y'know? And I couldn't *believe it*, because *Oh my god that boy's got beads on! Couldn't believe it!* You know? A man, in beads!' And Ace Kefford, his name was, blonde, beautiful, he'd got like a Spanish hat on. Oh my god they were awesome! I'll never forget it. […] and of course, they'd got these skin-tight velvet loons on y'know? […] they were just amazing. I'll never forget that band because they were wearing things I'd never seen blokes wearing before y'know? (Emma, 2020)

While Emma placed a particular emphasis on the physical appearance of group members describing the men she was most attracted to as 'blonde, beautiful' – language traditionally used to describe the feminine object of male desire - in *Groupie,* Jenny Fabian dwelled upon the prettiness of musicians, Syd Barrett and Andy Summers, 'I found his features faultless', she wrote of Summers, 'and his mouth, slightly parted, was soft and girlish' (1969, p. 25). Emma also emphasised the social presentation of the groups, citing their beads and loon pants. When I asked her whether she found the style of these groups sexy, Emma emphasised the attraction of tight trousers:

> Emma: Very tight. I mean if you've ever seen any footage of Led Zeppelin, with Robert Plant, they all wore their loon pants *so tight*, I shouldn't think they even wore any pants, cos you could see the outline y'know?
>
> EF: I know what you mean
>
> Emma: [laughs] I know! Could see everything!
>
> EF: Was that appealing? Amusing or?
>
> Emma: Very appealing! Very appealing, God knows what, I was only a kid weren't I? (Emma, 2020)

While revealingly tight trousers might have been considered obscene, and beads and long hair effeminate, by the older generation, as Green observes, the nature of sexual capital is variable 'acquiring a hegemonic status in relation to the erotic preferences of highly specialised audiences' (2008, p. 30). Within the field inhabited by these groups and their audiences, the overlapping erotic habitus of young women and girls produced '*structures of desire'* that established a particular currency of sexual capital (ibid. p. 31). Groupie testimonies suggest that male sexual capital took on the form of particular physical traits

(a lean physique), and affective characteristics (long hair, beads, tight trousers). The androgynous nature of these currencies of sexual capital might best be summed up as 'soft masculinity'. Soft masculinity is tied to youth, the structure of age therefore mediated the desirability of musicians. The structure of class may also, arguably, have played a role, since the requisite lean physique would be more attainable for young men unfamiliar with the kind of muscle-building heavy manual labour historically assigned to the working-class male worker. The structure of race, on the other hand, is rendered conspicuous by the absence of black or Asian musicians in groupie accounts of desire.

In their writing on Beatlemania, Ehrenreich et al. (1992) draw upon the work of psychiatrist Joyce Brothers to argue that teenage girls were drawn to the soft masculinity of the Beatles because they were unconsciously deemed sexually unthreatening. Emma and Jenny Fabian may have been fascinated by the androgyny of these groups, but they were also older than the Beatlemaniacs, and consciously interested in sexual encounters with group members. These desiring groupie subjects may have been drawn to soft masculinity because it offered a socially non-threatening alternative to the authoritarian masculinity associated with their fathers' generation. But the nature of groupie desire was not purely sexual; when Percival asked the disguised middle-class groupie in 'The Ravers' what it felt like to be attracted to a group performing on stage, she responded:

> Groupie 2: You know, I feel a sense of compatibility with the person
>
> Percival: Even before you've spoken to them?
>
> Groupie 2: Yes, it's funny, it's as if I belong to them already

This response could be interpreted as evidence of this teenager's commercial manipulation, but in the sixties, popular music was the primary means by which youth expressed opposition to the old values of restraint, thrift, and duty, while musicians themselves were 'symbols of leisure and escape' (Frith, 1978, p. 169). In her interviews with American Beatlemaniacs, Ehrenreich found that some respondents expressed a desire for the freedom musicians were seen to embody: 'It didn't feel sexual, as I would now define that', one respondent told her, 'It felt more about wanting freedom. I didn't want to grow up and be a wife and it seemed to me the Beatles had the kind of freedom I wanted' (1992, p. 13). When the disguised middle-class groupie in 'The Ravers' speaks of her sense of 'compatibility' and 'belonging', then, she may not be speaking purely in terms of sexuality and romance, but also of her identification with the performer, and the ideas of freedom he embodied and communicated on stage.

Pleasure without responsibility

Contrary to the media assumption, that groupies and other fans wanted to marry the pop stars they pursued, neither of the women I interviewed cited marriage or even a steady relationship with a male musician as an aspiration during their groupie phase. Jenny Fabian 'never had a vision of a long-term relationship with any of these guys because it was too ephemeral the whole thing' (Fabian, 2019). By the time she had her first sexual encounter with a musician in 1966, she had already been married and had two children, which she suggests 'liberated me an awful lot from the necessity to do that thing, which we were all brought up to think we had to do' (ibid.) Jenny Fabian may have submitted to social convention in getting married, but she found her new role as a housewife intolerable. 'I exchanged one prison for another' she told the *Kensington Post* (11 August 1972 p.36), drawing comparison between the restrictive nature of family life she experienced first as a daughter, and then as a wife and mother.

For Emma and the disguised middle-class groupie interviewed in 'The Ravers', the ephemeral nature of the groupie/male musician encounter appears to have been part of the appeal:

> Percival: Does it worry you that you're not going to see them again very often?
>
> Groupie 2: No, it's um, it doesn't bother me at all. I quite like the idea – I like a boy to have lots of experience, to know about lots of girls, it doesn't bother me at all that I won't see them very often. I rather like it that way.

If this groupie liked 'a boy to have lots of experience', in our interview Emma expressed a desire for sexual experiences of her own:

> Emma: It would've been nice, to be girlfriend and boyfriend, but of course, I used to think, if I got a boyfriend, I wouldn't be able to see all these bands. Why go with one, when you could go with them all? And that's not me saying that, that's from an old joke y'know? About this bull, and his calf, going down the hill one day, and they got to the field, and the calf said to the bull 'wow! Let's go in the field and fuck one!', and he says, 'oh take your time, let's go in an' fuck them all!' [laughs]
>
> EF: Is that an old dirty joke?
>
> Emma: Yeah. It's one I've heard over the years y'know? And it's very apt really when you think about it, cos there are people like that. They don't just want one… But I've often thought to myself, y'know, because my dad wouldn't let me have a boyfriend, and I never really developed any *friendships* with any boys y'know? It

> was sort of like, well, you know, you *went* with them and, couldn't go out with them in case my dad found out! So it had to be a secret, so I never did. But now, when I see married couples now, and I think, 'oh, what a shame', y'know? Cos *I* always thought, all men, were like my dad, and if I got with a boy, and he was like my dad and took my freedom away, I would *hate* it, cos I'd waited a long *time* to be free. But now I realise you *can* be friends with the bloke that you marry, and you can have great times with him, but it's just the way it was, y'know? That's what I just, assumed. That all blokes was like me dad… (Emma, 2020)

While Emma and Jenny Fabian speak of traditional heterosexual monogamous relationship and the housewife role in terms of self-denial, restriction, and oppression, they position the groupie pattern of behaviour as an alternative, which they associate with pleasure, personal fulfilment, and instant gratification. These associations are grounded in their own personal experiences, but the wider shift in values associated with the ethic of consumption can also be seen at play in their testimonies. Like the highly individualistic form of female liberation Radner conceptualised through the neo-feminist paradigm, groupie testimonies suggest the pattern of behaviour more closely corresponded with an emergent 'discourse of autonomy'. This discourse encouraged individuals to 'realise themselves in the pursuit of pleasure– a pleasure that is first and foremost sexual – with individual gratification being the final expression of the citizens' inalienable right to the pursuit of happiness' (Radner, 2011 p.12).

While the fleeting nature of these sexual encounters may have been advantageous for touring musicians, it also made it impossible for these women to be entirely dominated by their sexual partners. 'I think I did have a lot of heartache' Emma admits 'because y'know, you used to get crazed on them, but then you would go off out again the next weekend and, y'know, be out having fun and all that' (Emma, 2020). Emma and Jenny Fabian placed a high value on what they saw as their sexual and social freedom. The one-night sexual encounter with a male musician, particularly one who belonged to a touring group from out of town could, therefore, be of benefit to the groupie by foreclosing on the development of romantic attachments, which might lead to the restriction of a traditional monogamous heterosexual relationship.

Groupie testimonies suggest the phenomenon, which crossed class positions, can be understood as a response to the destabilisation of gender roles under the new ethic of consumption. Recalling their groupie experiences, Emma and Jenny Fabian both give a subjective account of real (and imagined) patriarchal oppression and female subordination in the family home and the traditional heterosexual monogamous relationship. Both women recall a desire to counter this form of oppression and frame

their groupie phase as an attempt to do so. The groupie pattern of behaviour, as it is articulated by Emma and Jenny Fabian, therefore, corresponds with Leblanc's reconceptualization of resistance, which foregrounds human agency in the struggle against domination (1999, p. 18).

Emma's oral history suggests that she variously feared and desired men; the groupie pattern of behaviour offered an imperfect solution to these contradictory feelings – the promise of pleasure without responsibility. This theme also features prominently in Jenny Fabian's oral testimony, and appears to have been a key groupie motivation, that crossed class boundaries. Pleasure can be an object of desire, but where sexual desire features prominently in groupie testimonies, with the exception of Fabian's and Byrne's memoir *Groupie*, sexual pleasure itself is conspicuously muted. This could be because former groupies are reluctant to explicitly describe sexual encounters. Emma confessed that she is 'embarrassed about it, I do get worried about people finding out things about me, because it's all very secretive' (Emma, 2020). But she also acknowledged that sexual pleasure was not explicitly discussed between the girls at the time either. 'We never spoke *directly* about things, not like now, when you get the full facts', she recalls:

> the funny thing was, in those days [Tina] never, ever, told me what she'd done. We just knew that something had happened, and she'd say 'oh I went with him'. 'Oh did you?'. 'Yeah'. And that was all that was said, there was no details or anything like that. You know, if they'd had sex, she'd say 'oh yeah, I went with him. (Ibid.)

Emma did, however, have another girlfriend outside her groupie peer group 'who I could spill all the gory details to' (ibid.). This suggests that it was the sexual conquest itself, rather than the sexual pleasure negotiated during the encounter, which constituted a form of subcultural capital between these girls.

Another reason for the muted nature of sexual pleasure in Emma's account may also be the fleeting nature of the sexual encounters she describes, which are not necessarily conducive to female sexual pleasure. With groups often back on the road after the show, and the girls themselves all residing in the family home, these young people were short on time and privacy. Sexual encounters took place in cars, in the group's van, an alleyway or a vacant room when nobody was about. Emma and her friends rarely got to spend a whole night with a male musician or roadie, as the following excerpt, in which Emma recalls an exceptional encounter, indicates:

> Anyway, another time, me and [Tina], went to see [Group I] in [redacted], we hitchhiked there, and we went to see this [Group I], and while the band, while the roadies was packing the gear up, [redacted, famous guitarist] sat there with his guitar and played a song to me! Oh, he was lovely! He really was nice! Anyway, we went back to the hotel with the roadies, [Tina] was with her dark haired one, and I was with [Barry]. *Oh my god!* I could've married him; he was absolutely lovely! And he was the first bloke I actually went to bed with I think, and stayed the night with. He taught me things I'd never dreamed of! He did things to me I never even knew existed! [laughs] (Ibid.)

This sexual encounter appears to have been a revelation for Emma. It was also one of the only times that female sexual pleasure was foregrounded in her account. This suggests that both the extended period of time she spent with 'Barry' in the privacy of the hotel room, and Barry's sexual competence were conducive to a highly pleasurable and exceptional sexual encounter. If indeed this encounter was an exception, at no point during our interview did Emma express dissatisfaction with the fleeting sexual encounters she shared with other musicians and roadies, perhaps because sexual pleasure was not her only goal. There was also pleasure in the sense of power- the external validation that each encounter generated.

Risk and Respectability; Navigating the nice girl/scrubber dichotomy.

The ephemeral nature of the groupie/musician encounter could also be of benefit to groupies in mitigating risk of reputational damage; as out-of-towners, a visiting group would have less opportunity to share damaging gossip about the groupie within the local community. 'You didn't want these people to think that you were just *going* with somebody, cos, y'know, you weren't a good girl then, you was a slag y'know?' Emma recalls, 'and yeah, I had to be very careful that my parents never found out' (Ibid.) While 'scrubber' and 'slag', are both labels for a promiscuous woman, they are also categories of feminine policing (Cawie & Lees, 1981) which evidently had a regulative impact on the sexual behaviour and self-governance of young women. In a Foucauldian (1976) sense, the categoric distinction between the nice/good girl and not nice/bad girl (scrubbers, slags etc) rendered female sexuality controllable. This is demonstrated by the way in which Emma modified her sexual behaviour through compartmentalisation, to evade being labelled a slag or scrubber, and outwardly conform to the nice girl ideal. In our interview, she spoke of her encounter with the fair boy as a formative moment in establishing the clandestine nature of her subsequent sexual encounters:

that was the first time I'd ever done it, perhaps if I'd had a boyfriend, and it had been really sweet and loving, I don't know… just don't know duck, it's just the way it was, and the way it happened and everything. So y'know, maybe that was why I was a groupie, because it was, well I couldn't have a boyfriend you see, so I'd been with this fair boy, and there was no way I could go out with him again, and it was all in secret, nobody would know about it, so mum and dad wouldn't find out about it, y'know? But yeah, it was always boys from different towns, y'know, fair boy, same thing as a groupie.

Aware of the risks, she went to great lengths to conceal her behaviour from her parents, 'I think it was actually a lot of lying, and saying we was going to stay at people's houses, which fortunately for me, never backfired', she told me, when I asked how she got away with it. In one extended anecdote, she recalled how, in 1969, she and her friend Tina pulled off an audacious feat of parental deception to attend the Isle of Wight Pop Festival some 200 miles away:

Emma: We went to see [Vagabond] a lot, […] And they played at the Isle of Wight pop festival, which was the one that Bob Dylan did, and we hitch-hiked, I was only 19, she [Tina] was a year older than me, she was 20, we hitchhiked down to Portsmouth, and we got the ferry and went over to the Isle of Wight pop festival in the clothes we stood up in. I couldn't take a sleeping bag or a change of clothes, or anything, because I had to lie to my mum and dad as to where I was going. So, I didn't even tell them what I was going to do. I said, 'oh we're going over to see a friend'. And of course, when we got down to Portsmouth, I rang them up, […] cos it was a call box, it was just what everybody used in those days, they couldn't tell if you was in [town in the North of England], or if you was, y'know, down south, and I rang them up and I says, 'oh we're gonna stay the night, at my friend's. We'll be back, y'know, on Sunday, see you then'. Or it was Monday or something like that. I said 'I'll let you know when I'm coming back'… so the first night we went there, we were lucky to spend, the night. I think we spent the night in a van, with these lads we had met, […] And then that would be on the Friday I should think, so we got somewhere to stay that night. Then the next night, we slept in a field, or tried to because it was absolutely freezing at night. And you couldn't sleep, and all I had on, I'd got a fur coat that I used to wear a lot. But in those days you used to swap things with your mates you know? So I borrowed my friend's little fur jacket, which was only down to my bum, y'know, and I had to try and sleep in that. I was pleased because it was warm, but we was absolutely *frozen*, we didn't sleep. So, the next day when the bands was on, we missed a lot of them because we were sleeping in the sun! [laughs]

EF: Oh!

Emma: I know! Kept nodding off! There was no end of brilliant bands, all long hair, loon pants y'know. Edgar Broughton Band, they was a big festival band, they were good. Course we did see The Who, and Roger Daltrey was swinging his microphone round, and his long, long tasselled outfit that he wore. And of course, the [redacted] band to come on was [Vagabond], and we were so thrilled, and we weren't too far from the front. There was a lighting tower, if you ever look at

> YouTube of that festival, and we were sat near there, and [Alan] come on, and he was sat on the drums, y'know how they do when they're 'womp, womp, womp', and doing that sort of thing, and I stood up and shouted 'Alan!' and he was a very shy person, and he just lifted his hand up, and he went, like that, and then the rest of the band come on. *Oh my god!* I'll never forget the first bars of music, it was for this song that they'd written, cos they'd got an album out by then, [redacted]. And so we didn't see them, apart from on the stage. So we saw them then, [redacted] they played again the next day, and I don't know exactly what happened, but after Bob Dylan finished playing, we worked our way round to the band enclosure and somehow we met up with [Vagabond]. Cos we never had mobile phones or nothing! How we managed to do it I don't know, but anyway, [Tina] had sorted it, and we met up with [Vagabond], and we got a lift back with them in the van. Course, we *stank*! Because, we had been there all weekend! [laughs] No, nothing with us to have a wash or anything, y'know, and the festivals in those days was very primitive. (Emma, 2020)

Undoubtedly, Emma was not the only groupie who endeavoured to conceal her groupie exploits from both her parents and the wider community, but the clandestine nature of her behaviour also rendered it what Kirstin Schilt (2003), in her work on teen girls and zines, has defined as a 'c/overt' form of resistance; a combination of covert and overt resistance, which allowed Emma to reject chastity as a feminine ideal and share her groupie exploits with her close-knit like-minded friendship group, while remaining hidden from authority figures. Although this approach protected Emma from the punishment attached to overt resistance, it also rendered the nature of her resistance individualistic and diminished its power to challenge attitudes and effect real social change.

Emma generally attended gigs with her friend Tina and another friend, Susan who came from what Emma described as a '*really* respectable family':

> They were posh, they had a big house, they had a thriving business, with this [redacted] dealership, because of all that, y'know, I think my dad trusted me when I said I was stopping at [Susan's]. And of course, [Susan] would come to pick me up, she would come to the door and dad always used to sit in the kitchen, she used to come into the kitchen, and he loved [Susan], he thought she was marvellous y'know? So she would be sitting talking to him, while I was getting ready, because I was always late, and y'know, dad was in awe of [Susan], he thought she was a beautiful girl, and y'know, really lovely, so I would say 'oh I'm not coming home tonight dad, I'm stopping at [Susan's]', 'alright then, see you' [laughs]. So that's what it was, I used to say I was staying at [Susan's], and that's how we got away with it. (Emma, 2020)

What Emma's father did not know was that Susan's father slept heavily, and her mother turned a blind eye to the girls bringing groups back to the family home:

> Of course [Susan], used to invite these bands back to her place, her mum and dad was in bed, and of course her mum could hear us, but her dad couldn't because he

> used to sleep sound and snore. And the first time we went back there we took [Vagabond] back, and they were a really posh family, y'know? And they'd had a dinner party and there was this massive turkey! Great big bowls of strawberries and all this *fabulous* food laid out that I only used to see at Christmas y'know? And because they were posh, you know, well off, and anyway the band all came back, and they were eating all the food, y'know? And then they all stripped off and they went running outside and dived in her swimming pool! I mean, can you believe it? Y'know, that somebody in those days would have a swimming pool?! And I always remember, Susan saying, her mum, it woke her up, y'know, and she went and looked out the bedroom window, and she says, 'all I could see was all these naked boys running and diving in the swimming pool!' [laughs]. But it was *amazing* because, y'know, these lads in [Vagabond] they used to stay all night, and then, y'know, they'd go off at daybreak back to [redacted]. And we'd just have music on, and just wander about downstairs. (Ibid.)

When I asked Emma why Susan's mother let this go on, she told me more about Susan:

> [Susan] had been brought up differently to us, she was a young lady, and her mum- well *my* mum used to talk to *me*, but [Susan's] mum had more of a mind of her own y'know? Whereas my mum would do anything for a quiet life and of course she had to obey me dad, because that's the way he was. And [Susan's] mum was involved in the business, so she was a working mum, even though it wasn't far from home, it was only across the road. I don't know, they were so, *different* to my mum and dad y'know? They would *talk* to her-although her dad didn't really talk that much. I think men were like that in those days. Yeah, [Susan] was fairly close to her mum, but of course, [Susan's] mum would trust her, and as far as I know, well I *know*, [Susan] never went with any of them, and she never uttered the word 'sex', 'virginity', anything like that. But she knew, cos she was, y'know, a girl of the world, she knew about things, and she knew what me and [Tina] got up to. But, y'know, she wasn't like us, she really was, not prim and proper, not *secretive,* but y'know*,* she never gave anything away, and I would say she was probably a virgin y'know... We never spoke *directly* about things, not like now, when you get the full facts. (Ibid.)

Emma's description of Susan as chaste, middle-class, and respectable corresponds with the 'nice girl' ideal, but in considering her open and trusting relationship with her parents, Emma's testimony suggests that she understood Susan's self-imposed boundaries to be rooted in a sense of self-respect which had been instilled in her through her upbringing. Furthermore, as Skeggs notes, respectability is the property of the middle-classes (1997, p. 11); since the respectability of Susan's family was assured, it may not have been a source of preoccupation for Susan's father in the same way that it was for Emma's. Nevertheless, Emma's description of Susan's eventual marriage in 1973 is most telling:

> Emma: I'd been to her wedding that day, and also the reception, and then at night-time [Vagabond] was playing in a college not far away. So I went to see [Vagabond] and she spent the night with her husband in a hotel room watching football.

EF: Oh dear.

Emma: I know! I know, poor girl, and you see all these things used to make me think 'oh well I've got my freedom, I can do what I want' (Emma, 2020)

This retelling suggests that Emma's idea of Susan's wedding night only served to reinforce her existing beliefs about marriage; if feminine subjugation was the 'reward' for effective conformity to the nice girl ideal, why deny oneself pleasure? Sadly, Emma and Susan's friendship was, in time, severed. In our interview, Emma described to me how Susan 'had a controlling husband that wouldn't let her be friends with me- "you're not going around with her, she's an old… old groupie" so I lost [Susan] through that'. Evidently her husband perceived her association with Emma, who had, despite her best efforts, garnered some kind of reputation as a groupie within the local community, as a threat to the respectability of his own marriage and in line with norms of restrictive masculinity, saw fit to dictate who his wife could be friends with.

Emma's other friend, Tina, worked in the same factory, 'me and [Tina], […] we were the biggest groupies' she told me. '[Musicians], always made a beeline for [Tina], because she was very, very pretty, and very long thick blonde hair, big blue eyes, nice figure, y'know, and we were "with it"' (Ibid.). To attract the attention of the groups, the girls would deploy their sexual capital and embodied subcultural capital ('with it' clothes). When I asked Emma how the groups knew they were interested in them, she described how, rather than approach the groups directly, the girls would subtly signal their sexual availability in a manner which allowed them to exert a degree of sexual agency within the limits of 'acceptable' feminine conduct:

We was always *gawping* at them, giving them the eye, y'know, and smiling. I mean if you saw somebody, if you went to a gig, you would get to the front, as close as you could, have a look at them and see which one you really fancied, and you'd probably fixate on that one [laughs] you really fancied! And then you'd, y'know, they'd catch your eye and keep looking at you, it's all in the game, isn't it? (Ibid.)

This passage suggests a degree of newfound sexual confidence on Emma's part, but elsewhere in our interview it emerged that, despite her ability to attract these musicians, she remained a painfully shy young woman:

And then another time I went to see [Vagabond] in their flat, and, well the first time I went, we went to a Wimpy Bar, well that was very new, and this flat was over the Wimpy Bar, and I always remembered going in the café with them, and I could not

> think what to order, I just didn't know what to have, because the thought of even eating in front of them *mortified* me, I just couldn't do it y'know? And look, we lost no end of weight when I was a kid, because whenever I was going to a gig or something I used to get so excited and when I was walking downtown to the gig, I used to get butterflies in my tummy, well I never get butterflies now. Well, I did then, and it took the hunger pangs away y'know? Anyway, we went in this [laughs] went in this Wimpy and they all ordered something to eat and that, and anyway, I think, I know what I had, egg and chips, if I ever went anywhere it was always egg and chips, cos I could never stand burgers y'know, and anyway, I was trying to eat it in a delicate way, y'know, and they was always teasing us, and joking, and mucking about and all that, y'know, but oh it was terrible, I couldn't eat in front of anybody, couldn't *eat* in front of them, couldn't *talk* to them, it was just *painfully* awkward! [laughs] (ibid.)

The groupie pattern of behaviour, then, may have temporarily boosted Emma's self-esteem, but not to the extent that she was able to feel comfortable in her own skin around the groups. Shacklady-Smith suggests that 'social definitions of female delinquency lead not so much to a total rejection of femininity in that a male role is aspired to, as to a rejection of certain elements of a culturally stereotyped female role which is perceived by the girls as too constraining' (1978, p. 84). Emma may have rejected the principle of feminine chastity, but this excerpt suggests that, to maintain male approval, she was still anxious to conform to other, superficial elements of the 'lady-like', and essentially middle-class 'nice girl' construct, and this left her self-consciously preoccupied with monitoring her own behaviour to the extent that she was sometimes paralysed.

By deploying their sexual capital, Tina and Emma were able to negotiate pleasure on interpersonal terms, but the ephemeral nature of the groupie/musician encounter and the necessarily c/overt nature of the groupie pattern of behaviour also meant that these young women could end up feeling like they were getting used:

> The blokes in town all had girlfriends, or were engaged or something, and of course, they were all *nice* girls, who were probably saving themselves, who weren't allowed to come out because they were studying, they were in the sixth form, and stuff like that. And I always remember [Tina] saying, 'huh' she said, 'yeah, he's got a girlfriend, but he sees me in the week, and I'm his in the week bird, and I'm not playing second fiddle to his girlfriend' y'know and it was like that, we were always *used*, but then again, we did it anyway. We was always going with somebody y'know? (Emma, 2020)

Emma's description of the 'nice girl', as chaste, educated, and obedient, corresponds with the middle-class feminine ideal. Evidently, girls who conformed to this ideal made desirable girlfriends and wives; young men, granted a degree of sexual licence, were able

to consolidate respectability through marriage to such a young woman. But for Emma, conformity to the 'nice girl', ideal was contingent on self-denial, and the abnegation of pleasure. She related similar experiences with the girls' favourite group, 'Vagabond':

> Emma: We would go and see, [Vagabond], in [their hometown] and that, but of course, they never spoke to us when they was in [their hometown], cos they got their girlfriends, and the fiancés, y'know? And they would totally ignore us […]
>
> EF: You said that you weren't upset about it though?
>
> Emma: No…it's funny y'know? In those days, it's like anything that ever happened to us, you just accepted it y'know? That was how they were, and they used to, I think they'd told my friend [Tina] that, y'know, when you come over to [their hometown], we won't talk to you, because we've got our girlfriends there y'know. So yeah… but we used to go and see them. (ibid.)

The groupie pattern of behaviour provided a means by which these young women were able to contest the 'delegitimacy' of their feminine cultural capital at a local level, but as Skeggs argues, 'counteracting delegitimacy does not mean that devalued capital can be capitalised upon, rather it suggests a momentary refusal of powerlessness' (1997, p. 13). Emma and Tina may have been able to capitalise on their sexual capital to negotiate pleasure on interpersonal terms, and these encounters may have made them *feel* good about themselves, even powerful. But prevalent discourses on feminine devaluation through sexual activity meant their behaviour also served to further diminish the convertible value of their feminine cultural capital on the marriage market in a way that their male partners' masculine cultural capital was not affected. As Emma explains, her and Tina's reputation about town may have made it difficult for them to get a steady boyfriend:

> In the old days, if you got a boyfriend, he would expect you to be a virgin. Well, you couldn't *lie* about it y'know? And I don't know, it was just the way things were, sort of like, you was a slag if you'd been with somebody before, and of course, y'know, we'd got this bloody name, 'groupies'. They knew in [town in the North of England] we were groupies cos they used to see us in action! [laughs] We were always at the front, and we was always with them (ibid.)

Their resignation in response to this disrespectful treatment at the hands of male musicians, and other men about town, suggests that Emma and Tina were, on some level, aware that as sexually active, working-class young women, their feminine cultural capital was delegitimised.

Rape and pregnancy were also real and significant risks with life-changing consequences for the girls involved and negligible repercussions for the groups, who, if they were from out of town, were not easily held to account. In our interview, Emma told me about how Tina became pregnant after a one-night encounter with a member of a group she never saw again, and the terrible impact this had on her and her family:

> I don't know how [Tina] managed to get pregnant. Whether she had forgotten her pills, or she was on antibiotics, cos they don't work when you take antibiotics, and that happened with a group. Another one that played at the [redacted], [Group E], and she went outside in the car with this one. I didn't even know his name, and then I went with one in another room, what was his name, [Mike] or something like that. There was pictures of them, in *Melody Maker*, but I never actually found out any information. It was just a one-night stand. It happened, never heard from them ever again, never saw them again. And [Tina] got pregnant with one. But it never showed, people just thought 'oh she's putting on a bit of weight, you know, getting a bit thick round the waist'. But she hid it, and we *still* went groupie-ing. Went to see bands and everything. But that was in 1970, I know she'd got pregnant either late '69, or early '70. I know she was pregnant that year, because I went down to Torquay for the summer. I'd worked in this factory for four years, and I *knew* that my mum and dad would be asking loads and loads of questions about [Tina], because people were suspicious that she was pregnant. But there was not proof. So I said 'right, well I'm going to go down to Torquay for the summer' and y'know, I was 20 and my auntie lived in Torquay, so it was alright for me to go, because I was going to stay with her, and she had got me a job. And [Tina] eventually had to finish work and her parents, moved to [redacted], because they couldn't bear the scandal, in [town in the North of England]. My mum, asked her mum 'how's [Tina]?' she said, 'when's she due?' And [Tina's] mum said 'I don't know what you're talking about'. And she was fuming, and she banned [Tina] from having anything to do with me, because my mum asked her if she was pregnant. And I went down to Torquay, [Tina] went to [redacted], and the plan was we would get a flat together. She was going to have this baby adopted, she never even mentioned it as a baby. She used to say, 'when this is over'. You know, there was a lot of secrets in those days, where, nothing was mentioned, but you knew what they were on about.

The retelling of this event shatters the mythology that a far reaching and transformative 'sexual revolution' took place in the sixties. The introduction of the contraceptive pill may have given some women more control over when and if they had children, but it did not eliminate the risk of unplanned pregnancies for all women and girls. For anyone living in provincial towns, where there were far fewer abortion provisions, the procedure could also prove hopelessly out of reach (Ingham, 1981, p. 113). Furthermore, Emma's testimony suggests that attitudes towards illegitimacy in working-class communities had shifted very little since the post-war period; for this groupie and her family, pregnancy spelled reputational damage, scandal, and social ostracism. So serious were these social

consequences that Tina's family chose to relocate to another town, while Tina herself appears to have spent a good part of her pregnancy in denial about the realities of her situation. This sad turn of events, like the loss of Susan's friendship, illustrates how the category of respectability not only worked to regulate the behaviour of groupies, but those close to them.

Emma's testimony raises questions to which there can be no answer – how many babies were conceived in this way? How much suffering in isolation has gone unacknowledged and unrecorded for decades, shrouded in secrecy, denial, and shame? In recent years, the treatment of young single mothers in mother and baby homes and maternity wards in the sixties has received media attention (Siddique, 2022). It has been revealed that many young women were pressured by social workers to give up their babies. Emma told me of a school friend to whom this happened, and who, to this day, continues to search for the baby daughter taken from her against her will and put up for adoption.[17] When the time came, Tina kept her baby, but subsequently severed ties with Emma, and her groupie past. At the time of writing, fifty years later, the two friends remain estranged.

Conclusion

While Emma and Tina sought to negotiate pleasure without responsibility through the groupie pattern of behaviour, the groupie/musician encounter could still have serious life-changing consequences which bore down excessively and exclusively on the groupie alone. Groupie testimonies suggest that in cognizance with the new emphasis on personal fulfilment, the groupie pattern of behaviour represented a form of resistance to patriarchal oppression and female subordination in the family home and the traditional heterosexual monogamous relationship, which crossed class. But attitudes had not moved on to the extent that mythologies of the sexual revolution and the classless society would have us believe; the system of patriarchy and structures of class continued to regulate the sexual behaviour of working-class young women and girls like Emma, and ensure that, beyond the groupie peer group, they continued to be socially ascribed a low value. Female sexual pleasure, meanwhile, could also be elusive. Other forms of pleasure

[17] I can happily report that during the writing-up of this thesis, Emma informed me that her friend has finally been reunited with her long-lost daughter, who always knew her birth mother had not willingly given her up because she had failed to sign the adoption papers. The efforts of both parties to trace one another over the years had been derailed by a careless administrative error.

were at stake, but the subtext of these groupies' references to male validation and peer-group esteem is ultimately their own powerlessness. Finally, the necessarily c/overt and individualistic nature of the groupie pattern of behaviour and its firm relation to male approval rendered this form of resistance imperfect because it ultimately left structures of class and gender inequality intact.

Chapter 6 Underground manifestations; bourgeoisification of the groupie

Emma and Jenny Fabian essentially followed the same pattern of behaviour; both women sought sexual encounters with male musicians and used these encounters to negotiate pleasure without responsibility. But Jenny Fabian's class privilege put her in a very different position from Emma. She was representative of a different kind of groupie for whom the pattern of behaviour was associated with an immersive alternative lifestyle. This chapter uses Jenny Fabian's life story narrative as a framework to trace the emergence of the British underground groupie.

When Jenny Fabian and Johnny Byrne published their semi-fictional novel, *Groupie*, in 1969, a spotlight was shone on the groupie phenomenon as never before. This surge of media interest necessitated the discursive reconstruction of a 'new' kind of middle-class groupie, strongly associated with the underground, of which Jenny Fabian was positioned as representative. By drawing upon archival sources, this chapter argues that in its middle-class manifestation the phenomenon was treated as potentially political in both the mainstream and underground press.

The Times They Are a-Changin'; The emergent underground groupie

In Chapter 3 we left Jenny Fabian in the late fifties:

> when I left school, I spent a lot of time in Soho, in a coffee bar called Les Enfants Terrible. I thought the French had a lot of style, back then, we had no style at all. This is even before Mary Quant or anything like that. And I thought the French were so cool and I got deeply involved with that, and then we danced to things like Ray Charles. So, I was getting into a, sort of, dance music, and then I got involved with foreign boys, who I thought were much more sophisticated than English public schoolboys (Fabian, 2019)

As Bill Osgerby notes, throughout the fifties and sixties, coffee bars were 'pivotal within the public cultures of young women. Places where girls could see and be seen, coffee bars offered relative sanctuary from the confines of the home, the workplace, and the official institutions of youth provision' (1998, p. 51). At her parents' behest, Jenny Fabian attended secretarial college and cooking school during this period, but friction in the family home was coming to a head:

> … I became a beatnik, and they didn't like me wearing black stockings, or black clothes and going out with, sort, of black eyes and going out with poets and things like that. They weren't that keen on that. So, if I went out, I had to, sort of, put my stockings on outside the house, and things like that. So, then I was moving into a different scene, more like poets, and writers, and people like that in Hampstead. Cos I lived in Highgate, it was quite a trek to get to Hampstead in those days, it seemed anyway. And I had a boyfriend, who was the son of a journalist, and, yeah, I can't remember the music much. But, that's what I was doing, I was being a beatnik. (Fabian, 2019)

Beat poetry, like the American hippie movement, was an early influence on the emergent British underground. The poetry reading organised at the Royal Albert Hall in 1965 and captured in Peter Whitehead's film *Wholly Communion* (UK 1965), has been credited as the first 'symbolic gathering of the tribes' (Green J. , 1999, p. 142). This was the moment when various like-minded groups came together, not just the beats, and fans of poetry, but avant-garde artists, art students, members of the Swinging London aristocracy, musicians, former CND marchers, and disaffected young people.

For the youth of London this event 'was a catalyst: the birth of the London underground' (Miles, 2010, p. 151). In its wake, Barry Miles established Indica Books and Indica Gallery in the West End. From this venture grew the weekly newspaper, the *International Times (IT)*, which was launched in 1966 with a party at the Roundhouse, and from this event came UFO, the underground's premier club on Tottenham Court Road, which later moved to Chalk Farm (Fountain, 1988, p. 24). Other key sites, such as The Arts Lab on Drury Lane, followed as London's network of underground cultural manifestations began to take shape.

Like many young people, Jenny Fabian was looking for alternatives to the conventional life her parents had envisioned for her. As early as 1960, at the age of 18, she was strategizing on how she might become fully independent from them:

> I said I wanted to go to America, that's right. And they said, 'well, we can't afford to send you to America, you're going to have to save up, or do, go to work, or something like that'. And I went to work, they didn't mind, I worked in a restaurant. I was a waitress for about a year. And I worked in a cinema as an usherette, no an ice cream girl, I was an ice cream girl. Did that. And I did, I saved up quite a lot of money, and I said, 'look I've saved up', I can't remember how much it was, and I said, 'look I don't want to go to America. I want to go live in Notting Hill Gate' [laughs]. And that, they couldn't sort of, because they said I could go to America, they couldn't then turn around and say well you can't go and live in Notting Hill Gate. And so I moved away from North London. (Fabian, 2019)

Working in the service industry for one year Jenny Fabian must have been able to save a considerable sum if it was sufficient to travel to America. Emma did not have anything like

this amount of disposable income from her supermarket or factory job, presumably because she was expected to contribute to the family finances, while Jenny Fabian was not. Jenny Fabian moved to Notting Hill Gate in the early sixties, but by 1962, she was pregnant by an Italian man she had been seeing. 'Because my parents were totally very English, to marry a foreigner was, not on' she recalls, but she succumbed to social convention and married the father of her child. Following the birth of her first daughter, she quickly became pregnant again. So began what Jenny Fabian describes as 'an appalling sort of domestic life' (Ibid.).

In the early sixties, live music 'wasn't really accessible', as Jenny Fabian recalls 'there were no groups to go and see particularly […] I had no idea what the future held, until it confronted me' (Ibid.). 'The crunch came' in 1966, when she 'heard Bob Dylan singing':

> I think it must have been 'Times They Are a-Changin'', because I think that must have resonated with me, and then I knew this was, I couldn't take this, and I had to leave the Italian, had to leave the foreign set-up and move out… (ibid.)

Her decision to leave her husband may not have been quite as spontaneous as this narrative suggests, since elsewhere in our interview she explained that she fell in love with the poet Spike Hawkins around this time, and 'ran off' with him. But in citing music as the catalyst for her rejection of the traditional domestic feminine role, Jenny Fabian links her subjective experience to a wider historical moment. In the mid-sixties, Bob Dylan was one of the emerging British Underground's few music heroes (Haslam, 2015, p. 162). Underground musician, journalist, and author Mick Farren recounts a similar experience to Jenny Fabian's, upon attending a Dylan concert at the Royal Albert Hall in May 1965, where he felt a 'strong sense of impending change' (cited in Haslam, 2015, p. 156). If the poetry reading at the Royal Albert Hall in June 1965 has been mythologised as the moment when the British underground first 'saw itself *en masse'*, Dylan's electric return to the Royal Albert Hall, in May 1966, 'cemented the experience […] a social movement was born' (Green J. , 1999, p. 147).

For Jenny Fabian, Dylan's music tapped into a deep sense of dissatisfaction with her life as a housewife:

> He makes you think, his music, his words make you think. And if you think, you start to realise that your, what was I? 20…21, by then, and that it couldn't go on. I was not going to stay like this. Married to an Italian with two children for the rest of my life. I knew, I just knew, that, the times were changing, and I was going to change with them! And that's all really. I didn't dwell too much on it, but I just

> knew. And once I get a bee in my bonnet, I pursued it in those days, I was quite stubborn. So, I had to work out how to get where I wanted, and I did. (Fabian, 2019)

She plunged into the unknown, and moved, with her two young daughters, to a flat in Powis Square.

Jenny Fabian may have been among those of her generation who 'dropped out' of the dominant culture and rejected her traditional responsibilities, but her disillusionment was tempered by her gendered experience. Her frustrations with the traditional feminine role were shared by many women of her generation. Mary Ingham, for example, recalls the way she, as a young woman in the sixties, perceived her own mother:

> She stood for most things I disdained: uniformed opinion, repressed sexuality, narrow-minded morality; the implacable belief that a woman's destiny lay solely in getting married and having babies, saving yourself for the simple self-sacrifice of wiping up after others; the stereotype housewife and mother who denies she exists in her own right. I never thought to ask why, let alone ask *her* why. (Ingham, 1981, p. 21)

In a few years, some feminists like Oakley (1976) would begin to ask why, as these frustrations began to feed into the burgeoning women's movement, but in the mid-sixties Jenny Fabian was among those young women who gravitated towards the British underground, which promised freedom, self-fulfilment, and alternative ways of living. As Rowbotham, who also became involved in the underground during this period, recalls:

> As everything in the counterculture was meant to be weird and mystical, you could take cover under the imperative on everyone to be a free spirit. You could hang around alone, bump into people you knew, pirouette in the light shows to music, hide in a corner or meet someone new (2001, p. 132)

Initially Jenny Fabian struggled financially. Her husband gave her some money, which was more than some separated women received from their husbands, but 'he wasn't giving me enough money not to work, for them, and he'd come along with presents for the kids, and things like that, and then swan off again' (Fabian, 2019). Nor did she claim any benefits, 'we got absolutely no additional help, financially then […] apart from the basic child benefit, which you know, everybody gets anyway, which isn't really enough for anything' (Ibid.). Despite her middle-class background, Jenny Fabian and her daughters did not receive financial support from her parents either, 'I only lived off what I earned, and what he [her husband] might give me from time to time' (Ibid.)

To support herself and her daughters, she explains 'it was essential to work' (Ibid.) Having completed a journalism module for her secretarial course some years earlier and interviewed a 'second tier' pop star for her final project, Jenny Fabian decided to seek work in that field. She walked into the editor of the *Daily Telegraph's* office and talked herself into a job working in the newsroom as a 'gopher' (general dogsbody). Jenny Fabian's middle-class cultural capital was indispensable in securing this opportunity; it is difficult to imagine a working-class young woman who left school at 16 as she had, having the confidence to pull off such a feat or being taken seriously if she had indeed attempted it.

By this time Jenny Fabian was enjoying a revitalised social life. At the *Telegraph* she met Ann Barr, who, impressed by her personal style, unconventional hip lifestyle, and insider knowledge commissioned Jenny Fabian to write some articles on the underground for *Queen* magazine, where she was features editor.[18] 'She was so generous with her time and her friendship', Jenny Fabian recalls of Barr. 'I was almost like her protégé, in a sense, […] she was such a sweet person. And she, she used to take me and say, "this is Jenny Fabian, she's been doing this"' (Ibid.). These articles for *Queen,* and the contacts she made through Barr, led to more freelance journalism assignments for other publications which, along with Barr's encouragement, would give Jenny Fabian the confidence to write her first novel. 'I'm in a very useful position to tell people who want to know about [the underground]' she would tell the *Sunday Times* in 1969, 'mostly, I suppose, they're out of town provincials who are fascinated by all the lurid stuff about drugs and love-ins' ('Jenny's Journal', 9 March 1969, p.17).

Over the decades that followed, Barr would prove an invaluable friend, providing Jenny Fabian with professional opportunities and encouragement. The income from freelance journalism assignments would help keep her afloat throughout the personal highs and lows of the sixties and seventies, but this kind of work would also help Jenny Fabian build social capital and cultural capital, which, as we shall see in Chapter 7, would prove to have exchange value in other fields. 'I wouldn't like to be thought of as totally underground myself because I am not' she wrote in one of her exposes for *Queen* ('All Change', 5 February 1969, p.58-63), suggesting that she was consciously aware of the value in advancing her status within different fields.

To support herself and her daughters, she also made other lifestyle adjustments:

[18] In the early eighties, Ann Barr would be involved in coining the terms 'Sloane Rangers' and 'Foodies'.

> My flat was big so I was able to share it. It was essential to have other people. And also, it was useful because two of them were a young couple and were very keen to babysit and stuff like that, which gave me a certain amount of opportunity to go out in the evening (Fabian, 2019)

This domestic set-up was unconventional for the time and perhaps presents an early example of the countercultural experiments in communal living which would become popular later in the decade. Evidently, for Jenny Fabian, this living arrangement gave her more freedom than the traditional male breadwinner/female homemaker configuration had; it would help facilitate her social life within the underground and, by extension, her groupie exploits. But Jenny Fabian's new path was by no means easy, and in our interview, she did express regret for how the upheaval affected her daughters:

> although it wasn't particularly, convenient, or good that I'd done it and had two children who were, sort of, they weren't pawns, but they were part of, they were, it was a difficult thing to have to deal with, because I had to look after them and, you know. And the implications of drugs and all that, around them and stuff, wasn't great. (Ibid.)

In the sixties, cannabis was already the well-established drug of choice among Britain's West Indian community. For white middle-class bohemian circles, this gave the drug outsider cachet, and by the mid-sixties, smoking cannabis had taken on countercultural connotations (Hewison, 1986, p. 127). The underground's other drug of choice, LSD, had been in use as an experimental therapeutic drug in Britain since 1954 (Marwick, 2003, p. 115), but it was introduced as a recreational drug in 1965, when British researcher Michael Hollingshead returned from Timothy Leary's upstate New York estate to establish the World Psychedelic Centre in Chelsea (Whitley, 2013, p. 14). Leary was a proponent of the idea that LSD use was not only therapeutic, but mind-expanding, with the power to transform society for the better. He encouraged the masses to 'turn on, tune in and drop out' of the dominant culture, his teachings lent drug culture utopian associations and fed directly into the American hippie movement, and British counterculture (Marwick, 1998, p. 310).

Jenny Fabian, like many of her contemporaries, smoked cannabis and experimented with LSD during this period. Her estranged husband did not approve of her new lifestyle:

> my husband was living, sort of, 'round the corner, and kind of saying 'oh you're a dreadful person, you're taking drugs and look at the way you live'. And there were lots of people, and the flat, I shared the flat with various people, and one of them

> was a dealer.[19] You know, it was just, to somebody who wasn't in that world, it looked appalling. You can see, can't you? We were, I mean all freaks and hippies, I don't think they were even called hippies then, but he had a wonderful word for it, he called it 'squalido' [laughs]. And perhaps it was, to someone outside, but you know, it was, it was okay! It was a bit of a, bit of a brown rice era, but didn't last long. And I was working, I was working from 9 till 5. My kids were at a nursery school. I had to take them in the morning, pick them up in the afternoon, it was hard work, doing all that. And he'd come along and say, you know, 'squalido' and 'what are you doing?' and this and that, and then I'd say, 'well you do it then!' you know, you can see, the confrontation with somebody who thinks they're in charge. (Fabian, 2019)

When Jenny Fabian's flat was raided by the police in 1967, and she was busted for drugs, her husband saw his chance to claim the children:

> he was a very, loving father, but he just definitely disapproved. Disapproved to the extent that he intended to take them, and when I got busted and my mind was concentrating on not getting sent to prison, because it was a time when people were being made scapegoats of, you know, it was like the Stones were busted, Brian Jones, all that time then. So, I was quite worried, and he, I suppose that's when he thought 'well I can make my move' (Ibid.)

This event coincided with a wider police crackdown on recreational drug use, which saw the underground press, nightclubs, and the homes of individuals all targeted.

Jenny Fabian may have 'dropped out' of the dominant culture, but she was still able to mobilise her middle-class capital when she really needed it. 'The most striking thing about Jenny Fabian is her ability to control and direct vastly different experiences, a certain knack of culling the best from her heredity and environment' wrote John See in the *Kensington Post* in 1972:

> One example which seems to illustrate this particularly well is her reaction to getting "busted" for a very small amount of illegal drugs […] Instead of calling "Release" or a similar organisation, which she felt would have immediately branded her as "an underground freak" she called the "family lawyer" who managed to get her case dealt with separately from those of the other people in her flat. Thus, she only got a small fine and was able to go the same night to a May Ball in Cambridge where the Pink Floyd were playing ('She's no drug addled libertine' 11 August 1972, p.36)

In the event of a drugs bust, an individual from a less privileged background would have had little resources at their disposal. Drugs activist, artist, and feminist, Caroline Coon, set up her organisation, RELEASE in 1967, which provided 24-hour a day legal aid and advice to help those charged with drug-related offences for precisely this reason. This venture

[19] Following review of the interview transcript, Jenny Fabian has requested it be noted that the dealer 'only dealt pot'.

was facilitated, to some extent, by the mobilisation of Coon's own middle-class capital, but, unlike many other underground initiatives, RELEASE has outlived the underground and has provided invaluable support to many people in times of personal crisis.

Although Jenny Fabian managed to evade a prison sentence, her husband was able to use the situation to his advantage and secure custody of the children:

> through various ways, he got them off me because I got busted, for drugs, and then he managed to, I mean we didn't fight about it, but I knew that if it came to the crunch, the way I was living then, which is, we're up to 1967 now, he would get them, and he took them to Italy eventually, when they were about nine and ten. I kept them for as long as I could, and, you know, it's hard to support children, and he just wheedled them away, because he had the money, I wasn't living a good life, and consequently I then became, free, in a sense (Fabian, 2019)

By the time her husband took custody of the children, Jenny Fabian was pursuing the groups. 1966 had brought another pivotal moment in her life story narrative, in which music, again, played a central role; she saw Pink Floyd perform 'in the flesh' for the first time at All Saints Hall.[20] Bedecked in 'colourful finery' from the likes of hippie boutique Granny Takes a Trip, the group's lead singer Syd Barrett was the centre of attention during live shows at that time, 'raising his arms in dramatic gestures and wringing increasingly amazing sounds out of his telecaster, which was covered in mirrors to reflect the swirling lightshow' (DeRogatis, 1996, p. 65). 'Wow' thought Jenny Fabian, 'look at those guys!' 'what music! This is fantastic!' (Fabian, 2019).

Britain's short-lived cultural pre-eminence was, by 1966, on the wane, and by the summer of 1967, San Francisco would supplant London as the new capital of pop, as groups from the West Coast now led the way (Melly, 1970, p. 106). Established in 1966 and influenced by West Coast groups like the Byrds and Love, who were by now producing sounds and lyrics inspired by the LSD trip, Pink Floyd were chief among a new crop of groups crafting a quintessentially English answer to psychedelia which incorporated cosmic light shows and lengthy explorations of feedback and echoed effects (DeRogatis, 1996, p. 64). The psychedelic experience would influence the sound and lyrics of already established and highly influential artists, like Bob Dylan and the Beatles, the latter of which introduced an idiosyncratic British take on psychedelia to the mainstream with the release of their acclaimed 1967 album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. But Pink Floyd were at the forefront of the new generation of experimental groups emerging

[20] A short-lived ad hoc venue in Notting Hill, which staged live events to raise funds for the nearby Notting Hill Free School (Haslam, 2015, p. 169)

from underground music venues, which catered to the tastes of the underground's avant-garde audience (Hewison, 1986, p. 184). Other underground groups included psychedelic folk group the Incredible String Band, and psychedelic pop groups Tomorrow and The Pretty Things, who successfully transitioned from R & B to psychedelia.

Under the influence of another much heavier strand of acid blues rock, typified by West Coast groups like Big Brother and the Holding Company led by Janis Joplin, and the Grateful Dead, a heavy prolonged blues style also emerged from the mid-sixties British R & B revival (Melly, 1970, p. 118). These groups and performers, which included Cream and American expat Jimi Hendrix, were celebrated for their technical skill and musical virtuosity and, like the British psychedelic groups, were increasingly categorised as 'rock' rather than 'pop'. As successful groups of the mid-sixties, such as the Beatles and Rolling Stones, also made the transition from commercially viable 'pop' to more experimental work and critical acclaim, a critical dichotomy, legitimated by music critics, emerged, with artistic album-orientated 'rock' juxtaposed against commercial single-orientated 'pop' (Chambers, 1985, p. 84).

While the political left had long considered rock music 'an unappetizing expression of capitalism's ideological powers of temptation' (Wicke, 1990, p. 102) the emergent pop/rock dichotomy reframed rock as artistic, authentic, sincere, and original, releasing it 'from every suspicion of commercial motivation' (Ibid. p. 93). This was necessary for rock, a commercial endeavour, and the underground's one dependable source of income (Green J. , 1999, p. 431) to be reconciled with the counterculture's apparent rejection of mass culture and consumerism. But authenticity is not inherent, as sociologist, Gary Alan Fine notes, 'it is created in practice as a symbolic boundary, separating those whose authority is taken-for-granted and those whose authority is given by the very fact of their ability to create at the margins' (Fine, 2003, p. 175), further, 'authenticity implies *to authenticate,* and so is linked to a market society' (Ibid. p. 163). This 'belief in a continuing struggle between music and commerce is the core of rock ideology' (Frith, 1978, p. 191). Tensions between the ostensibly anti-consumerist underground and its commercial wing, the music industry, would come to a head in the early seventies, and will be the subject of further discussion in Chapter 8.

For women, opportunities in rock were even narrower than they had been in pop because there was no space for solo girl singers. There were some very successful female front-line singers among the new wave of West Coast groups, such as Grace Slick, vocalist in Jefferson Airplane, and Janis Joplin, but in Britain, there were no equivalents. With a

handful of exceptions, women were conspicuously absent from the new crop of heavy blues and psychedelic groups, either as singers or other musicians. Maggie Bell, vocalist in Scottish blues rock group Stone the Crows, was one exception, but the group found it difficult to break through. Another exception was vocalist Julie Driscoll, who enjoyed some success with keyboard player Brian Auger and psychedelic group Trinity, but by 1969 she had left the pop/rock-side of the business to concentrate on experimental jazz. Opportunities behind the scenes, as road managers, for example, also remained scant.

Fortunately for Jenny Fabian, her middle-class cultural capital gave her access to one of the Pink Floyd's managers, Andrew King (Miles, 2010, p. 212) who she already knew from when she had gone out with a boy from Westminster School (a public school), 'so I started to go out with one of the managers of the Pink Floyd, but the mind was working as to how to get beyond that' (Fabian, 2019). She set her sights on pulling the group's front man:

> Syd Barrett, so, the thing is, he was, you know what he looked like don't you? He was incredibly beautiful, and haunted, he was a doomed poet, wasn't he? It was just, and completely, he was virtually beyond, by the time I got to meet him, he was virtually beyond contact (Ibid.)[21]

With a slight build, wild hair and flamboyant style, Barrett certainly embodied the soft masculine ideal. She encountered him again at the underground's premier music venue, the UFO, where Pink Floyd had taken up a residency. As King's girlfriend, Jenny Fabian was permitted to hang out with the group backstage, and it was here that she saw her chance to 'pull' Syd Barrett.

> Well, the great dope smoking thing was great, and then if you were, you were just *there*, cos, he was just so spaced, if you were just *there*, you felt like you were in with a chance. So, I was going out with the manager, but I was just, I had my, so that was my first thing. I mean I'd seen them play originally, down at Powis Hall […]and then UFO, and oh! You know, taking a trip at UFO and all this business. And then, getting, backstage at UFO was pretty grim I tell you! It was like, you know, all pipes and yuck! And then sort of managing to be with him in the van, or just… Are those the first groupie experiences? I suppose they are. (Ibid.)

After sharing a joint with Barrett backstage, Jenny Fabian managed to manoeuvre herself into the group's van without King, and when they dropped her off at her home after the gig, Barrett got out of the van and went inside with her. So began the series of events that

[21] As a partial consequence of heavy LSD use, Barrett was becoming increasingly withdrawn by 1966. His deteriorating mental health would ultimately lead to his ejection from the group in 1968.

took place between 1966 and 1968, which would ultimately inspire her novel *Groupie* (1969).

Reconstructing the groupie; mainstream media perspectives

Upon publication, *Groupie* appears to have been generally well received. Critic Angela Levin promoted the novel's mass appeal, when she included it in her round-up of 'Best Buys' for Christmas 'for younger people in the 18-25 age group' ('Best Buys' 20 December 1969 p.25). Meanwhile, Philip Norman described the novel as 'a far better book than most of those to which our attention is drawn on the Tube' and acknowledged it as a 'serious work' ('Catgut' *The Sunday Times,* 2 November 1969 p.55). For outsiders like Norman, the primary appeal of *Groupie* appears to have lain in the novel's insider view of the underground. 'It represents the Underground exactly' he wrote in his review:

> a surprising number of inefficient people wearing airbrushed trousers[…] groups for the most part consist of people with the capacity of a Mexican garrison for turning clean places and nice things into hovels […] drugs are taken and mixed all the time in the spirit of the most abject boredom […]a horrible life compounded mainly of long van journeys and fear of the clap […] people with sour complexions and spot craters, dreadfully aged before their time yet scared to a suicide point by the prospect of the age of twenty-five (ibid.)

This description of the novel illustrates not only how many of those belonging to an older generation perceived the underground, but also how it was possible for critics and readers alike to interpret *Groupie* in a way that supported their existing prejudices and anxieties.

Critics and journalists also made sexist assumptions about the nature of the creative collaboration behind *Groupie.* While *The Sunday Times* claimed that Byrne made Jenny Fabian's tape-recorded real-life stories over into fiction before Jenny Fabian turned them 'back into more unsophisticated female language' ('Jenny's Journal' 9 March 1969, p.17), Norman suggested that having had her 'rambling and fondness for dwelling on plating (fellatio not foot-worship) […] much disciplined by her collaborator' Jenny Fabian 'may still be unaware of its humour' ('Catgut' *The Sunday Times,* 2 November 1969 p.55). Such patronising claims entirely miss the distanced irony that runs through Katie's first-person narration in *Groupie.*

Despite these assumptions about the creative process behind the novel, with the commercial success of *Groupie*, it was Jenny Fabian, rather than her co-author Johnny

Byrne, who quickly became a minor celebrity and figure of fascination in the British press. Middle-class, confident, and articulate, she did not fit the classist 'scrubber' stereotype, which had hitherto served to categorise, condemn, and dismiss working-class groupies to the margins. 'The fact that Fabian, far from being an inarticulate scrubber down on her knees outside some provincial stage-door, was authentically middle class and clever with it, only helped the bandwagon' recalls Jonathon Green, uncritically invoking the classist and sexist scrubber stereotype (Fabian, 1969, p. v). Indeed, much of the media coverage fixated upon Jenny Fabian's social background, as if the groupie pattern of behaviour was only to be expected from 'unrespectable' working-class girls. As Jenny Fabian recalls:

> Once they discovered I was a, sort of like, a middle-class girl, they were, more shocked, than if I'd say, [adopts approximation of stereotypical 'low class' accent] *spoken like that and been on the make* because middle-class girls don't behave like that, and if they do, they don't talk about it. So, they had more copy because I was who I was, than if I'd been nobody, and just risen by my bootstraps. But in a sense, I had risen up by my bootstraps, I had no help from anybody. I mean financially, I was having to make, pay my own way (Fabian, 2019)

If Jonathon Green claims she 'gained a certain celebrity, the media loved her' (Fabian, 1969, p. v) Jenny Fabian remembers things differently. She felt she was 'dragged around a bit like an exhibit' (Fabian, 2019) and recalls how interviewers would impose their own morality upon her, asking her insulting questions like 'don't you think it's awful the way you live your life?' while she dissociated from the humiliating experience by focusing upon their 'horrible nylon trousers' (Fabian, 2022). In her sequel to *Groupie*, *A Chemical Romance* (Fabian, 1971/1988), she describes how it felt to be the object of so much media attention, while her co-author Johnny Byrne escaped scrutiny:

> When the publicity started, just before publication, it was me they wanted to interview, it was me they wanted to misquote, it was me they wanted to pass their moral judgement on […] To read myself sounding so unfamiliar was causing me an identity crisis. I felt I wasn't making myself understood. The questions were boring and stupid, because the book should have told them everything. Endlessly I tried to explain what a groupie was. In just one paragraph. I asked myself questions and wrote down the answers. I tried to be facetious, and they took me seriously. I tried to be serious, and they felt sorry for me. I was a dirty little girl, a social revelation, a right-wing fascist, a sign-of-the-times gone wrong; funny, boring, sexy, sad, they all saw me differently until I couldn't see myself (Fabian, 1971/1988, p. 24)

Evidently Jenny Fabian found the pressures of fame difficult to bear. In our interview she recalled one incident, in which journalist, Hunter Davies tracked down her parents and asked to interview them for *The Sunday Times*:

> And I didn't know about it. And of course, he got my mother, he probably had got in touch with them and said, 'your daughter's written this book, and could we talk about it?' and I suppose they thought, well, they were totally, sort of, innocent about stuff like that. And in he steams, and he starts to ask questions about how they thought about what I'd, and he must've quoted some stuff from the book. My father walked out within five minutes, absolutely, sort of, 'I'm not listening to this rubbish'. My mother who's very stoic, she sat through it and, you know, and he wrote about her sitting there with her cocker spaniels at her feet, saying 'I don't know where we went wrong!', and stuff like this, and it was just awful. That was awful, and I've, I'll never forgive him for that (Fabian, 2019)

Jenny Fabian also made efforts to conceal the fact that she had a young family from the media, presenting herself as an individual responsible only for herself. This attempt to compartmentalise her life, presents a mirror image of Emma's attempts to conceal her groupie life from her parents and the wider community while presenting herself as a dutiful daughter and factory worker. Evidently middle-class groupies were not immune from demonization in the media, but where Emma's resistance to restrictive feminine norms had been covert, a 'momentary refusal of powerlessness' intentionally obscured from social judgements about respectability, Jenny Fabian was frank and defiant. Further, by publishing her semi-fictional memoir, she made her resistance public and overt: 'I am pleased to be called amoral', she told one journalist in 1973. 'I do not mind if that shocks people. I am quite open about it' ('Unrepentant child of a sub-culture' *The Times,* 20 December 1973 p.7).

This was a bold move, but the social stakes were also different because Jenny Fabian's respectability was always recuperable. Retrospectively she acknowledged that the novel caused her father 'grief at the golf club, while my mother bore it stoically, as she'd been brought up to do' ('The trip of a lifetime' *The Sunday Telegraph Magazine*, 15 June 1997 pp.28-29). But her parents did not disown her 'It doesn't matter however dreadfully your child behaves, you must let them come home', her mother Vivian Fabian told Hunter Davies, 'They might commit suicide' ('The Generation Gap: Hunter Davies talks to Jenny Fabian and her mother' *The Sunday Times,* 12 October 1969, p.51). Meanwhile, in *A Chemical Romance,* Jenny Fabian wrote that, by 1971, 'whatever they [her parents] felt inwardly about the content of the book, they had forgiven me outwardly' (Fabian, 1971/1988, p. 107). It is difficult to imagine that, had Emma, like Jenny Fabian, made her groupie exploits public, her father would have been so accommodating.

In May 1969, by way of promoting her forthcoming novel, Jenny Fabian interviewed four women for *Queen* magazine, who she personally knew, and considered

groupies. In the resulting article, 'Orpheus received a lute' (*Queen,* 14-27 May 1969 pp.92-95), class is obfuscated, nevertheless, the image of the groupie which emerges presents a radical departure from the 'scrubber' stereotype. Groupies, Mia, Christine, Marie, and long-term girlfriend of Jimi Hendrix, Kathy Etchingham, gaze languorously from the shadowy black and white photographic portraits that accompany the article (Fig. 6.1).

Fig 6.1 Drug-hazed sexual availability; (clockwise) Christine, Marie, Kathy Etchingham, and Mia and the Pretty Things pose in Fabian, J. (1969) 'Orpheus received a lute', *Queen* (14-27 May), pp. 92-95.

While Christine and Marie are both seated, by a window, and before a poster of Jimi Hendrix, respectively, Mia and Kathy recline on beds bedecked with cushions, the former photographed surrounded by shirtless members of underground group the Pretty Things. The reclining poses of Mia and Kathy and the languorous gazes of all four women signal a drug-hazed sexual availability.

With their hair worn long and natural, and dressed in antique velvets, lace, crochet and flowing dresses, these women typify the underground feminine ideal, the 'Guinevere'- a figure drawn from the Pre-Raphaelite muse and Arthurian legend (Green J. , 1998, pp. 401-402). British hippie style 'bore a message that was anti-capitalist in the sense that to create a unique appearance out of a bricolage of second-hand clothes, craft work and army surplus was to protest sartorially against the wastefulness of the consumer society' (Wilson, 1985, p. 193). But as individuals not directly involved in the

underground began to grow their hair long and adopt hippie stylistic elements to signify their allegiance with the movement, underground 'oppositional dress' (Ibid.) 'trickled up' from the street to the fashion industry (Blumberg, 1974). Designers like Thea Porter and boutiques like Biba began to produce high fashion and mass-produced styles inspired by the hippie retro look (Steele, 1997, p. 285). By 1969 the dolly ideal, icon of the mid-sixties, had been transformed, as 'the art nouveau nymph, stoned and tubercular, replaced the empty vivacity of the sixties girl who was always having such "fun"' (Wilson E. , 1985, p. 177). These groupie portraits, therefore, not only typify the underground feminine ideal, they also correspond, to some extent, with an emergent fashionable ideal. Appearing in the pages of a ladies' lifestyle magazine, which still profiled debutantes, these underground groupies are glamourized and legitimised, in a way that provincial working-class groupies never were.

Archival sources suggest that, coinciding with the publication of *Groupie*, the figure of the groupie underwent a process of bourgeoisification in the media; the 'wet knicker scrubber brigade', as Spike Hawkins contemptuously put it (cited in Green J. , 1998, p. 83), had morphed into something 'cooler', metropolitan, more grown-up (between their late teens and early twenties), and essentially, more middle-class. This shift in understandings of the groupie pattern of behaviour, from a working-class phenomenon to a middle-class one, accounts for the media's heightened interest during this period. For as Clarke et al. have noted, 'expressive movements' among middle-class youth, tend to attract more public attention and reaction than their working-class counterparts (2006, p. 45).

While groupies were described as hailing from 'suburban homes' ('Girls who are going for a song' *The Mirror Magazine*, 11 April 1970 pp.14-15) the scrubber stereotype was not entirely supplanted. The 'scrubber' label itself was occasionally deployed to describe the groupie pattern of behaviour after 1969. For example, in his review of American documentary *Groupies* (Dir, Nevard & Dorfman, USA, 1970), titled, 'The Sick Scrubbers of Pop', critic Stanley Hurwitz describes groupies as 'a particular species of the "scrubber" genre'. This article was accompanied by headshot stills from the film of American groupies Pamela Des Barres and Miss Harlow (*Newcastle Journal,* 16 Feburary 1973).

Mainstream media representation also continued to draw upon some of the key themes and imagery established in proto-groupie representation, such as the scalp hunter and nymphomaniac. The passing of Beatlemania and annexation of classic scenes

of hysterical fandom to the pop genre and its young, predominantly female teenybopper audience, meant the image of the hysteric featured less prominently. But this new kind of groupie, like the 'scrubber', continued to be described variously as 'sad' ('Girls who are going for a song' *The Mirror Magazine,* 11 April 1970, pp.14-15), 'hopeless' (ibid.), 'vacuous' (ibid.) 'pathetic' ('Jumping on the bandwagon' *Newcastle Chronicle,* 16 Feburary 1973 p.16) 'lost' ('It's enough to give an RSM apoplexy' *Evening Chronicle,* 18 Seprember 1970) and 'soulless' ('Catgut' *The Sunday Times,* 2 November 1969 p.55) drawing upon cultural anxieties regarding mass culture and consumerism.

Groupie representation in the mainstream media may have been generally characterised by moral outrage and condemnation, but this new kind of groupie, like the predominantly middle-class underground with which she was associated, was also taken more seriously; Jenny Fabian was among a handful of underground groupies who were, unlike the working-class groupie, given some space to account for themselves and their behaviour in the media. In doing so, this form of representation attributed this new kind of groupie with more agency than her pathologized working-class counterpart. 'Discourses of individualism' (Skeggs, 1997, p. 163), which legitimate the middle-classes, and render the working-classes unworthy of the designation 'individual', can be seen at play in the divergent construction of these two different kinds of groupie along class lines.

Presented with a middle-class groupie and institutionally legitimised author, the media response to Jenny Fabian could also be ambiguous, even admiring. Writing from the vantage point of 1973, in his article titled 'Unrepentant Child of the Subculture', journalist Geoffrey Wansell described her as 'a child of our times, a sexual adventuress whose escapades as a follower of popular musicians gained her a considerable, if transitory, notoriety' (*The Times*, 19 March 1973, p.7). Sexual attitudes may have relaxed by 1973; nevertheless, this description positions Jenny Fabian as a product of the times, rather than her class, like the 'scrubber'.

As Clark et al observe, middle-class countercultures tend to be treated as 'potentially political' even if they do not take the form of an overtly political response (2006, p. 48). Accordingly, Jenny Fabian was quoted in newspaper articles on a range of topics, such as 'Just how permissive are we?' (*Gazette and Post,* 4 December 1969 p.13) and 'What is the secret of sex appeal?' (*Liverpool Echo,* 29 September 1971 p.7) which positioned her as a kind of spokesperson for the radical fringes of the 'permissive' society. She was also invited to speak on current events television programme *Challenge,* where she appeared alongside Jack Straw, then National Union of Students' president and

Michael Mogie, Durham Anarchists Group leader (cited in 'In view: Dream with Braden' *Newcastle Evening Chronicle,* 28 November 1970). By giving Jenny Fabian space to pontificate on her sexual politics, the media aligned this new kind of groupie with what Clarke et al. have identified as a set of moral panics around permissiveness and middle-class youth, who were interpreted as 'active agents of social breakdown' rather than symptomatic of deep civil unrest, like working-class youth (2006, p. 57). These divergent constructions of the groupie along class lines illuminate the class biases and class prejudices at play within British culture, but they also serve to obscure commonalities; the groupie phenomenon concerns women as a group which crosses class.

Jenny Fabian's behaviour may have been treated as potentially political in the media, but her countercultural involvement was limited to the movement's manifestation as a radical alternative lifestyle, which encompassed sexual permissiveness, drug experimentation, and the rejection of a 9-5 workaday existence. While the underground, as an immersive lifestyle, was confined to the metropolitan elite who congregated around a small number of nightclubs and other venues, the movement's more political wing, the New Left, was larger, extending across the country through its universities. During the sixties there were boycotts, sit-ins, and violent disruptions at, most notably, London School of Economics (LSE), but also at the universities of Hull, Birmingham, Bristol, and Essex, and in art schools, such as Hornsey and Guildford (Caute, 1988). As we shall see in Chapter 9, this was part of a global phenomenon. Student demands varied, but it was the Vietnam War that replaced nuclear weapons as *the* central issue for the New Left. The Vietnam Solidarity Campaign (VSC) was launched in 1966, and heavily publicised demonstrations, attended by tens of thousands of protestors, some of which ended in violent confrontations with the police, took place at the US Embassy Grosvenor Square, in October 1967, March 1968, and October 1968.

The underground was also galvanised by what was seen as British complicity in American imperialism, and these two groups would form a precarious alliance in opposition to the Vietnam War. While radical and challenging reinterpretations of Marxist theory, developed by influential continental thinkers such as Herbert Marcuse and Guy Debord, were debated and disseminated in Britain via academic journals and radical newspapers, such as the *New Left Review* (1960- Present), and *Black Dwarf* (1968-1972), the libertarian underground press gave space to student protests and theorists on the left, imposing 'psychedelia over the assumed dullness of Marxist-Leninist theory' (Diski, 2010, p. 87). New Left student activists, like Sheila Rowbotham, were also inclined to

dip into the underground world of music and recreational drug experimentation. Nevertheless, 'between the "politicos" and the hippies there was tension, even animosity' (Caute, 1988, p. 23); the politically motivated New Left, which sought to change the world through activism and intellectual inquiry, regarded countercultural hedonism as trivial, while the counterculture found New Left intellectualism boring (Green J. , 1999, p. 244).

Jenny Fabian was among those in the underground who eschewed political activism and derided New Left intellectualism. 'I simply can't read the *International Times*. It's pretentious rubbish', she told the *Sunday Times* ('Jenny's Journal' 9 March 1969, p.17). She was far more interested in the radical fringes of personal behaviour than radical politics. Today, she abhors labels and being 'put in a box', but the emphasis she places upon self-reliance and personal freedom throughout her oral history, in her memoirs and mediated testimonies, paints a portrait of an individualist and libertarian.[22] But as Skeggs notes, 'individuals' are the product of privilege who can occupy the economic and cultural conditions which enable them to do the work on the self' (1997, p. 163). For Jenny Fabian, New Left political activism held little appeal because her involvement with the underground was motivated by a quest for personal fulfilment rather than political idealism. She was not alone in this regard, as Brake observes: 'the "politics" of the counterculture often amounted to little more than an absorption in "art" and "individualism" and thus tended to evade rather than confront the structural sources of inequality' (1980, p. 100).

Claiming the groupie; Underground perspectives

Archival evidence suggests that, initially, some underground initiates made sense of the groupie phenomenon in relation to countercultural values and objectives. References to groupies first began to appear in the underground press from March 1969, possibly inspired by *Rolling Stone*'s infamous expose on the American groupie phenomenon 'Groupies and Other Girls', which editor Jann Wenner selected to launch the UK edition of the magazine on the 15th of February 1969. The studio shots that accompany this article,

[22] When I ran this characterization by Jenny Fabian in an informal follow-up conversation, she reluctantly agreed it was 'okay but sounds a bit eighteenth century.'

Fig 6.2 Caroline Coon exudes underground cool posing for her groupie parody with Mitch Mitchell and Noel Redding in Unknown, (1969) 'Is this girl a tart?' *Oz* (Issue 19, March), p.11. (Credit: Keith Morris).

taken by photographer, Baron Wolman, are strikingly stylish.[23] These American groupies, and 'other girls', pose confidently in eclectic antique clothes, many are conventionally beautiful, and the staging and styling of some of the photographs would not look out of place in *Vogue.*

Rolling Stone was widely read in the British underground and the following month, Caroline Coon posed for *Oz* in a 'groupie parody' with musicians Mitch Mitchell and Noel Redding of the Jimi Hendrix Experience. 'Is this girl a tart?' asks *Oz:*

> Yes! Says Jimi Hendrix, who wouldn't be seen posing with her for Oz. It's the lovely Caroline Coon. When she arrived at Jimi's-especially tarted-up for a groupie parody-an acolyte muttered: 'Jimi's the only one around here who's allowed to wear frizzed hair'. 'Yes', added Mr. Hendrix, 'you don't have to prostitute yourself'. In that case, thought Caroline, I'll leave. Which she did. Followed by the sympathetic Noel Redding and Mitch Mitchell. Recalls Caroline: 'it was an awful Experience'. 'Teeny rave bop OZ' (*Oz*, 19 March 1969 p.11)

Whether this incident actually took place as described remains to be seen. Satire, typical of *Oz,* infuses this gossipy anecdote, but Hendrix is painted as the villain of the piece, characterised as vain, egotistical, and puritanical. As Skeggs observes, tarty is 'the sign of the working-class woman' (1997, p. 85), but Coon is middle-class. In the accompanying image (Fig. 6.2), she is resplendent in sumptuous antique flapper dress, voluminous curled hair, and immaculate intricate black eyeliner. While the stereotype of the working-class tart wears cheap, gaudy, revealing clothes, this groupie parody exudes a kind of underground glamour, comparable to the women photographed in *Rolling Stone* and *Queen*.

References to the groupie phenomenon across underground media are limited, but suggest that, initially, the underground's response to the groupie phenomenon was generally positive. The most extensive coverage of the groupie phenomenon to appear in the underground press was written by Germaine Greer. In 1970 she would publish her

[23] The 'Groupies and Other Girls' expose has been the subject of academic study in the United States (Fenn, 2002; Rhodes, 2001) and is not directly relevant to this study, which is concerned with the British groupie phenomenon.

influential feminist text *The Female Eunuch,* which would skyrocket her to international fame, but in 1969 Greer was leading a kind of triple life, lecturing at Warwick University, hosting a teen sketch show on Granada TV called *Nice Time* (1968-1969)*,* and regularly contributing to *Oz.* Greer's perspective(s) on the groupie as a feminist will be expanded upon in Chapter 9; this chapter is concerned with how Greer as an underground luminary, and self-identified groupie, made sense of the groupie phenomenon.

In her cover story for *OZ,* titled 'The Universal Tonguebath: A Groupie's Vision' (19 March 1969, pp.30-33), Greer interviews herself, as a groupie called Dr G, and in the accompanying photographs poses with Vivian Stanshall of the Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band. On the front cover, she stands behind Stanshall, grinning provocatively at the camera as she unzips his fly; inside, on the front of book content page, Stanshall stands erect, with Greer kneeling, worshipful, at his feet; on the back cover, she straddles a cross-legged Stanshall, gazes at the heavens with a look of ecstasy, and is revealed to be bare breasted, wearing an antique Assuit bolero; in the series of four images that accompany the article itself, Greer appears alone, wielding an electric guitar, the image is superimposed within the silhouette of a giant phallus (Fig. 6.3). Unlike Coon's straight-faced 'groupie parody', Greer's presentation in these images is playful and parodic but her frizzy natural hair and opulent antique clothing exude underground cool.

Fig 6.3 Germaine Greer playfully poses with Viv Stanshall in Greer, G. (1969) 'The Universal Tonguebath: A groupie's vision', *Oz* (Issue 19, March), pp. 30-33 (Credit: Keith Morris).

This article drew the attention of the tabloids: 'she is shown with a blouse undone and nothing underneath, playing the guitar' reported the *News of the World* in its expose titled the 'The not so Nice Time girl' (29 June 1969 p.3). Her boyfriend at the time, Mick Farren, claims she lost her job at Granada TV as a result (Farren, 2002, p. 221). Greer defended 'The Universal Tonguebath; A Groupie's Vision' as a work of satire: 'I was really doing a send-up of the groupies, just portraying it as a way of life', she told a reporter defensively. 'It's not necessarily me that's described in the article. My personal life is private' ('The not so Nice Time girl, *News of the World,* 29 June 1969 p.3).

The article does contain elements of parody; 'I guess I'm a starfucker really', Dr G tells Germaine Greer. 'You know, it's a name I dig, because all the men who get inside me

are stars. Even if they're plumbers, they're star plumbers' ('The Universal Tonguebath: A Groupie's Vision' *Oz*, 19 March 1969 pp.30-33). But her biographer, Christine Wallace suggests that Greer 'had relayed these precise views and anecdotes in all seriousness to Richard Neville before she wrote the piece' (1997, p. 144). Wallace and a second biographer, Elizabeth Kleinhenz (2018), also both agree that Greer did indeed partake in a groupie phase during this period. Three years later, in an article she wrote for Australian magazine *Pol,* Greer confirmed that 'The Universal Tonguebath: A Groupie's Vision' was derived from her own groupie experiences. 'I wrote an article in *Oz* magazine in which I, as Germaine, interviewed a famous groupie called Dr G the day-tripper, who was also me,' she wrote. 'In it I talked about the rock musicians I have known and loved, without mentioning their names, and the life led by people who are caught up in the rock culture' (cited in Wallace, 1997, p. 145).

In her article for *Pol,* Greer claims rock music was 'a liberating influence for us all' (Ibid.). In doing so she may draw upon the ideas of Canadian philosopher, Marshall McLuhan (1964) which were influential within the underground at that time. McLuhan argued it is the form, rather that the content, of a medium which affects society; 'the medium is the message'. As these ideas mingled with the influence of psychedelia, countercultural McLuhanites 'argued that the music of Dylan, the Rolling Stones, or the Beatles had done more to change people's consciousness than radical theory or practice' (Buxton, 1990, p. 372). For underground initiates, rock, like psychedelic drugs, was thought to be 'the means by which the young would free themselves from adult hang-ups and repression' (Frith & McRobbie, 1990, p. 317). In this way, rock had the potential to ultimately bring about the much-vaunted social revolution necessary to deliver the counterculture's vision of utopia or 'rocktopia', characterised by peace, love, freedom, and community. This vision was for a time thought to be rendered in miniature at a series of what would become increasingly enormous music festivals held in Britain and the United States from 1967 onwards.

In 'The Universal Tonguebath: A Groupie's Vision' Greer expands upon the idea of rock as a liberating force:

> … the girls sitting wiped out against cold nightclub walls in quiet clothes arose with their listening eyes and danced alone, opened out their beauty in the various light and sex flowed back into the scene and lapped all around them. Where all the currents intersected and flowed forward and back, there he was, the musical revolutionary-poet calling all to witness the new order and achieve the group grope, astride his thousands of volts, winding his horn while the mode of the

> music changed, and the walls of the city fell and everybody burst out laughing. The women kept on dancing while their long skirts crept up, and their girdles dissolved, and their nipples burst through like hyacinth tips and their clothes withered away to the mere wisps and ghost of draperies to adorn and glorify, and at last the cunt lay open like a shining seapath to the sun (*Oz,* 19 March 1969, p. 31)

In this passage, Greer paraphrases the *IT* slogan, loosely translated from Plato's *Republic,* 'when the mode of the music changes, the walls of the city shake' (Green J. , 1999, p. 418) to underscore rock's revolutionary connotations. Her use of sexual imagery, meanwhile, draws upon radical sexual theories to locate rock's 'liberating influence' within the erotic realm, rather than social or political sphere.

The theories of Austrian Freudo-Marxist psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957) were highly influential within countercultural circles at this time. Reich argued that to produce the submissive character required for economic exploitation and political domination under capitalism, healthy sexuality has been historically distorted by a sex-negating culture (Robinson, 1970, p. 50). In *Eros and Civilisation* (1955/1974) Marcuse made similar arguments; for him, the release of sexual pleasure had the revolutionary potential to penetrate the consciousness and disrupt bourgeois complacency. These ideas fed into the hippie 'free love' ethos, which advocated sexual liberation as a 'solution' to violence. They also provided an appropriate intellectual rationale for the strand of highly libertarian sexual radicalism, which posited individual sexual liberation as a means to achieve collective social and political liberation, that came to dominate countercultural circles (Neville, 1970, p. 61).

In the passage above, Greer draws upon the Reichian idea that a political and social revolution could be brought about by individuals achieving sexual liberation, to construct the groupie as a sexual trailblazer and central component in the countercultural project. She would repeat this reframing of the groupie as an agent of sexual liberation elsewhere: 'I think groupies are important because they demystify sex', she was quoted by *The New York Times,* 'they accept it as physical, and they aren't possessive about their conquests' ('Germaine Greer- Opinions that may shock the faithful', *The New York Times*, 22 March 1971, n.p.). Her appraisal of the groupie phenomenon in *Oz* resonated with at least one reader, C. E. Philips. 'In this world saturated with violence, physical, mental, or spiritual, it is infinitely better to have a good fuck', writes Philips, in the only letter on the groupie subject to appear in the following month's edition (April 1969, p.4).

Richard Neville took a similar view to Greer when he included the groupie phenomenon in his manifesto and survey of the international countercultural movement, *Playpower* (1970). 'These people are the sexological phenomenon of the sixties, as fashionable anthropological specimens as were the Trobriand Islanders in their day', he writes, before citing American groupie Cynthia Plastercaster's assertion that the groupie phenomenon 'is going to be a significant element in the revolution' (Neville, 1970, p. 69). Exactly what role the groupie might play in the revolution is not expanded upon, but elsewhere in his manifesto Neville also draws upon cod-Reichian theory to describe how, in an ideal, pre-capitalist 'pagan beach society', a 'generous girl' will 'put on a queue' behind the sand dunes for a seemingly unlimited line-up of young men (p. 67). In this light, one suspects his embrace of the groupie phenomenon has more to do with its apparent compatibility with male defined ideas of female 'liberation', as passive sexual availability, than the truly radical nature of the groupie phenomenon. Indeed, 'the knowledge that the performance of frequent sexual intercourse was a political duty was a powerful excuse for the sexual demands of young revolutionaries' (Jeffreys, 1991, p. 103). Jenny Fabian was among those underground women who benefitted from the increased opportunities for sexual fulfilment afforded by the new sexual radicalism, but male accounts such as Neville's give a strong indication of what was expected from women, and from sexual relationships.

If Neville's account of female sexual liberation makes for unsavoury reading, Greer's vision of the groupie phenomenon was highly romanticised. Switching to a second-person narrative, which implies personal experience, she describes the groupie/musician encounter in 'The Universal Tonguebath: A Groupie's Vision':

> When it's right that's how it is. You recognise each other, and you play in tune. Because you meet that way there are no hang-ups, no ploys, well, no way of exploiting each other. If you fuck, you do it with the carnal innocence of children, or cats or something. When you've watched a man calling his call, and you've heard it and know what it means, there are no limits, the night you spend together is limitless too (*Oz* 19 March 1969, p. 32)

In this scenario, the hidden agendas and power disparities of the old corrupt erotic order are supplanted by the innocence and spontaneity of *authentic* prelapsarian sexuality, for, as Linda Grant observes, the sexual revolution was 'all about authenticity, about throwing off inhibitions and hypocrisy, about doing one's own thing' (1993, p. 264). In this article, Greer constructs the groupie/musician encounter as *the* paradigm of sexual liberation.

The mediated testimonies of some underground groupies bear striking resemblance to Greer's. 'I remember watching this group playing and getting hung up on the drummer', Mia, told Jenny Fabian in *Queen:*

> […] It was like the whole sound of the group was coming from those hands, and it was turning me on. I went into a fantasy about being confronted by this guy whose face I'd hardly seen but whose hands I knew so well, and I knew I'd dig him because I'd dig anybody who could make such a groovy sound. So, when they'd finished playing, I went up and said hello, then we had a smoke together and I spent the night with him ('Orpheus received a lute' 14-27 May 1969, pp.92-95)

In this passage, Mia, like Greer, describes a spontaneous sexual encounter without hidden agendas or power disparities. She also makes explicit the link between rock and sexual liberation, suggesting she was sexually aroused by the effects of the music itself, and this in turn attracted her to the musician. Jenny Fabian described a similar erotic response to the music when I asked her whether she was attracted to handsome musicians in our interview:

> No, it was the music. If they made good music I would forgive them. I mean, God rest his soul, I don't think I would ever have slept with Ric Grech if he'd been a chartered accountant. But he, he was the guy who played the electric violin in the Family, and it moved me, and I thought 'wow, that…' cos it *really* was the music, that entered my body and soul and I wanted to give back, I mean sounds silly, and perhaps almost like an excuse or pretentious, but 'Thank you, for that, and what can I do for you?' it was like, cos it really was, I really did enjoy the sounds of that era (2019)

When Jenny Fabian speaks of how the music entered her 'body and soul' and Mia recalls how she was turned on by the music, these women are describing how they not only heard but *felt* the music, and how they understood this bodily experience to be sexual in nature. Drugs, of course, may have played a role in heightening this erotic response. The ideas of McLuhan may also have provided an intellectual rationale for the link some underground initiates made between eroticism and rock. His arguments converged with the countercultural strand of sexual radicalism when he claimed, 'the electric media, by stimulating all senses simultaneously, also give a new and richer sensual dimension to everyday sexuality that makes Henry Miller…old-fashioned and obsolete' (cited in Neville, 1970, p. 70).

Where sexual desire and authentic fandom had been positioned in the mainstream media as mutually exclusive, discrediting groupies and Beatlemaniacs alike, groupie testimonies suggest that some underground groupies drew upon countercultural

ideology, which placed value on sensory experience and sexual authenticity, to reconfigure eroticism as a mark of authentic fandom within a reverse discourse. Where the sexual appeal of a group's members was intrinsic to Emma's fandom, for Jenny Fabian the sexual appeal of a group's members was contingent on the erotic appeal of their music, 'but obviously, there were certain people who weren't attractive' she told me, 'even though they were big names […] I had a scintilla of integrity [laughs]' (2019).

While the groupie phenomenon appears to have been initially defined in relation to countercultural ideas of radical sexual libertarianism, there were no moves to reinstate or reclaim the figure of the 'scrubber' as a forerunner of the sexual revolution. Instead, Greer invokes the 'scrubber' stereotype and distinguishes the groupie from this figure. 'In the years BB (before Beatlemania) there were two kinds of musicians' birds, the muso's old ladies and the scrubbers', she writes:

> The rock-and-rollers picked up and put down the local goers like meals, perhaps storing a little woman at home, protected from the knowledge of her husband's promiscuity and lunatic fringes of his sexuality. The scrubbers suffered all his aggression, all his loneliness and self-doubt ('The Universal Tonguebath: A Groupie's Vision' *OZ* 19 March 1969, p. 32)

While Greer understands the 'scrubber's' low social status as one which leaves her open to abuse, she also denies her sexual agency. Instead, she situates the 'scrubber' in a scenario which resembles Freud's conception of the Madonna/whore complex; in doing so, she implies that the 'scrubber' is the object of sexual repression rather than an agent of sexual liberation.

In Fabian and Byrne's novel *Groupie*, sexual repression or 'hang ups' are also attributed almost exclusively to characters of working-class origin, such as 'Norman' who becomes upset when Katie seduces and then discards him. In these accounts sexual liberation is demarcated as the province of a predominantly middle-class counterculture who intellectualise their behaviour and define themselves in opposition to a sexually repressed working-class; the imagined excesses attributed to the latter remain but are redefined as the product of this repression. Within the underground, then, classist tropes and attitudes were reconfigured to be compatible with the new onus on sexual liberation. Their endurance, more broadly, reflects the inward-looking nature of a predominantly middle-class movement, which saw itself as the vanguard, but failed to form meaningful alliances with working-class labour politics.

Conclusion

The groupie phenomenon in its middle-class manifestation was taken much more seriously in the mainstream media than it had been in its working-class manifestation. This reconfigured figure of the groupie was understood in relation to the wider disaffiliation of middle-class youth and treated as potentially political. Jenny Fabian's testimony, meanwhile, suggests that the groupie phenomenon can be understood in relation to the underground as a radical alternative lifestyle rather than its more overtly political manifestations, such as the student protest and anti-Vietnam War movement.

Within the underground itself, archival sources and groupie testimonies suggest that, initially, the phenomenon was understood in relation to countercultural ideas of sexual radicalism, and for some influential individuals, such as Germaine Greer and Richard Neville, this imbued the phenomenon with vaguely revolutionary connotations. But the issue of class underlies both mainstream and underground reappraisals. A pattern of behaviour, which had been dismissed as a form of working-class sexual delinquency by the mainstream media, and as a product of working-class sexual repression by some within the underground, was only reframed as potentially political/revolutionary when exhibited by middle-class young women.

Jenny Fabian's testimony indicates she was untroubled by the category of respectability. Her class privilege made it possible for her to not only gain acceptance in both the underground field and the field of journalism but speak openly about her groupie escapades and intellectualise her behaviour in a way that working-class groupies like Emma were unable to. As we shall see in the following chapter, her middle-class cultural capital also made it possible for her to approach the groupie pattern of behaviour in a different, more strategic way than Emma was able to do.

Chapter 7 Chasing 'Groupie glory': navigating the underground field

Between her first groupie experience with Syd Barrett in 1967 and publishing her novel *Groupie* in 1969, Jenny Fabian managed to advance her status within the underground hierarchy to secure a prominent position for herself. But not all groupies were able to do the same; this chapter argues that, within the underground field, classed and gendered cultural capitals held different convertible values. While groupies were able to trade their sexual capital for different kinds of subcultural capital, this was by no means a straightforward exchange, and some groupies found their attempts to negotiate vicarious status through sexual relationships blocked. To understand how groupies deployed their sexual capital to navigate this highly competitive field and why some were more successful in advancing their social status than others, this chapter draws upon Jenny Fabian's lived experiences, recorded in her novels and oral history, and the mediated accounts of other underground groupies produced at the time.

Feminine cultural subordination and the trading of sexual capital

The underground may have promised women alternatives, but as Virginia Nicholson observes, 'a broader reading of the sources tells us that, in a rapidly changing society, men were lagging behind in adjusting their inbuilt prejudices' (2019, p. 220). 'Girls just rolled joints', recalls artist Nicola Lane, 'it was what you did while you sat quietly in the corner, nodding your head. You were not really encouraged to be a thinker. You were really there for fucks and domesticity' (cited in Green J. , 1998, p. 401). The testimonies of underground women suggest that, just as feminine cultural capital was devalued in the dominant culture, so it was of low convertible value within the underground. Women, therefore, entered the field with lower stocks of subcultural capital than men.

'It was quite helpful if you were, involved with somebody' Jenny Fabian told me when I asked her about roles for women within the underground, 'involved with a guy who was somebody in the underground, so that's where the expression "somebody's old lady" would come in' (Fabian, 2019). In our interview, Jenny Fabian identified other roles for women in the underground, including secretarial positions within the underground press and the underground's commercial arm- the music business, selling vintage clothes, and dealing drugs- the latter of which, she noted, came with significant social status. She also spoke of Germaine Greer, and Caroline Coon, both of whom were among a handful

of women who managed to carve out independent positions of power for themselves within the underground. But when I asked her about hierarchy, Jenny Fabian described a steady relationship with a musician as the chief means by which women were able to advance their low social status within the field:

> There was a hierarchy amongst the girls, because […] if you'd got a really good boyfriend - a top rock star - you were looked up to, rather than if you were scrabbling around at the bottom with some drummer from a group nobody knew. So, there was a hierarchy like that. (Fabian, 2019)

Jenny Fabian's testimony suggests that it was possible for women to negotiate vicarious status by trading their sexual capital for subcultural capital, and this practice was not confined to the underground groupie. But the trading of sexual capital was complex. Physical beauty is the most obvious form of sexual capital, for those women whose appearance corresponded with beauty ideals of the period, this could be of great advantage. As Nicola Lane recalls, 'looks were very important. Looks were far more important in the sixties than they are now. Looks were of primary importance' (cited in Green J. , 1998, p. 402). Jenny Fabian agreed, 'looks were very important'. But she also explained that physical beauty alone was not enough:

> Well, it was definitely style, because you could be physically beautiful and look like a 1950s housewife, couldn't you? I mean beauty was obviously a help, but then I imagine it still is, but the style was definitely the most important thing, so you could get away with a lot, if you had style (2019)

Sexual capital is, therefore, like all other kinds of capital, dependent upon the specific field in which it holds currency (Green A. I. , 2012, p. 149). In this case, the underground presents a social milieu anchored to a loose network of underground physical sites (such as the Speakeasy, the Scotch of St. James, and the UFO), and the structure of relations that underpins its social organisation.[24] In Bourdieusian terms, this formulation constitutes the underground field in which subcultural capital acquires value and significance. But it is also a field in which sexual capital holds hegemonic status in relation to the erotic preferences of a particular crowd (Green A. I. , 2008, p. 30).

[24] The 'Speak' and the 'Scotch', as they were known to initiates, both opened in 1966. These members clubs, frequented by the rock'n'roll community, including top groups such as the Bee Gees, the Rolling Stones and the Who, were so exclusive there was no need for a VIP area. As Barry Miles recalls, - 'The Speak was famous for its groupies, who had a harder time getting into the Scotch […] if they did not arrive with a musician' (2010, p. 171)

For sexual capital to be rendered contextually valuable, it was necessary for it to be combined with forms of subcultural capital. To return to Jenny Fabian:

> A certain look was very important, so you had to have the look of someone who knew, about perhaps, I could call it 'free love'. So, you would wear a certain type of clothing, your hair would be in a certain way, probably longish and a bit messy. And you'd wear old-fashioned clothes, and you'd have a certain kind of confidence about you and you'd smoke a lot of pot, and you'd be able to hold your own with the dope smoking, and you'd be able to roll joints, and you'd just be, you'd just be able to show you were a kind of independent individual. (2019)

In this extract from our interview, Jenny Fabian describes the cultivation of 'hipness' as a form of subcultural capital which 'confers status on its owner in the eyes of the relevant beholder' (Thornton, 1995, p. 11). This form of subcultural capital can be objectified (antique clothing) and embodied (being confident, independent, and able to maintain one's cool while on drugs). Through the cultivation of hipness as a form of subcultural capital, or 'front work' and 'impression management' as Adam Isaiah Green puts it, a groupie could render her sexual capital contextually valuable and even enhance its value. Jenny Fabian's testimony also suggests that the cultivation of these embodied and objectified capitals signified a sexually liberated self.

The successful musician possessed high levels of both artistic capital and subcultural capital. As Thornton notes:

> with live ideologies, the artistic and subcultural authenticities collide (and are often confused) at the point of authorship. Artistic authenticity is anchored by the performing author in so far as s/he is assumed to be the unique origin of the sound, while subcultural authenticity is grounded in the performer in so far as s/he represents the community (1995, p. 30).

For women, whose lower stocks of subcultural capital saw them generally excluded from rock's creative production and other positions of prestige within the underground, artistic capital and high levels of subcultural capital were unobtainable. But groupie testimonies suggest that the groupie pattern of behaviour offered an alternative means to negotiate more subcultural capital. This could be achieved in several interrelated ways, all of which have a vicarious element, and all of which were contingent upon male approval. Indeed, male approval appears to have stood in for (sub)cultural approval, legitimising the groupie, lending her subcultural credibility, and the kind of subcultural authenticity which is 'about being natural to community' (ibid.).

In their interviews, the groupies in *Queen* exhibit 'doxa'; practical consciousness of the game and the stakes and assets in play, and 'illusio', acceptance that the game is

worth playing (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 73). The sexual encounter with the male musician appears to have worked, to some extent, as a form of subcultural capital in and of itself. This is underlined by the tendency for groupies to boast about their sexual conquests. Christine, for example, claims she 'only got involved with big groups and usually the leader of the band' ('Orpheus received a lute' *Queen,* 14-27 May 1969 pp.92-95). The sexual encounter might also lead to the groupie being observed by their peers socialising with male musicians, 'When I'm with someone in a group I find people treat me better' Mia tells Jenny Fabian*,* 'like I'm someone, because of who I'm with' (ibid.). This also appears to have worked as a form of subcultural capital. But higher levels of subcultural capital could be accrued should the groupie secure a steady relationship, and ideally cohabit, with a male musician possessed of high levels of subcultural capital and artistic capital – the envied position of being known as 'somebody's old lady' (Fabian, 2019).

In *Queen* the perceived status and security of living with a big-name pop star, 'groupie glory' ('Orpheus received a lute' *Queen,* 14-27 May 1969 pp.92-95) is positioned as the ultimate goal; 'Kathy has made it', Jenny Fabian writes*,* 'She holds the envied position of living with Jimi Hendrix and has done for the last two and a half years.' Meanwhile, Mia, a groupie just starting out, 'can see herself getting right into the group scene because she is meeting more and more groups, and ultimately she wants to live with a superstar'. Marie, on the other hand, confesses her misgivings:

> Although I must admit it would be nice to have a scene with someone big to give me some prestige, and I do feel envious of chicks who have got scenes going with guys in good groups. But I have a lot of complexes that stop me from trying to make the Speakeasy scene, because I'm afraid that if I did try to get something going for myself there, I might fail, and rather than have my ego shattered I don't try. I keep telling myself I don't need the prestige of going with a group member. (Ibid.)

It appears that the majority of sexual encounters between groupies and male musicians did not lead to the 'groupie glory' of a steady relationship. As Marie laments:

> The trouble is that the nice ones always seem to be involved with chicks, like living with them, and it's only the bastards that pull you. And that doesn't do you any good, because next time you see them it's 'hello, how are you?', so I've stopped sleeping around and prefer to think of myself as a friend rather than a chick who's trying to pull them (Ibid.)

Hakim has suggested that sexual capital is a female resource and can be used to women's advantage; drawing upon the work of social exchange theorists (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004) she argues that 'market value is determined by the desirability relative to the

scarcity, supply and demand' (Hakim, 2010, p. 47). But within the sexually 'liberated' underground, women were *expected* to be sexually available, 'if you go to someone's pad, then you have to, haven't you? You don't argue. I'd sleep with someone just because he was an old friend', Jenny Fabian told the *Sunday Times* ('The Generation Gap: Hunter Davies talks to Jenny Fabian and her mother' 12 October 1969, p.51). Moreover, groupie testimonies suggest that competition among underground groupies was fierce because there were not enough successful male musicians to go round ('Orpheus received a lute' *Queen,* 14-27 May 1969 pp.92-95). This situation could see groupies take on the active sexual role traditionally assigned to men in order to compete for the attention of male musicians. But the gendered power imbalance remained in place unchallenged; the convertible value of feminine cultural capital remained low and musicians, therefore, had the power to decide which groupies were 'valuable', and worthy of elevation through the hierarchy to girlfriend status, and which were 'disposable'. Under such 'market conditions' female sexual capital was abundant, and therefore devalued, putting women at a greater disadvantage than Hakim might have anticipated when it came to trading their sexual capital. As Fabian and Byrne write, many male musicians 'scored so many chicks and got so smashed that one chick was pretty much the same as another' (1969, p. 210).

Like Kathy, Christine achieved 'groupie glory' – cohabiting with a star – but her interview reveals the precarity beneath the fantasy of security. Christine told Jenny Fabian about how her own relationship with a top pop star had soured:

> Through me he changed his appearance and found he was attractive to other chicks. After a while he wanted to pull these chicks – he realised that now he could pull anybody, which before he couldn't. As well as this, musically he had reached his peak, and I had to take a couple of stands down ('Orpheus received a lute' *Queen,* 14-27 May 1969 pp.92-95).

Women do not have a monopoly on sexual capital. For the male musician, the cultivation of subcultural capital in the form of an affective presentation, defined by long hair, beads, and tight trousers, could render one's sexual capital contextually valuable. Christine's account suggests that, by taking style advice from her, and perhaps even borrowing her clothes and accessories, her boyfriend effectively appropriated her objectified subcultural capital, and this worked to enhance his own field-relevant sexual capital.

Artistic capital accrued through membership of a successful underground group could also generate high levels of contextually valuable male sexual capital. Ric Grech, for example, was not a conventionally attractive man, by Jenny Fabian's own admission, but

what made him attractive to her was the fact that 'he was the guy who played the electric violin in the Family' (2019).[25] In Christine's case, as her boyfriend achieved a degree of success as a musician, he found himself becoming attractive to considerably more women within the underground. The temptation to exploit his newfound sexual capital was evidently too great to resist, and Christine found herself discarded, her social standing and stocks of subcultural capital diminished by the loss of her high-status boyfriend. Christine's experience illustrates how the status differential between groupie and musician meant that, not only did groupies have more to gain, in the form of subcultural capital and vicarious status, from establishing a steady relationship with a male musician, they also had more to lose should that relationship fail.

This status differential also meant that, for the male musician, sexual capital could not be traded in the same way as it could be for the groupie. Certainly, he could negotiate pleasure through sexual encounters with groupies; Regan and Dreyer (1999) have found that beyond the underground, men are significantly more likely than women to claim that they gain status and prestige in the eyes of their peers by having brief sexual encounters. A series of sexual 'conquests' may, therefore, have worked as a form of subcultural capital for male musicians. But groupies and other women in the underground generally occupied a significantly lower social status within the field, and therefore had little subcultural capital of vicarious value. Where women and girls did hold power was *en masse*, as consumers; the denigrated record- and concert ticket-buying teenage girls to whom the male pop star's sexual projection was chiefly designed to appeal. Through this negotiation, male sexual capital could be converted into economic and symbolic capital with trading value on other markets.

Sexual libertarianism under conditions of sexual inequality could also see the expansion of male sexual freedom and its encroachment upon women's right to self-determination. Rowbotham describes a 'seedy side to the underground' (2001, p. 210) and she is not alone; women's histories of the period abound in negative sexual experiences. As Diski recalls, 'wanting overrode not wanting. To stop someone having something they wanted was to be a drag, really controlling, just laying "your problem" on others who were unburdened by your hang-ups' (2010, p. 61). Claims about groupie sexual availability were pervasive in the mainstream media and may well have

[25] Ric Grech was 'Joe' in *Groupie* (Fabian & Byrne, 1969)

contributed to the assumption that, if all women within the underground were now sexually available, groupies were especially so.

Such assumptions are touched upon in an article concerning the production of the American rock musical, *200 Motels* (Dir, Zappa & Palmer, USA 1971), which was filmed at London's Pinewood Studios. Co-director, Tony Palmer reported that 'some of the groupies turned out to be real and got upset when people treated them like groupies and everybody had a party' ('Frank Zappa, The Royal Philharmonic and me' *The Observer,* 28 March 1971, p.7-13). Working in an industry decades before its #MeToo reckoning, Palmer's dismissive quote implies that, on set, at least one of these young women may have been subjected to sexual harassment by a crew or cast member, who had, quite reasonably, by Palmer's reckoning, assumed that 'real' groupies must be sexually available to anyone.

Though neither Jenny Fabian nor Emma spoke of being pressured into unwanted sexual encounters during their groupie phase, in *Groupie* Katie is threatened with rape by a roadie:

> He gave me a sinister look. 'I could have you, I could do anything I want to you because nobody would care, not Joe, not the others, not even you'. (p. 55)

In our interview, Jenny Fabian confirmed this incident did take place:

> there was the guy who banged on the door, yes it wasn't quite as bad as that, we kind of exaggerated it because it could have escalated into that, but there were people around weren't there? […] Yeah, that wasn't very nice, but I didn't really believe, I still didn't feel as vulnerable, as walking home from the tube at night. I suppose because I was in a, it was a daytime environment […] I just felt, 'would he really do that, to me, in this other guy's room?' Sort of thing. You know, I suppose I didn't entirely believe what possibly was going through the guy's mind, so I suppose I felt less vulnerable than that (Fabian, 2019)

Jenny Fabian's reluctance to believe that this man posed a real threat to her personal safety may have been rooted in her middle-class cultural capital. Nevertheless, her account illuminates how 'free agents' such as herself, who eschewed, or failed to secure, the vicarious status of a steady relationship could find themselves in a vulnerable position open to abuse by men who had no respect for their right to self-determination.

Interviewed for the *Sunday Times* in 1969, Jenny Fabian suggested that her success as a groupie was in part due to her high levels of sexual competency:

> Of course, I'm supposed to be super at sex, having had it so much, I don't know if I am, I never ask. But they come back for more. […] I don't look sexy, but I'm pretty

> athletic. I can thank my healthy upbringing for that ('The Generation Gap: Hunter Davies talks to Jenny Fabian and her mother' 12 October 1969, p.51).

In *Groupie*, too, Jenny Fabian's proxy Katie demonstrates her sexual competency during a series of sexual encounters with various male partners possessed of their own varying degrees of sexual competency. Radner argues the sexual revolution inaugurated a different system of exchange under which 'woman was the agent rather than the object of exchange, in which she exchanged orgasms as pleasure in a system of equivalence in which her pleasure was measured against his pleasure' (2011 p.21). In *Groupie*, Katie measures her pleasure against her partners', frequently emerging not exactly dissatisfied, but in a deficit nonetheless having given more pleasure than she received during the encounter or affair.

Fabian and Byrne's unflinching account of female sexual pleasure is unusual for the literature of the period. Sue Sullivan recalls that women in the underground actually 'didn't talk about sexual pleasure at all' (Maitland, 1988, p. 115). For all the counterculture's rhetoric of personal and sexual fulfilment, and in stark contrast to the hazy rose-tinted recollections of their male compatriots, many countercultural women cite their lack of sexual fulfilment during the period. One woman, for example, recalled how she rarely 'had an orgasm, because the men were so selfish' but she lacked 'the confidence to say "No, that's not right, I don't want to do that"' (Akhtar & Humphries, 2001, p. 182).

While some of the women interviewed in *Queen* speak of experiencing an erotic response to the music itself, overall, they express greater interest in the trading of their sexual capital for power than in pleasure for its own sake. In *Groupie,* this paradox is personified in the character of Roxanna, a sexually dissociative groupie who 'made it because she had the looks and was groovy, and had the confidence to get it together', but also confesses she 'can't bear being touched' (1969, p. 15). In contrast, Katie is motivated by desire for pleasure *and* power, but this does not mean that for much of the novel she is above persevering in a sexually unsatisfying but socially advantageous relationship with 'Joe'. Jenny Fabian's various testimonies illuminate how the countercultural emphasis on sexual liberation placed a new onus on feminine sexual competence and sexual availability which was of direct benefit to men. Discontent with this situation would feed directly into the emergence of the women's liberation movement, which would begin to assert the right of women to sexual pleasure on their own terms towards the end of the decade. But for much of the sixties, women had no clear way of articulating their position.

Sexual mores within the counterculture were at the cutting edge of the sexual revolution, but groupie testimonies indicate the transition to this new form of social relations was problematic for women who engaged in the groupie pattern of behaviour in the pursuit of sexual pleasure and/or a steady relationship and the social benefits this might bring. Whether they operated in accordance with the old paradigm or attempted to exercise their sexual autonomy as agents of exchange, this was not a system of equivalence. For those young women who received neither pleasure nor power in exchange, the trading of sexual capital could feel like no trade at all. 'I was desperately trying to find somebody I could have a relationship with, but I was very naïve. I couldn't get it into my tiny mind that I was just being used then thrown away', 15-year-old groupie, Brenda, told the *Mirror Magazine* ('Girls who are going for a song', 11 April 1970, pp.14-15). And this unsatisfactory situation could have real implications for a groupie's sense of self-worth, as Brenda reflected: 'I realised the more I was being used, the more my self-confidence was being destroyed' (Ibid.).

Not 'just a groupie'; resisting the groupie stereotype

Groupie testimonies suggest that the groupie who accrued multiple sexual encounters with male musicians but failed to secure the vicarious status attendant to a steady relationship risked reputational damage within the underground community. 'I feel sorry for chicks like Mia', Marie told Jenny Fabian in *Queen,* 'because I know the things people are saying about her, and it won't do her any good' ('Orpheus received a lute' *Queen,* 14-27 May 1969 pp.92-95). Marie's comment not only illustrates how unsupportive and unkind groupies could be to each other, it also suggests that, even within the supposedly sexually liberated counterculture, there were limits to acceptable female sexual behaviour. If groupies were to gain social approval, they had to walk an impossibly fine line, between sexual availability and indiscriminate promiscuity. When I asked Jenny Fabian about the underground feminine ideal, she described someone who is 'ready to acquiesce if necessary' but added 'they didn't like them too ballsy' (Fabian, 2019). While direct sexual assertiveness might be the only recourse for groupies with low subcultural capital in a highly competitive field, female sexual 'liberation' defined in male terms resembled passive sexual availability, not sexual agency; this leads one to question what kind of alternative the free love ethos really offered women.

Kathy Etchingham also addressed the risk of reputational damage: 'I can understand all the chicks that are trying to get on the bandwagon', she told Jenny Fabian, 'but they've got to be careful not to lose respect and get a bad name. You've got to have something going for yourself more than a pair of open legs' ('Orpheus received a lute' *Queen,* 14-27 May 1969 pp.92-95). In our interview, Jenny Fabian told me about how the groupie who did not 'have something going' for herself could be stigmatised and dismissed as 'just a groupie':

> It did have a sort of pejorative meaning, didn't it? At some stage, 'urgh, you're just a groupie' you know, that sort of, you were *just* a groupie, meant that you weren't a person in your own right. You were just someone who found their identity *through* sleeping with whoever. So, if you slept with, 'urgh you slept with him!?' [laughs] [...] I didn't think it was something to be aspired to, myself. I don't think I would have called that book *Groupie* if I'd had a choice, but obviously it worked out well. (Fabian, 2019)

To be 'just a groupie', then, was to have low subcultural capital, and little chance of accumulating more through the advantageous trading of sexual capital. In such a case, a series of one-night stands could be more socially damaging than beneficial for the young woman concerned.

Groupie testimonies suggest that the mainstream media construction of the groupie as inauthentic consumer and indiscriminate sexual agent cast a long shadow over the underground field, where it collided with subcultural authenticities. Those underground groupies who were given space in the media to account for themselves tended to distance themselves from the negative groupie stereotype. Interviewed in *Melody Maker* in 1970, Pamela Des Barres, who had by this time spent an extended period in the UK, actually rejected the label. 'I don't really think the GTOs are groupies', she said of her all-female singing troupe. 'I really hate the tag because it signifies a really very low-class chick who beds down with everybody' she continued, 'It's not really like that at all' ('Miss Pamela: 'We aren't groupies'', 18 July 1970 p.30). Meanwhile Brenda told *The Mirror Magazine* that she 'never wanted to be like the other groupies I knew. Many of them need help' ('Girls who are going for a song' *The Mirror Magazine,* 11 April 1970, pp.14-15). Like the adolescent girls interviewed by Cowie and Lees (1981), and Shacklady-Smith (1978) Brenda and Des Barres appear to accept the sexual double standard but resist seeing themselves as promiscuous, shifting the deviant category of the groupie socially downwards to other women. These testimonies also suggest that the bourgeoisification of the groupie partly failed, as the label appears to have retained some

of its scrubber connotations. As Jenny Fabian remarked in our interview, 'If somebody said, "what do you do?" You'd never say, "I'm a groupie", you'd never say that. Well, I wouldn't anyway, I don't know anybody else who would have said that' (Fabian, 2019).

Kathy Etchingham's testimony suggests that rock consorts and underground groupies had to work hard to evade being dismissed by their peers as 'just a groupie'. 'I'm very hung up on music', she told Jenny Fabian ('Orpheus received a lute' *Queen,* 14-27 May 1969 pp.92-95) asserting her taste in music as another form of subcultural capital and positioning herself as an authentic consumer. Like Christine, she was also keen to foreground her discernment in choosing high status sexual partners:

> It was a bit of an ego-trip at first, but after a while I became so well-known that I was just a friend to them all, they never thought of me as a slag. I've been involved with a lot of faces – you name them, I've had them. I'd never lower myself to go with a road manager (ibid.)

Bravado is in evidence; these young women emphasise the exclusivity of their sexual availability, which is limited to top male musicians, whose high status they claim as a mark of their own social worth. As Kathy Etchingham suggests, for groupies and rock consorts engaged in this status game, an unfavourable liaison with a road manager could, in fact, diminish their social standing. For Emma, on the other hand, there was no shame in pulling roadies 'with me, it was mainly the roadies that I used to get off with' she told me, 'because, well they were good-looking as well, and of course, y'know, when they'd set the gear up, the band was on, they'd smile at you and chat to you and all that' (Emma, 2020). For those groupies whose behaviour was regulated by the category of respectability, status of the kind sought by underground groupies was not at stake leaving them at liberty to 'end up with the roadie' if that was who they desired.

Sexual capital and autonomous status

While the groupies interviewed in *Queen* appear to have accepted the established relationship with a successful male musician as the ultimate goal, Jenny Fabian approached the groupie pattern of behaviour differently. In *Groupie*, high-ranking groupie Roxanna has recently been discarded by her top musician boyfriend. 'Here she was, she had pulled them all and ended up living with one of the best known', write Fabian and Byrne:

> But it seemed that underneath it all she was a terrified chick, because she couldn't hold her scenes together anymore, and having had the best, she couldn't start downgrading her pulls now. From the way she told it, it struck me that something else was needed apart from looks and being groovy, to successfully get things together. Grooving around with lots of famous guys who lived constantly in the public eye and who spent enormous amounts of bread didn't mean that you were equal to them, like she thought. [26](1969, p. 14)

This encounter with Roxanna serves as a lesson to Katie, whose goal, like the real Jenny Fabian's, diverged from the false security of 'groupie glory'. In our interview, Jenny Fabian confirmed that Roxanna was based on a real-life groupie. 'She was in a bit of a state because she had done the very thing that I feel you shouldn't do', she explained, 'which was to rely on the guy she was living with, the musician, to keep her and provide somewhere for her to live' (Fabian, 2019).

Having observed first-hand the consequences of emotionally and financially depending upon a musician, Jenny Fabian sought to advance her status as an autonomous individual within the underground. She achieved this goal by embarking upon a series of strategic, short-term sexual relationships with influential middle-class men. She would prove adept at turning these lovers into friends and in doing so, converting her sexual capital into field relevant social capital. 'Friendship' she told me 'was very very important' (Fabian, 2019). Well-connected within artistic groupings adjacent to the underground, Spike Hawkins first introduced Jenny Fabian to his circle of male writers which included Steve Abrams, Thom Keyes, and Johnny Byrne. Riding high on the commercial success of his novel *All Night Stand*, Keyes proved a particularly powerful lover-turned-friend: 'Thommy sort of tried to educate me and sort of help me, said "you've got to meet this person, you've got to meet that person", he was quite helpful to me. He was very much into status", Jenny Fabian recalls (2019). Keyes also gave her a room in his South Kensington flat, which was 'a sort of centre for alternative glitterati':

> So you'd get people like Donald Cammell and Roman Polanski, […] You get a lot of these film people, and there were some amazing individuals there, that probably, people haven't heard of […] But the ideas were very wild, and so it was very important to be sitting there listening to these ideas, and thinking about things they were thinking, and taking your mind beyond where it was acceptable to go (ibid.)

[26] 'Bread' was hippie slang for money.

Jenny Fabian's testimony suggests that classed cultural capitals, like gendered cultural capitals, held different convertible values within the underground field. As Bourdieu writes, 'cultural capital can be embodied as part of the habitus, so that the social agent will have a bodily and pre-reflexive sense of what is appropriate and valued conduct in a given context' (1986, p. 250). Jenny Fabian's middle-class habitus, therefore, made it possible for her to approach these individuals from a greater position of parity than a working-class groupie might, conduct herself in a manner 'appropriate' to the social situation, and gain social acceptance within elite enclosed social circles.

Through her friendship with Keyes, Jenny Fabian was able to build high levels of field-relevant social capital defined by the network of connections she could effectively mobilise and the volume of the capital […] possessed by each of those to whom she was connected' (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 249). She was also able to build (sub)cultural capital, by absorbing the ideas aired in these conversations, which would give her the confidence and experience to hold her own conversations within the underground field. 'I saw myself as someone with quite an advantage' she told me:

> in the fact that […] although I had left school early, I was relatively well-educated, that I had a lot of quite interesting and, not necessarily powerful in that sense, but people, who had influential friends, so I saw myself as having certain advantages, and that I had to like, maintain them, and not fuck it up, basically, because it was easy to mess up, I probably got quite close to it a few times. But Thom Keyes was very influential and, that whole set up in Cranley Mansions, which was where he lived, was very helpful to my whole life (Fabian, 2019)

Through another affair, Jenny Fabian was able to secure a job at the underground's 'only really good venue', Middle Earth in around 1967/1968:[27]

> I moved on quite well when I started having a scene with someone called Dave Howson, who ran Middle Earth, because then, instead of working for the *Daily Telegraph* magazine, which took up so much time, he gave me a job in the office of Middle Earth, which was afternoons only and, sort of, supported me, as necessary, so that he had, I suppose, a form of control. So, I would work in the office, I don't know what I did in the office, I suppose I booked groups and things like that, and I would work on the door, like taking people's membership or money in two nights a week at Covent Garden (Ibid.)

This job at Middle Earth not only helped to maintain Jenny Fabian's financial independence, it came with a degree of power: 'You actually had the power to turn people away at the door if you didn't think they should go in and stuff like that. And

[27] Middle Earth, originally located at 43 King Street in Covent Garden market, followed UFO as the underground's premier venue.

people would kind of say, “oh can you let me in? It’s a special, can I get a ticket?”, so you had a certain power of your own’ (Ibid.). It also facilitated her full-time immersion in the underground, distancing her from the dominant culture, reinforcing her countercultural authenticity and embedding her status as natural to the community.

Where male musicians enter the narrative in *Groupie*, the trading of sexual capital becomes less advantageous. Early in her groupie phase, Jenny Fabian found that in the short term, her sexual encounter with Syd Barrett, which was motivated by sexual desire rather than desire for power ‘didn’t really help, to get me in anywhere’ (Ibid.) and probably also damaged her relationship with the group’s manager, Andrew King. In the long term, of course, she admits that ‘it made great copy’ (Fabian, 2022). She would be more strategic when it came to choosing some of her other lovers. While generally middle-class men involved in the music business arm of the underground had the power to open doors, helping her build subcultural capital through jobs, and field relevant social capital through their connections, sexual encounters with male musicians worked as a form of subcultural capital, but rarely led to the same kinds of accumulating rewards.

‘Power is what does it’, Jenny Fabian told the *Liverpool Echo*. ‘All women are groupies, unless they’re just suburban housewives. They go for the power a pop star gives out, or the power of a wealthy man or a businessman’ (‘What is the secret of sex appeal?’, 29 September 1971 p.7). Nearly fifty years later, in our interview, she echoed this sentiment.

> JF: Tony Howard, who managed the Speakeasy was quite powerful because he could decide who came in and who didn't, and so […] I had an affair with him as well, so I was quite careful who I had affairs with because it was useful, but I did like them as well. But the fact that he was the manager of the Speakeasy and managed quite a lot of groups as well. It was, it was good. That made him attractive, do you see what I’m saying? So, if the men had a certain amount of power, it made them, but then that's the way now, nothing's changed. It’s just that the actual, what they represented, has changed. I don't know, would people find a group manager as attractive now?
>
> EF: So, the power was attractive?
>
> JF: Oh yes
>
> EF: But it also sounds like it could be very helpful for your career in the underground as well, people could open doors…
>
> JF: Well in a sense yes, yes it did, it did, and I was writing, by now I was writing, and consequently, I had ins to, I'd write an article about the Speakeasy, because now if I was hanging around Tony Howard, I was meeting lots of people as well,

> […] Yeah that opened doors. [….] I was aware at the back of my mind, about doors opening. So, in a sense I was calculating.

In *Groupie,* Katie's love life and career interweave to great advantage in a manner comparable to Gurley Brown's 'single girl' ideal (1962); as affairs win jobs, and jobs win affairs, subcultural capital, field relevant social capital and sexual capital work together in a cycle of escalating accumulation and social advancement. 'In real life, it was important to me to have my own work anyway', Jenny Fabian told me, 'Because I'd seen what became of girls who, started to have scenes with musicians, and rely on them for their living. Because musicians get bored with people and then they throw them out, and then they've got nothing to fall back on. But I would never want that to happen to me' (Fabian, 2019). This emphasis on fiscal responsibility corresponds with a key strand of the highly individualistic form of female liberation conceptualised by Radner's neo-feminist paradigm (2011 p.23).

By drawing upon 'reflexive modernisation', a sociological account of the dynamics of social change developed by Giddens et. al (1994), McRobbie argues that a process of 'female individualisation' has seen women in 'second modernity' become 'disembedded' in sociological terms from old, structured pathways and communities where gender roles were fixed (McRobbie, 2009, pp. 16-19). In response to these changes, Jenny Fabian invented her own 'internal and individualistic structure' (ibid.), which strategized and intermingled her love life and career to advance her social status as an individual agent. Those groupies who sought social advancement through the perceived status and security of living with a big-name pop star were perhaps only partially disembedded from the old secure pathways. As we shall see, this dependency on others could put them at a particular disadvantage within the libertarian underground field, in which individuals were expected to accept responsibility for themselves alone.

'It was quite hard work. Quite hard work being a *groupie*, if that makes any sense?' Jenny Fabian reflected in our interview. She was engaged in what Radner identifies in her analysis of the emergent single girl ideal, as a 'constant process of becoming', as she worked to accumulate different kinds of subcultural capital, not only through advantageous relationships, but through the constant work of 'continual change and self-improvement as a sign of individual agency' (Radner, 2011, p. 7):

> I had to know what everyone was, you had to know what people were talking about as well. So, if somebody said, have you seen such and such, you had to be on the ball. So, I would be interested, in stuff like that, and, if people were talking about alchemy or Rosicrucians, they talked about a lot of, quite heavy-duty stuff,

> you had to have read the books, or done the homework. So, I did a lot of that. […] I was, not studying, but like, I felt I ought to know what it, what 'the Grail' all that, you know, all that business, you had to know what they were talking about (Fabian, 2019)

By working hard to accumulate and cultivate subcultural capital Jenny Fabian was able to compete with other groupies and evade characterisation as 'just a groupie'. 'It's a game,' she told the *Mirror Magazine,* 'It's a rat-race – that makes it exciting, how much better to sit in a top pop star's pad than having it off in the back of a van on the M1' ('Girls who are going for a song' 11 April 1970, pp.14-15). As a groupie equipped with high levels of field-relevant capital, Jenny Fabian felt comfortable playing the game, and perhaps knew how to play it better and more strategically than other groupies. If 'the sixties counterculture represented not so much an "alternative" lifestyle as an adaption of the traditional middle-class ideologies of self-improvement, freedom of expression and entrepreneurship' (Osgerby, 1998, p. 94), Jenny Fabian's middle-class habitus put her at an advantage, for the middle-class self is a valued self that accrues value to itself for future exchange in competition with others (Skeggs, 2004, p. 147).

Fig 7.1 Jenny Fabian wears her patchwork boots from Chalk Farm in Peters, G. (1970) 'Girls who are going for a song', *The Mirror Magazine* (11 April) pp. 14-15. (Credit: Pat Keene).

The hegemonic currency of subcultural capital

Thornton observes that 'the assertion of subcultural distinction relies, in part, on a fantasy of classlessness' (1995, p. 12), and within the counterculture, class was, indeed, obfuscated. In interviews at the time, for example, Jenny Fabian appropriated working-class slang, referring to men as 'geezers' ('The Generation Gap: Hunter Davies talks to Jenny Fabian and her mother' *Sunday Times,* 12 October 1969, p.51). The wider counterculture was a predominantly middle-class movement 'in both composition and ideological orientation', but it did attract a range of individuals from different backgrounds who participated at varying levels of involvement (Osgerby, 1998, p. 86). 'There were English working-class guys, as opposed to the Pink Floyd, the Incredible String

Band, and the Soft Machine, who were all very middle-class', recalls promoter and record producer Joe Boyd. 'Twink and the guys from the Move would have been on a building site if they hadn't been working in a band' (cited in DeRogatis, 1996, p. 82). [28] While working-class men can use class as a way of including themselves in a positively valorised social category (Willis, 1977) as Skeggs notes, this does not apply to working-class women whose feminine working-class cultural capital is doubly delegitimised (1997 p.73).

For journalist, Andrea Adam, the prevailing memory she has of the sixties 'is the fear of being uncool' (cited in Green J. , 1998, p. 188). But within the underground the hegemonic currency of subcultural capital was established by the field's structures, which were socially and historically constituted by the habitus of the predominantly middle-class actors within the field, and socially constituting in that they situated actors differentially within the underground field's hierarchy. Subcultural capital was, then, in the words of Jensen, 'classed and class specific' (2006, p. 272). This is illustrated when Rowbotham recalls how, 'class snobbery merged with the elitism of cool' within the underground (2001, p. 198).

In *Groupie*, Katie details frequent visits to 'Gavin', her hairdresser 'who's always one step in front, he has to be, working for one of the best salons in London' for an up-to-the-minute 'Keith Richards' or 'Brian Jones' hairdo (Fabian & Byrne, 1969, p. 10). 'I always had a garment by Thea Porter to show […] that I could spend money because her stuff was very expensive', Jenny Fabian told me in our interview. She also wore hard-to-source one-of-a-kind antique clothing:

> you had to look the part, and the part was, finding totally individual clothes. We were very much into old movies, so if you could find, I had a dress I called my Rita Hayworth dress, and we'd scour the antique market in Chelsea […] and you'd look for…I had also inherited an amazing skirt from my grandmother, which was like a, sort of, long black satin thing, which was totally tatty, but you just couldn't buy one anywhere. You couldn't buy this stuff new, anywhere. All the clothes were rubbish. (Fabian, 2019)

She also described the lengths she went to procure footwear:

> you had to be careful with your shoes, because shoes were quite difficult to get. So, […] we went to Anello & Davide. Now do they still exist? Well they were wonderful because they did ballet shoes. But they also did button shoes, which you couldn't get anywhere, so they, and they'd make them for you. Quite expensive but one pair would last you. So, I had two pairs of Anello & Davide button shoes, one with one strap, and one with two. So, they were just like

[28] Twink was a member of British psychedelic group the Pretty Things.

> rounded toes… cos everything was so awful, like high heels and stuff. Like, you couldn't wear a pair of normal high heels, and then, then there was another place in Chalk Farm that made these amazing patchwork boots. I had a pair of them, and that was about it for shoes. Unless you wore espadrilles or rope sandals or something like that in the summer. But you could not go into a normal shoe shop and get anything for your feet. So, you had to be quite, so if you were wearing shoes, people could look at your shoes and tell whether you were cool or not [laughs]. (Ibid.)

As Jenny Fabian's detailed account illustrates, the accumulation of objectified subcultural capital necessary to achieve her luxe hippie look (and enhance her field-relevant sexual capital) involved a significant investment of money, it was therefore linked to higher levels of economic capital than most young people had access to. Just as Bourdieu suggests that the 'link between economic and cultural capital is established through the mediation of the time needed for acquisition' (1986, pp. 244-246) so the cultivation of subcultural capital also involved a significant investment of time. This work on the self also involved the embodied subcultural capital of 'insider knowledge' (Thornton, 1995, p. 11) and this exclusivity distinguished the wearer as both hip, and authentic, reintroducing 'the snobbery of uniqueness, since there was, necessarily, only *one* of the "Frock" you had found – just as much as if you'd bought a Dior original' (Wilson, 1985, p. 193).

It is also perhaps worth noting here that second-hand clothing had historically been associated with poverty; that young people chose to wear what the older generation might have considered 'rags' in an era of post-war abundance, lent second-hand clothing radical connotations. But second-hand clothing could also mean different things on differently classed bodies; a tatty second-hand look might be considered subversive, sexually provocative, and even glamorous on a middle-class body, but for working-class young women a 'tatty' social presentation could, as we saw in Chapter 4, be read as a sign of impoverishment and the kind of excessive sexuality associated with the scrubber stereotype.

Objectified subcultural capital, in the form of expensive, difficult to source clothing and shoes, not only served to distinguish the wearer from the mainstream, but from less hip, less 'authentic' individuals within the underground field. But this distinction also inevitably tended to fall along class lines, since working-class individuals were likely to have less time and money to dedicate to cultivating this kind of capital. In *Groupie*, the middle-class bias of subcultural capital's hegemonic currency within the underground field is personified by the character Norman, who represents the denigrated mainstream as working-class. 'Norman looked all neat and clean, and his clothes were cheap

imitations of the better hip boutiques' observes Katie (Fabian & Byrne, 1969, p. 181). His drug of choice (speed), occupation (postman), and even car (Cortina), in Katie's view simultaneously signify his inauthenticity and justify his lowly social status within the underground field.

In contrast, Emma had a 'lot of lovely, beautiful dresses' bought from chain stores or run up on the sewing machine by her mother, but in ''68, I changed, it was more that kind of hippie groovy look' (Emma, 2020). Living in the North of England and working full-time in a factory, Emma did not have the time, money, or insider knowledge necessary for her to shop in exclusive London boutiques or make special pilgrimages to Chalk Farm for her shoes. When I asked her how she achieved the hippie look she told me about how she and her friend Tina got creative:

> Emma: Well, we decided that we would make our own fringe waistcoats, because they were the big thing in those days, and of course, living in [town in the North of England], it was very, difficult, to get clothes y'know? So [Tina] said, 'I'm gonna buy some pelts', that's pieces of leather you know? And have a go at making them, and they were tan, so we got a pattern, cut it out, it was quite good actually, they didn't look homemade. And my mum had got a *massive* bread board that my dad had made for her, so we got these pelts on the bread board with the Stanley knife, and cut the shoulders, and the armholes, and the only bit of stitching I had to do was across the shoulders, and then I got a leather punch, and punched holes in, down the side, and y'know, threaded it with a matching cord, and then, got the Stanley knife and put this pelt on the bread board and y'know, scored it, and cut all these fringe, like Roger Daltrey, and I should say they were about that long, because it was shoulders and then they come to the waist, and then the tassels was from the waist to your miniskirt. And we both had them, and I had mine with the suede showing outwards, and [Tina] had hers with the leather on the outwards, so, we felt fantastic in them. (Emma, 2020)

To some extent, Emma and Tina were able to compensate for their low capitals by investing what time, skill, and effort they could, to produce their own fringe waistcoats. Emma also wore 'a bit of vintage':

> I had a *gorgeous* blouse, a lace blouse which was very old, and it had got like a peplum to it. […] And I had a pink vintage blouse with a pussy bow that belonged to my mum and she'd had that in the forties, and this lacy one (Ibid.)

By mixing mass produced or home-made separates, with family heirlooms and getting creative, Emma was able to achieve the hippie look. She loved clothes, and still does today, but her personal narrative did not reveal the constant work of continual change and self-improvement that Jenny Fabian's did, perhaps because she was not able to occupy the same economic and cultural conditions which enabled Jenny Fabian to do her

work on the self. Nevertheless, Emma was aware that clothes were important when it came to attracting the attention of the groups. The connotations of 'free love' attached to the hippie look appear to have extended beyond the confines of the metropolitan underground.

While 'middle class culture affords space and the opportunity for a section of it to "drop out" of circulation. Working-class youth is persistently and consistently structured by the dominating alternative rhythm of Saturday Night and Monday morning' (Clarke et al. 2006, p. 47). In contrast to the 'living for the weekend' nature of the post-war working-class subcultures, within the predominantly middle-class underground, embodied subcultural capital was accumulated through full-time immersion in this alternative lifestyle. But this was a precarious existence best facilitated by an economic and/or familial safety net, for as Mike Brake observes, the very notion of 'dropping out' depends upon a location in the class structure from which to drop- and ultimately return (1980, p. 86). Inevitably, this contributed to the distinction, which tended to fall along class lines, between the 'authentic' and 'phoney', the 'hip' and 'mainstream' or what one hippie described as 'fellow travellers' and 'weekend ravers' (Mills, 1973, pp. 59-82) the latter of which, were viewed by the former, with disdain.

In *Groupie*, class is the subtext; Katie describes the working-class men in the music industry she encounters as 'uneducated' (Fabian & Byrne, 1969, p. 103) 'animals' (Ibid. p. 86) and notes their 'funny provincial accents' (Ibid. p. 50) and provincial 'frame of mind' (Ibid. p. 137). These comments are deplorable. One suspects the snobbism, which runs through Katie's first-person narrative, was characteristic of middle-class attitudes towards working-class musicians within the underground, but in our interview, Jenny Fabian did not express these views; rather, she expressed a 'loathing' for public school boys. Katie's relationships with these working-class men in the music industry resemble a series of power struggles for the upper hand. Frequently she finds herself back in the domestic role, cooking, making tea, pressing trousers, but even in her moments of submission Katie is self-possessed. 'If I had to make a cup of tea, I'd make a cup of tea, if I didn't want to, I didn't want to', Jenny Fabian told me (2019). In *Groupie,* Katie's middle-class cultural capital never leaves her in any doubt of own her superiority, 'Who did he think he was, with his uneducated accent, laying down the law for *me?'* she exclaimed when her lover

Grant, a road manager, told her she was not to call him, he would call her (Fabian & Byrne, 1969, p. 75). [29]

The defiance of Jenny Fabian, and her proxy, Katie, sits in contrast to Emma's quiet resignation: 'that's just the way it was then', she told me. 'Men was superior to women and… y'know, they always had the upper hand' (Emma, 2020). Both women may have used the groupie pattern of behaviour as a form of resistance, but as a groupie with delegitimised working-class feminine cultural capital, Emma approached the groupie pattern of behaviour as a kind of avoidance tactic designed to circumvent the strictures of a committed relationship. Jenny Fabian's feminine cultural capital was also devalued, but she did not accept patriarchal domination, certainly not by working-class men. Instead, her middle-class cultural capital made it possible for her to use the groupie pattern of behaviour as a strategy in her struggle for power in heterosexual relationships and within the wider underground field.

The different capitals Jenny Fabian had accrued outside the underground field put her at an even greater advantage when it came to approaching male musicians, 'I know how I pulled Andy Summers' she recalled in our interview:

> I was quite forward. I actually did ask him, if he wanted to come out with me to […] well […] I was going to quite a few things, you know, because […] Ann [her friend at *Harpers*] would say, 'oh there's an opening of such and such', and so I was able to say to people 'oh do you want to come to the opening of a doo-dah or whatever?' So that was quite useful for me, to have those other, I wasn't just somebody who didn't know where to go or do anything. You can't say 'oh, do you want to sleep with me? Or do you want to come out for a pizza?' or something like that [laughs].

By mobilising her accumulated capitals Jenny Fabian was able to be direct in the pursuit of her desires, without being seen as 'too ballsy' and evade being labelled a 'slag' by her peers, an approach which also corresponds with the 'quiet, private, personal aggression' Helen Gurley Brown encouraged in the emergent Single Girl ideal (1962, p. 9).

In 'The Universal Tonguebath: A Groupie's Vision', Greer recalls attracting the attention of Simon Dupree and the Big Sound as she changed her clothes on the set of *Nice Time or* bumping into musicians at parties in a country house (*Oz*, 19 March 1969, pp.30-33). 'Supergroupies don't have to hang around hotel corridors', she was quoted in *The New York Times*, 'when you are one, as I have been, you get invited backstage' ('Germaine Greer- Opinions that may shock the faithful', 22 March 1971, n.p.). The term

[29] Grant was Tony Gourvish in real life.

‘supergroupie’ is generally used to describe groupies at the very top of the hierarchy, who only have affairs with top musicians (Des Barres, 2007). These encounters take place in a world far removed from the carparks and backstage dressing rooms where teenage girls jostle for Simon Dupree’s attention in ‘The Ravers’.

Emma told me about an occasion when she was invited to such a party, while she was working in Babbacombe, the summer of 1970:

> Anyway, we went back to this party and it was only [famous comedian’s] house! I *could not believe* it! And they said ‘oh yeah, y’know, Will’s girlfriend, it’s her dad’, well I couldn’t believe it! And it was, *sumptuous*, it got like all this low-level seating, and fabulous fittings, oh it was absolutely gorgeous! And I always remember going to the loo, and I sat there, and I thought ‘oh my god! I’m sat on [famous comedian’s] loo!’ I just couldn’t believe it! Of course, you know, I mean, [Group G], and all these girls at this place, they were so cool, so groovy y’know. And I always remember writing a letter to my mum, I said ‘oh I went to a party at [famous comedian’s] house and I sat on his loo!’ [laughs]. (2020)

While Emma was dazzled by this glamorous party and its denizens, Greer or Jenny Fabian probably would have felt quite at home, maybe even bored. But even Jenny Fabian was uncomfortable with the idea of ‘star fucking’ her way up to the very top of the pop aristocracy:

> I wasn't a star fucker, because I never got that far, and I never really thought about that. I was just operating in a little sort of world of alternative music. I never really thought about going up into that level. I only ever really, I did meet, I know I met the Beatles. I briefly met Mick Jagger, but he was after someone else in the room. And anyway, I don’t know that I fancy Mick Jagger. Somehow, those enormous stars, somehow, didn’t, there was something that I didn't really, they didn’t enter my equation somehow. I don’t know, I felt more at home with people who were trying to get up the ladder, a bit like my own self. I felt those that had made it, I felt wouldn’t have been, I wouldn’t have been able to have dealt with all that. I felt more at home with people who were on the verge of making it, or had made it enough to have a good time. I mean, we had a good laugh! You know, it was good fun. That's all I can say. Whereas I don't know that being up there would have been fun. I think you would have been constantly worried, about other people, constantly being harassed and, getting, I don’t know, I don’t think it would have suited me. I never made a bid for it anyway. (Fabian, 2019)

What Jenny Fabian may well be expressing here is her unconscious awareness that, even with her accumulated (sub)cultural capital, (field-relevant) social capital, sexual capital, and middle-class capital, even with the valuable artistic capital she would accrue once she was a published novelist, she would still be approaching the rock aristocracy from a position of imparity. ‘I could manipulate certain situations, but they were all within my gift, as it were, that I could deal with it’, she told me (Ibid.) Groups such as the Rolling

Stones were 'within the gift' of models, actresses, aristocrats, women possessed of the very highest levels of all capitals, the mythologised rock consorts personified by Marianne Faithful and Anita Pallenberg. In this world, Jenny Fabian may well have found herself rendered replaceable and disposable, like groupies with lower subcultural capital within the wider underground field.

'Gaming the system'

In *Groupie*, Katie's strategizing pays off; by the end of the novel, she has secured an autonomous position of power and prestige within the underground hierarchy. At the novel's close, Katie has accumulated sufficient subcultural capital and field relevant social capital to be in the position where she can afford to reject a high ranking but entitled male musician:

> now I don't sleep with people just to sleep with them because it just doesn't seem to work out for me, and anyway, it's better to have scenes with people who really turn you on. This meant that from now on I would be doing the choosing (Fabian & Byrne, 1969, p. 202)

Like her proxy Katie, Jenny Fabian had also secured an autonomous position of power and prestige within the underground hierarchy. Initially, her strategizing had fed directly into her novel, but with the novel's completion she was now in the privileged position where she could afford to trade her sexual capital for pleasure and pleasure alone. 'I don't think I hardly slept with a musician after that' she recalls (Fabian, 2019).

It has been argued that cultural capital is defined as capital because of its 'convertibility' into economic capital (Garnham & Williams, 1986, p. 123), although this conversion does require an investment of time and labour. Subcultural capital does not convert into economic capital in the same way (Thornton, 1995, p. 27). The underground was less powerful than institutionalised fields within the wider power structure, but it also encompassed a variety of diverse groupings and tendencies that related to other fields which did have institutional power. Like Thornton's club culture DJ, some entrepreneurs, musicians, and journalists were able to successfully convert their subcultural capital into economic capital, and even symbolic capital with trading value on other markets, such as broadcasting, publishing, the music industry, and film industry.

Upon publishing her novel and achieving notoriety, Jenny Fabian became one of the comparatively few women to emerge from the underground and make this transition. Her accumulated capitals made this possible; by drawing upon her middle-class cultural capital Jenny Fabian was able to successfully trade her field relevant sexual capital for field relevant social capital, she gained the support of male gatekeepers with links to the literary world, and in writer Johnny Byrne, an artistic collaborator. The pair then set about using Jenny Fabian's real-life groupie experiences as material for their novel *Groupie*. In doing so, they converted Jenny Fabian's field relevant sexual capital and subcultural capital into artistic capital. Once published, and a great commercial success, *Groupie* was institutionally legitimised, converting Jenny Fabian's artistic capital into symbolic capital with trading value on other markets.

'Symbolic capital is a credit: it is the power granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition' (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 17) and in the wake of publishing *Groupie*, Jenny Fabian was transformed into a minor celebrity; she was consulted in the media as an authority on, not only the groupie phenomenon and the underground, but also sexual matters. She wrote articles for *Playboy*, *Penthouse, Forum*, and even delivered a lecture on the 'triumvirate' (the threesome) at a university (Fabian, 2022). In the late sixties, Jenny Fabian, like Greer, was a radical media figure, because she was prepared to speak frankly and provocatively on the subject of female desire and sexual pleasure.

She was also courted by the film industry for the rights to her novel, and even did a bit of acting, appearing in a minor role in the *Wednesday Play* 'Season of the Witch' (Dir, McCarthy, UK, 1970) alongside singer Julie Driscoll. In our interview, Jenny Fabian told me about how her life was transformed:

> Suddenly […] Shel was giving me things like empty jewel boxes saying, 'this'll be full of jewels in six months' time'. [30] You know, film rights, foreign rights, money was pouring in, at that stage. Course I was wasted, and suddenly I rented this enormous flat in Exhibition Road, Harrods was my local supermarket. I was going to the hairdressers every day you know, it was just that, that was my expectation, that life would stay like that forever. As I was told it would. But of course, it didn't. (Fabian, 2019)

Contrary to mainstream media representations of the underground as a field populated by listless 'drop-outs', its upper echelons were absolutely organised according to ideas of achievement and success. 'You do get snobs in the underground scene', Jenny Fabian told

[30] Shel was Jenny Fabian and Johnny Byrne's literary agent.

The Sunday Times 'but it's achievement snobbism not social' ('The Generation Gap: Hunter Davies talks to Jenny Fabian and her mother' 12 October 1969, p.51). Jenny Fabian's artistic capital elevated her social status to the extent that the gendered power dynamic could be reversed: 'I would get guys sidling up to me saying "oh can I be in your next book?"' (2019). But as an institutionally legitimised author and minor celebrity, she found she was no longer interested in the groupie scene.

By publishing a best-selling novel, Jenny Fabian had effectively gamed a system which was stacked against all women. But elsewhere in the counterculture, groupies wishing to pursue a career in the music business found it difficult to be taken seriously, 'after grouping it I'm finding it very difficult to put my ideas over to people in and around the business, because they don't forget that once I was a groupie', Christine told *Queen* ('Orpheus received a lute' *Queen,* 14-27 May 1969 pp.92-95). Evidently, Christine's success in securing the vicarious, if precarious, status of rock consort, and Jenny Fabian's success in securing autonomous status as a novelist, did nothing to advance the status of women or groupies collectively. Despite the overt nature of Jenny Fabian's resistance, her behaviour, like Emma's, still presented a highly individualistic form of female liberation which ultimately left structures of class and gender inequality intact.

Tensions under the new regime of self-reliance

Jenny Fabian's strategic approach to the groupie pattern of behaviour involved constant self-surveillance to suppress her emotions and need for security. She was not the only underground woman who found it necessary to suppress her emotional needs; Mary Ingham, too, recalls how when she 'first entered into non-demanding relationships with men', she had to consciously fight 'the desire for more security than that, in order to appear more "cool" and sophisticated than I really was' (1981, p. 168). Within the highly libertarian underground, self-reliance was a virtue, keeping one's cool and containing one's emotions appears to have worked as both a form of embodied subcultural capital, and sexual capital, which Jenny Fabian, like Katie, worked hard to maintain; 'if you got hung up on people […] they didn't like it. We were all very young and a lot of people didn't want to commit back then', she recalls (Fabian, 2019).

For those young women able to overcome their need for security and effectively regulate their emotions, self-reliance could be a source of strength and self-preservation.

As Kathy Etchingham reflected, emotional independence made it possible for her to establish boundaries in her relationship:

> Although Jimi keeps me, we're very independent. I've got to the stage where I can do what *I* want. I've been trodden on in the past, and I've built up a barrier, not becoming hard, but strong, because now I'm secure in myself (‘Orpheus received a lute’ *Queen,* 14-27 May 1969 pp.92-95)

But elsewhere, lower-status groupies with less subcultural capital to fall back on could find it difficult not to get emotionally involved. ‘The only trouble is that I'm too sincere, and I keep getting hurt’, Mia told Jenny Fabian, ‘I was hung up on one of the Pretty Things, and I didn't understand it when he cooled off. Then I went with one of the others in the group and got hung up on him. He said he was going to take me to America with him, but that cooled off as well' (Ibid.). There could be a good deal of heartache in store for those women whose need for commitment, security, and stability in a sexual relationship ran counter to the emphasis on personal ‘freedom’. As Jenny Fabian wrote in *Queen* ‘A lot of girls find it hard to adjust from the old instincts of security and possession to the new scene's freer, existentialist pattern’ (‘Orpheus received a lute’ *Queen,* 14-27 May 1969 pp.92-95). As individuals were called upon to regulate their feelings of possessiveness and jealousy, in order to adapt to the new regime of self-reliance and total sexual permissiveness, ‘free love’ could resemble the denigration of love as an emotional union, and its reduction to a physical act alone. As one groupie told *The Mirror,* ‘You have to be completely cold-blooded and emotionless to survive. You put up such a barrier of hardness that in the end even you can't break through’ (‘Girls who are going for a song’ 11 April 1970, pp.14-15).

During an informal conversation, Jenny Fabian, a long-time fan of Janis Joplin, quoted a lyric from the song ‘Me and Bobby McGee’: 'Freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose'. When I asked her to expand upon this during our email correspondence she responded:

> Me and Bobby McGee represents the brick wall you come up against when you've gone as far as you can go in the quest for freedom, free love, free speech, freedom from authority .... then you find there's 'nothing left to lose' because you've lost everything that constrains you to being a member of society, or community. You're out on a limb, and it's kind of lonely (Fabian & Foden, 2021)

As an individual agent, libertarian, and valued self, Jenny Fabian responded well to the new regime of self-reliance, but this quote suggests that her ‘freedom’ came at a cost – loneliness. Contrary to her own rose-tinted recollections of the period, American groupie,

Pamela Des Barres, may have also experienced loneliness. At the wrap party for *200 Motels,* music journalist, Michael Watts reported seeing her 'over in the corner […] slumped against a wall "I'm so lonely." She keeps muttering "so lonely"' ('Zappa's got a brand new bag' *Melody Maker,* 13 February 1971, p.32).

These accounts disrupt golden age mythologies of the sixties as the decade of 'peace and love'. They also undermine the core countercultural value of community and equality by illuminating a parallel set of coded highly individualistic and elitist values. While the theme of childhood loneliness recurred in both Emma and Jenny Fabian's oral histories, towards the end of our interview, Jenny Fabian reflected upon how she and her friends had lived in the sixties:

> JF: Cos that's what we were doing basically. Being childish. And it was great while it lasted. Like a second childhood. Or a childhood that I possibly never had. Cos, you don't, you know, I never had that, sort of, *Swallows and Amazons* or, what's that other one? I don't know
>
> EF: *Famous Five?*
>
> JF: Oh, I love the *Famous Five!* I read them all the time! That, that was my ideal. But I was only one wasn't I? I didn't have, I didn't really have a lot of local friends…

In reframing this period in her life as an idealised childhood, Jenny Fabian's account suggests that, when groupies like Mia, Christine and Marie speak of their behaviour as a means to advance their social status, perhaps what they are also speaking of is their desire for a sense of belonging and community. A desire which, groupie testimonies suggest, often went unfulfilled.

It is important to note that, looking back from the vantage point of today, both Jenny Fabian and Emma recall their groupie experiences with fondness. For both women, these are some of the happiest moments in their lives: both expressed no regrets. When I asked Jenny Fabian about negative experiences, she became defensive 'Well, why should they all be negative? I mean what are you saying?' she asked (Fabian, 2019). But groupie testimonies from the time tell another story, and both women, when pressed, acknowledge they also experienced heartache, even if this has subsequently slipped from view. 'None of the men would take responsibility', Jenny Fabian admitted in an informal conversation (field notes, 6 September 2022).

In 1970 Jenny Fabian along with Thom Keyes, Johnny Byrne, and others, rented a country house, Hilton Hall in Huntingdonshire, then owned by Bunny Garnett, a survivor of the Bloomsbury set ('The trip of a lifetime' *The Sunday Telegraph Magazine*, 15 June

1997 pp.28-29). In an episode which would later feature in *One too Many Mornings* (2002), Jenny Fabian met and fell in love with 'Billy' at Hilton Hall. Although Billy was not a musician, like many within the underground he eschewed commitment. Jenny Fabian found this difficult to accept, and their tumultuous ill-fated affair would ultimately trigger her own emotional unravelling. 'I managed to control it until I met one individual and then I just, couldn't control it anymore, and it was a complete nightmare' she told me in our interview:

> And it was absolute hell, and I don't know, I got through it, but I really wanted to die. Really seriously wanted to die, there was no life beyond this individual. And I totally didn't want any identity except through him. And it was just awful, awful, but I did, I got through it. And here I am still (Fabian, 2019)

For all her accumulated capitals, autonomous status, her published novel, her constant self-surveillance, and efforts to suppress her emotions, Jenny Fabian was not immune to heartbreak. Today, looking back on these events, she recalls an awful memory of being out for dinner with friends, only to suddenly find that tears were streaming down her face, and that she was unable to make them stop (field notes, 6 September 2022). After years of keeping it together and presenting an independent, emotionally self-sufficient social self, Jenny Fabian had, at last, lost her cool.

Drawing, again, upon her own lived experience and the aftermath of this relationship, she and Byrne had Katie embark upon a short affair with a controlling individual 'Shultz' in *One Too Many Mornings*. In our email correspondence, Jenny Fabian expanded upon the nature of this relationship:

> So the relationship with Shultz tipped the balance back to the security of having rules. Sometimes one needs boundaries. Curiously, although Katie felt Shultz was the opposite of Billy, there was a similarity of control, although in totally different ways. Shultz wouldn't allow her any freedom, Billy claimed she had all the freedom she wanted. And yet this freedom had its rules as well, perhaps more elusive and harder to deal with, especially emotionally. (2021)

Total freedom, then, could be as restrictive as domination. For as Diski writes, with the counterculture's efforts to destroy the old sexual morality, it ended up imposing a new form of morality which was equally restricting and repressive; 'Our elders called it permissiveness, but the permission we gave ourselves was more like a set of orders for disobeying our elders' (2010, p. 61). By setting rules and enforcing boundaries, Schultz was able to offer Katie 'pleasure without responsibility' of a different kind to that

promised by the groupie pattern of behaviour; 'freedom' achieved, conversely, through the renunciation of personal responsibility.

As Jenny Fabian observed in her *Queen* article, 'Nervous breakdowns' among groupies were 'not uncommon' ('Orpheus received a lute 14-27 May 1969 p.92-95). In our interview she told me about one groupie who suffered a mental health crisis:

> She took too much acid and had a breakdown. And she went around saying, 'I've slept with Country Joe and the Fish' and she just kept going 'round saying it. I don't know what happened. She had […] to be removed from the whole scene. I think her parents had to, sort of, come and take her away and dunno. I felt a bit awful about that, but she was, she tipped over. Quite a lot of people tipped over, you know? (Fabian, 2019)

Under the new regime of self-reliance, one wonders who was looking out for this young woman and who she was able to turn to for support when she needed it. In a culture where individuals took responsibility for themselves alone, and everyone was doing their own thing, individual liberation could veer into a ruthlessly selfish kind of libertarianism which justified all kinds of inconsiderate behaviour. Under these conditions underground groupies, like Christine, who **'**after a few years of sleeping around […] ending by having a baby' ('Orpheus received a lute' *Queen,* 14-27 May 1969 pp.92-95) could find themselves pregnant and alone like their working-class provincial counterparts.

The overwhelming impression from groupie testimonies is one of a highly stratified, competitive environment comprised of individuals engaged in the struggle for power and status. I found very little evidence during my research of the 'affirmative groupie girl gang' that characterises twenty-first century groupie recreations. Jenny Fabian observed that 'some of those groupies hung around together', but 'I knew there's no way you're gonna pull that way. Well you might, but I wasn't like that, I was a solo operator. And I had no real girlfriends at that stage' (2019). For the individual agent, looking to further her own self-interests in a field where advancing one's status was entirely contingent upon male approval, female friends could be considered a liability rather than a resource. In *Groupie*, for example, Katie describes an encounter with two groupies who bicker 'how is it you always score the singer and I always end up with the roadie?' (Fabian & Byrne, 1969, p. 210). It was only after she had had her heart broken, that Jenny Fabian 'realised the value of female friendship […] *then* I made a friend, and we had a relationship' (2019). That friend was the artist Penny Slinger:

> She and I both, sort of had broken hearts at the same time, so it was a great moment for us to have a relationship, we'd talk about the men and what they do to us, and things like that […] She's a very dear friend (Ibid.)

Female friendship, meanwhile, was central to Emma's account; she and her friends found that, with different groups performing in their local area every week, there were more musicians to go round. Of course, there were occasional upsets and jealousies, as Emma ruefully recalls:

> me and Susan had got a crush on [Neil], thought he was gorgeous, and Tina, the one who'd always said she didn't fancy him, well she got off with him! [laughs] Yeah! She got off with Neil, and it was a bit quiet in the car going home that night, because we used to get *jealous* as well y'know? (Emma, 2020)

A strong sense of disillusionment and dissatisfaction with the nature of gender dynamics within the underground and groupie culture in particular runs through groupie testimonies from the time. That the *Mirror Magazine* should foreground the unhappiness of girls like 15-year-old Brenda is unsurprising; that such themes should feature so prominently in Jenny Fabian's groupie interviews for *Queen,* is significant. 'I'm 21 now, and I've been around for long enough to be able to see through guys in groups. Half of them are like the groupies, just doing it for identity and ego', Christine told Jenny Fabian ('Orpheus received a lute' *Queen,* 14-27 May 1969 pp.92-95). It may be somewhat of a cliché to say so, but these groupies in their teens and early twenties had their whole lives ahead of them. The impression they give in these interviews, however, is of old-before-their-time, world-weary exhaustion and cynicism. Their disillusionment sits in stark contrast to the enthusiasm with which Emma recalls her own groupie experiences in the North of England. This is perhaps because the social conditions under which Emma and her friends pursued the groups were less competitive, and unlike their underground contemporaries, these girls had no expectations or illusions with regards to securing the vicarious status of a steady relationship with a male musician.

For those women who secured 'groupie glory', this prized position could often resemble the traditional homemaker role. In *Groupie*, Katie performs domestic tasks for boyfriends sometimes begrudgingly, sometimes as a powerplay. Kathy Etchingham, meanwhile, took pride in her domestic role: 'I think Jimi digs me because I'm a homemaker', she told *Queen,* 'I'm very fond of my home' ('Orpheus received a lute', 14-27 May 1969 pp.92-95). For those 'scrabbling around at the bottom' of the hierarchy, heartache, crack-ups, unplanned pregnancy, abandonment, lack of fulfilment, feeling used, and disillusionment could be a reality. Disillusionment and dissatisfaction were not

limited to those at the bottom of the hierarchy either; even Jenny Fabian admitted, with a note of melancholy ‘me, I'm just waiting for the right geezer to come along, like every other chick’ (The Generation Gap: Hunter Davies talks to Jenny Fabian and her mother, 1969).

Conclusion

While the underground failed to deliver women real alternatives, groupies attempted to negotiate forms of subcultural capital and advance their social status through the trading of field-relevant sexual capital. This could be achieved in three ways; through sexual encounters with male musicians; by being observed socialising with the groups by their peers; and by securing a steady relationship with a male musician. But the trading of field relevant sexual capital was by no means assured. Groupies seeking the security and vicarious status of a steady relationship within a highly competitive field experienced varying degrees of success. Groupies who failed to successfully convert their erotic capital into vicarious status or exhibited too much agency in their pursuit of the groups, meanwhile, risked slut-shaming and reputational damage within an underground community where women were expected to be sexually available, but not sexually assertive.

Disembedded from the old secure pathways in which class and gender roles were fixed, Jenny Fabian invented her own internal and individualistic structures and self-monitoring practices. She was able to successfully trade her field-relevant sexual capital for high levels of social capital which ultimately secured her an autonomous position of power and prestige within the underground field. Her social background was absolutely indispensable to this trajectory. Her oral history reveals not only how differently classed and gendered capitals held different convertible values within the underground field but how the middle-class bias of subcultural capital’s hegemonic currency was both socially constituted and socially constituting.

As an individualist and libertarian, Jenny Fabian was also eminently compatible with the new regime of self-reliance which governed social relations within the underground field. While some other groupies succumbed to emotional breakdowns, Jenny Fabian’s middle-class habitus meant she was able to occupy the economic and cultural conditions necessary for her to engage in the constant work of self-improvement and self-surveillance which helped her accumulate the capitals necessary for her social

advancement. Like Emma, she rejected the traditional housewife role, but both women still felt pressures to fulfil different feminine ideals. While Emma struggled to conform to the middle-class 'nice girl' ideal, Jenny Fabian worked hard to survey and suppress her emotions to present a self-sufficient social self in accordance with the underground's 'sexually liberated' feminine ideal, until she could do so no longer. Groupie testimonies invoke what Nicholson has described as the 'quintessential sixties conundrum: how can freedom co-exist with commitment?' (2019, p. 366). As we shall see in the following chapter, the sense of disillusionment which pervades underground groupie testimonies was not confined to the groupie contingent.

Chapter 8 From decline and disillusionment to resignation: Groupie representation in the seventies

The seventies are perhaps the most uniquely maligned decade in modern British history, marked by pessimism, rising violence, and economic woe. This was a period in which disillusionment, economic pressure, and an authoritarian backlash began to undermine the countercultural project. This chapter explores how, against this backdrop, the more political element within the underground reappraised both the figure of the groupie and revolutionary rock, and how various filmmakers keen to capitalise upon the groupie phenomenon drew upon both conservative and countercultural anxieties in their cinematic recreations.

The cultural decade known as the 'Long Sixties' was effectively brought to a close in 1974, when ordinary people began to feel the impact of the 1973 oil crisis and subsequent recession (Marwick, 1998, p. 7). By drawing upon groupie representation in the mainstream media and cinematic recreations produced towards the close of this cultural decade, this chapter argues that sexual mores had shifted to the extent that a phenomenon which had once incited outrage, was now the subject of unapologetic titillation on one hand, and moral resignation on the other.

The end of an era; Reappraising the groupie

For a time, the much-vaunted international youth-led revolution had appeared close at hand. In May 1968, Paris had been brought to a standstill when student protestors were joined by a general strike and similar student demonstrations took place in the US, Berlin, Rome, Geneva, Milan, Brussels, Vienna, Madrid, Tokyo, and Latin America (Hewison, 1986, p. 161). But the revolution ultimately failed to materialise. Instead, a snap election was called in France, and the result swung in favour of the conservative de Gaulle, and the reinstatement of the status quo. Public opinion had proved far more conservative than the student revolutionaries ever expected.

In the aftermath of 1968, many young people continued to campaign for the possibility of real social change; some of the most important social movements of the twentieth century emerged directly from the tumult of 1968, such as the Gay Rights Movement, the ecological movement and the Women's Movement. But many within the countercultural movement became disillusioned and, as the New Left reasserted the

importance of political discipline, its uneasy alliance with the hedonistic underground began to fall apart. For those with money and connections, like Jenny Fabian, 'getting it together in the country' was a particularly fashionable option. Meanwhile, some radicals, infuriated by the failure of 1968, turned to more violent methods. This period saw the appearance of the 'urban guerrilla', as radical left militant underground organisations, such as the Red Army Faction in West Germany, the Red Brigades in Italy, and the Angry Brigade in Britain, carried out a series of high-profile bombings, robberies, kidnappings, and assassinations. These terrorist groups received significant media attention and, alongside Northern Ireland's descent into sectarian bloodshed, contributed to a wider sense that the world was descending into chaos.

For those on the Right, this was a period in which the very foundations of society were threatened by insurgent forces from within, as the permissive society became a 'political metaphor' deployed in the discussion of 'crime, violence, chaos, anarchy' in the Tory Press (Sandbrook, 2011, p. 454). Moral campaigner Mary Whitehouse, meanwhile, revived her campaign to mobilise the 'moral majority' to take a stand against drugs, sexual liberation, and obscenity (Hewison, 1986, p. 171). These developments fed into an authoritarian backlash against 'permissiveness' (Haste, 1992). The *Oz* obscenity trial in 1971 has been interpreted as the key moment in which the State sought to reassert its authority. The publication in question, the 'Schoolkids' issue (May 1970), had featured a pornographic Rupert the Bear cartoon. Following the longest obscenity trial in British history, the magazine's three editors were found guilty of publishing obscene material and sending it via the postal system. Despite their acquittal on appeal, the draconian sentences they initially received diminished the self-confidence of the underground press. In the aftermath, the editorial board stepped back from *Oz,* and, amid factional infighting, circulation plummeted (Fountain, 1988, p. 146). By 1973, both *Oz* and *IT* were on the verge of ceasing publication (ibid. p.184). Popular historical accounts have tended to position the trial as a landmark moment in the eventual demise of the British counterculture (Green J. , 1999, p. xiii). Writing in the final issue of *Oz,* David Widgery lamented how 'the underground got smashed, good and proper, by exactly those forces of which it stood in defiance' ('What went wrong' *Oz,* November 1973 pp.8-9).

While the authoritarian backlash played a role, the economic crisis was the deciding factor in the counterculture's ultimate demise. Sixties optimism had been undermined when Britain faced the 1964 balance of payments crisis and the sterling crises of 1965 and 1966, but it was severely damaged when the Government was finally forced to devalue

the pound in 1967 (Cairncross, 1992, p. 134), and by 1970, the Wilson administration's efforts to revitalise Britain's economic performance were largely seen as a failure. The seventies would witness 'the rise in both unemployment and inflation and a slow-down in the rate of economic growth, all of which took place against the background of industrial unrest' (Coopey & Woodward, 1996, p. 1). When, in October 1973, the Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur war led to OPEC (the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) implementing an oil price hike, which would see the cost of a barrel increase fivefold between 1972 and 1974, Britain's economic woes developed into a full-blown recession (Beckett, 2009, p. 129). This event has been identified by historians as a watershed in world history and by 1975 'the long period of accelerating expansion in material benefits and material consumption that followed post-war reconstruction', had been effectively brought to an end (Hewison, 1986, p. 274). As the coming recession hit the underground, it became increasingly apparent just how dependent the alternative society had been upon the affluent society (Osgerby, 1998, p. 86). As Andrea Adam recalls:

> Suddenly everyone was knee-deep in mortgages and scrabbling for a half-decent job. Everyone woke up one day and realised that they were nearly thirty, without a job and that jobs were getting very scarce and that they were broke and there was no money coming from anywhere. Living from hand to mouth was no longer possible (cited in Green J. , 1998, p. 427)

In December 1971, a cartoon with the caption 'Suzie Slumgoddess where is she now?' appeared in *Oz* magazine, accompanying an article by Jonathon Green on the rise of American militant far left group, the Weathermen (December 1971 pp.37-38). In the cartoon's two panes (Fig. 8.1) the figure of the groupie is mobilised to illustrate the drastic transition from the hippie peace and love ethic to militancy. In the first pane, 'Suzie' is pictured wearing a miniscule white mini dress and beads, with a flower painted on her cheek and a heart on her knee. 'In 1967 Suzie lived on Mt. Vernon Sq. with her cats and her iChing' reads the accompanying caption. A speech bubble extends from her mouth 'Ooh, peace and Luv everybody! We're all so beautiful! Let's trip on acid and paint flowers all over our bodies and dance under strobe lights! An' I don't wear a bra an' I'm a groupie an' proud of it an' I'm only fifteen'. In the next pane, 'Suzie' has undergone a transformation. 'Today we found sister Suzie X at the barricades', the caption reads. 'Right on!', says Suzie, 'Off the counter revolutionary sexist pig forces of Amerikan racism! Bomb their banks! Up against the wall macho muthafucka! Free Angela Davis! An' I'm nineteen now an' I still don't wear a bra. Look me up in 1974 for more fun and surprises…if we're still alive…'.

Fig 8.1 The latest trend in radical chic; the groupie phenomenon, hippie idealism and post-68 militancy ripe for parody in Unknown, (1971) 'Suzie Slumgoddess', *Oz,* (Issue 39, December), pp.37-38.

This cartoon suggests that, by 1971, disillusionment had rendered hippie idealism ripe for parody. The figure of the groupie is constructed as a sixties anachronism belonging to the thwarted, naïve utopianism of the 'summer of love'. But new left-wing radical groups emerging from the counterculture, from the Black Panthers to urban guerrillas, and indeed, radical feminists, are parodied in an equally derisive fashion. *OZ* had always been more interested in libertarianism than political discipline, but this cartoon positively drips with cynicism as it is implied these radical groups are, like the groupie and the summer of love, nothing more than the latest trend in radical chic.

Against the backdrop of countercultural decline and disillusionment, the more political element within the underground press began to reappraise the groupie phenomenon and align this figure with forces seen to undermine hippie idealism. While the underground club and the festival had been once thought to offer a transient glimpse of 'rocktopia', by the early seventies the underground's premier groups had been poached by major record companies, which it emerged were 'almost inevitably involved with the manufacture of arms' (Doggett, 2007, p. 370), and festivals had ballooned into enormous events involving vast sums of money. For many, the mounting hypocrisies and contradictions had become impossible to ignore. As Sue Miles explains:

> At the beginning it was supposed to be about love and peace and social equality and friendliness, and what it was really about was ripping everybody off. In the end it was about product. It was about posters and records, and it became clear that the rock'n'roll industry was making a fortune out of the whole thing. (cited in Green J. , 1998, p. 432)

For the underground press, rock's revolutionary connotations and utopian associations had been significantly undermined by commercialisation. In 1971, French artist Jean

Jacques Lebel voiced these concerns in *IT*: 'behind the psychedelic scene there is the same corruption, the same financial deals which plague any other market', he writes:

> Millions of young people all over the world are listening to pop music but that is not in itself a revolution. To a great extent we have been had. We were promised freedom and a new life. All we got was a new religion, new entertainers, new priests, new bosses, new exploiters, new pigs. ('Just buy your records and shut up' *IT,* 6 May 1971, p.10)

Later in the article Lebel appears to address the groupie phenomenon directly. In reference to infamous American groupies, the 'Plaster Casters', he writes: 'phallic worship is hardly an answer to our problems'. Drawing upon Marcuse's reappraisal of sexual permissiveness under late capitalism as 'repressive desublimation' (1964), the eroticisation of social life within the controlling terms of capitalist need, Lebel goes on to assert that 'exploitation of the human body – female or male – is clearly part of the capitalist master plan of sexual and social oppression which is not only to enslave all human beings but to turn them into commodities' ('Just buy your records and shut up' *IT,* 6 May 1971, p.10). For Lebel then, the groupie's sexual desires are subject to commercial manipulation, rendering her both duped consumer and sexual commodity par excellence. Rock's sexually liberating potential, meanwhile, had not only failed to initiate the revolution; it had been appropriated by an evolving capitalist system and mobilised in the service of commercial exploitation.

Germaine Greer was also disillusioned. In Jimi Hendrix's obituary she described his final performance at the Isle of Wight festival:

> The crude drugs were still there and, as always, the brutish adulation. In front of the stage, all he could see were the film cameras, the press, the bedraggled groupies with their blank hungry faces, and the politicos as ruthless in jostling for position as the cameraman. ('Hey Jimi, Where you gonna run to now?' *Oz,* October 1970, p.8)

This account marks a stark departure from the romanticised image of the underground groupie she had portrayed in 'The Universal Tonguebath: A Groupie's Vision', or the 'supergroupie' she had professed to be elsewhere in the media ('Germaine Greer – Opinions that may shock the faithful' *The New York Times*, 22 March 1971). It bears closer resemblance to mainstream media representation which had constructed the figure of the groupie as a massified, zombified, duped consumer. These sources suggest that, with the collapse of rocktopia and the onset of disillusionment, the more political element within the counterculture reverted to traditional left-wing critiques of mass culture with

their origins in the Frankfurt School, in its (re)appraisal of pop/rock. This critique was then extended to the figure of the groupie whose trading of sexual capital as object and agent of exchange perhaps rendered her behaviour the ideal metaphor for rock's commercialisation, debasement, and revolutionary failure.

Ideals of community and egalitarianism had been central to ideas of rocktopia. As Simon Frith has noted, in the sixties, the folk emphasis on honesty and insight had been 'adapted to the commercial needs of rock' to produce the rock songwriter as poet and artist (1978, p. 185). The distinction between mass and folk cultures is also important to music critics:

> who contrast mass and community, fragmented consumption and collective creation alienation and solidarity, passivity and activity. Folk culture is created directly and spontaneously out of communal experience; it is the culture of the working classes, it expresses the communal experience of work: there is no distance between folk artist and audience, no separation between folk production and consumption (ibid. p. 197)

These ideas took root within the underground community where the rock poet/artist was thought to express the predominantly middle-class countercultural communal experience of leisure (rather than the communal working-class experience of labour). But British pop/rock musicians 'were never as politically involved as many of their followers supposed' (Denselow, 1989. p. 97), even if some conventional musicians, most notably John Lennon, had flirted with radical politics.

By the early seventies successful groups were becoming more and more remote from their fans and the underground community, as 'underground' groups, enjoying mainstream recognition began to charge more for performances than underground venues could afford, and top groups, cocooned by wealth and power, withdrew to stadium tours, VIP areas, high society parties, and tax exile. Chris Rowley of *IT* described the rock 'n' roll world as a 'tiny elite at the top, those who could get backstage were taking cocaine and champagne, the great packed sweating mass out the front' (cited in Green J. , 1998, p. 434). Countercultural hierarchies and elitism had always existed, but by the turn of the decade it was becoming increasingly apparent that the groups did not represent their audiences. 'No, baby', wrote Germaine Greer in her review of the Hyde Park concert in 1970, 'the Stones are not one of you' ('Mozic and the Revolution' *Oz* October 1969, p.27). For the more political element within the underground, there were calls for the whole structure of the rock-pop industry to be revolutionised: 'the rotten star

system and the stage system has got to go', wrote Lebel ('Just buy your records and shut up' *IT,* 6 May 1971, p.10).

While American critic Lillian Roxon praised groupies for daring to 'break the barriers between audience and performer' (1969, p. 212), for other critics the groupie phenomenon represented the 'plastic hero worship' ('Sex, love and pop' *Melody Maker,* 3 May 1969 p.15) seen to uphold rock elitism. In the underground press, meanwhile, the figure of the groupie was increasingly associated with the exclusivity of the backstage areas, 'groupie' enclosures ('Mozic and the Revolution' *Oz* October 1969, p.27), and enormous touring entourages ('Crazy' *IT* 6 September 1973, p.6). The implication was that the social advancement of any individual, to a position of dominance and power, or indeed, the cocaine snorting, champagne quaffing exclusivity of the backstage area, undercut countercultural core values of egalitarianism and community. That women should be able to negotiate access to such elite circles through the trading of sexual capital appears to have been particularly unsettling, perhaps because their behaviour undercut the entrenched and unacknowledged gender hierarchies which upheld those very ideals.

In her 1997 essay on the American groupie phenomenon, Ann Powers writes that 'as the scene grew decadent, with more drugs and less idealism, groupies came to represent squalor: Female excessiveness once again offered the key to the collapse of the social order, only now it was rock's own utopia that was collapsing' (1997, p. 183). For Widgery, elitism and individualism mingled with hard drug culture to devastating effect in the rock 'n' roll world:

> It was to do with cool, you saw it most around something like the Rolling Stones entourage where people could be dying, and no one would stop to enquire why. It was a lot of egotistical, pretty, bright young people, mostly on the make in some form or another, and they all treated each other fairly unscrupulously. The people who suffered weren't this layer but those who hung on to the myths and ended up in the squalid rat-infested squat shooting up (cited in Green J. , 1998, p. 434)

As hard drugs like cocaine and heroin began to infiltrate and devastate the lives of those within the underground and rock's inner circles, drugs began to shed their utopian associations. For left-wing radicals like Widgery, they were no longer associated with mind expansion, but with the retreat from reality.

Between 1969 and 1970, both the British underground and the music business were shaken by a series of high-profile drug-related deaths, which 'provoked vitriolic criticisms of the counterculture and a panic reaction to the adverse effects of drugs generally'

(Whiteley, 2000, p. 75). Writing in the *Sunday Telegraph*, Christine Verity would remark how pop/rock had 'become associated with drugs, dangerous "trips", and death. The Rolling Stones gave a concert in America where one person was killed;[31] idols like Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin died in the full squalor of pop youth' ('Pop goes the image of teen idols' 13 February 1972 p.11). The untimely demise of American expat Jimi Hendrix, who died of a drug overdose in London in 1970, had a particular impact on the British underground where he had first won musical recognition. In the aftermath, Kathy Etchingham was persuaded to sell her story to *The People*. By her own account, the interview was intended to be a 'tribute to him, telling the truth behind the image', but when the article appeared, she recalls:

> It read like a nightmare, bearing no resemblance to anything I had actually said. The headlines screamed about drug orgies and sex sessions […] I came across as stupid, hysterical, oversexed and drug-soaked, just another groupie cashing in on my contacts. None of it sounded remotely like anything I had actually said (Etchingham, 1998, p. 151)

In the article itself, titled 'He would drink a quart of whisky – then go out for a drink', the tabloid 'quoted' Etchingham, claiming that Hendrix 'had an incredible sexual appetite and would often sleep with three or four girls the same night […] Jimi did everything to excess' (20 September 1970 p.6). All the components of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll mythology are present in this account; Hendrix's death is attributed to a pattern of excessive behaviour that encompasses drugs, alcohol, and groupies. When musical collaborator Curtis Knight published his book, *Jimi: An Intimate Biography of Jimi Hendrix* in 1974, he went further, blaming groupies for introducing the star to the drugs which would ultimately kill him, and these claims received attention in the British press ('How fame killed Jimi Hendrix' *Daily Mirror* 21 May 1974, p.7). As sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll began to shed their utopian associations, giving rise to the highly libertarian mythology of rock star exceptionalism we recognise today, the figure of the groupie was increasingly associated with an emergent, darker strain of rock mythology defined by decadence and death.

It is perhaps no coincidence that these countercultural reappraisals of the groupie corresponded with the emergence of the British feminist movement, which not only

[31] The disastrous Altamont Free Concert, held on the 6th December 1969 at Altamont Speedway outside Livermore California, like the Manson murders, which took place between July and August 1969, has been mythologised as a watershed moment marking the end of sixties peace and love idealism and the collapse of rocktopia.

asserted women's right to economic and sexual autonomy, but also grew, in part, out of the dissatisfaction of underground women with their subservient role. Writing in the final issue of *Oz*, David Widgery concluded that 'What finally knackered the underground was its complete inability to deal with women's liberation' ('What went wrong' November 1973, pp.8-9). Jeff Nuttall, author of influential countercultural text *Bomb Culture* (1968), meanwhile, expressed male anxieties regarding female sexual autonomy when he described feminists as 'a major element in the enfeeblement of a cultural movement that might have succeeded. They were very much people who dismantled the main drive – which was erotic and creative – from within' (Green J. , 1998, p. 403). Just as the figure of the sexually excessive groupie was constructed as a threat to rocktopia, for underground men like Nuttall, the figure of the supposedly puritanical feminist presented a threat to cod-Reichian countercultural utopianism. Between these two extreme feminine stereotypes, of course, lies the palatable male-defined definition of female 'liberation' as passive sexual availability, which posed no threat at all to the countercultural gender hierarchy.

Cinematic recreations; the groupie and excess narratives

Released in 1970, *Permissive* and *Groupie Girl* revived the prurient preoccupation with female sexual delinquency, which had defined earlier social problem films, such as *Beat Girl* (Dir, Edmond T. Greville, UK, 1960) and *The Yellow Teddy Bears* (Dir, Hatford-Davis, UK 1963) (Hunt, 1998, p. 98), but these groupie films were considerably more explicit. [32] With the demise of London's 'swinging' associations in the late sixties, American studios had withdrawn investment, leaving the British film industry in a state of crisis (Walker, 1974, p. 444). Desperate to coax audiences back into the cinemas, many filmmakers resorted to producing forms of exploitation cinema intended to capitalise on the general public's supposedly unending appetite for sex and violence. *Permissive* and *Groupie Girl* belong to the series of explicit soft-core low budget 'sexploitation' films, which emerged in the late sixties and early seventies (Hunt, 1998, p. 98). Both films feature excessive female nudity and were awarded the X certificate for which the age-limit had been raised to 18 as recently as November 1969 (Walker, 1985, p. 30).

[32] A direct line can be drawn between these two groups of films, as *Groupie Girl* director Derek Ford also co-wrote the original screenplay for *The Yellow Teddy Bears*

As Leon Hunt observes, in both these films 'there is a strong sense of looking backwards at the sixties, as well as acknowledging that this is no longer the Swinging London of films like *Blow Up* (Dir, Antonioni, UK, 1966) or *Smashing Time* (Dir, Davis, UK 1967)' (Hunt, 1998, p. 98). Instead, 'location shooting eschews the usual tourist traps and red buses of Swinging London films in favour of anonymous hotels, bomb sites and places to squat and beg' (Hunter, 2010, p. 1). In these 'cautionary tales', in which the groupie rather than the musician takes centre stage, the focus is upon what Hunt describes as 'innocents abroad, disillusioned or damaged by their experiences in the big city' (1998, p. 98). *Permissive* and *Groupie Girl* play out against the squalid unglamorous world of gigging lower and mid-tier rock groups, 'a million scuzzy toilets away from the champagne and cocaine supermodel world of Led Zeppelin and the Rolling Stones' (Dorrian, 2010, p. 7).

Both films were directed by men from an older generation, who were looking in on the rock 'n' roll world and the groupie phenomenon from the outside.[33] Comments made by *Groupie Girl's* musical director Ashley Kozac certainly suggest that the film offers a middle-aged conservative view of the groupie phenomenon. 'If there is one way to draw the attention of society to the sick minds of the groupies then this film is the answer', he told the *Daily Mirror*, 'I think it will deter many young teenagers from becoming groupies. We kept the sex scenes in the film because we want to get it home to parents that these things actually happen' ('Out of the pop shadows…the butterfly birds', 6 June 1970 p.11). It is difficult to imagine a concerned parent taking time out to visit the cinema and watch either of these X-rated sexploitation films, while the X certificate would also have ensured that neither film was accessible to 'young teenagers'. Kozac's defence of this film as an exercise in raising awareness draws upon its social problem credentials to pre-empt accusations of exploitation. But foremost, *Permissive* and *Groupie Girl* are intended to cash in on the surge of prurient interest in the groupie phenomenon at the turn of the decade which had been boosted by the publication of *Groupie*.

As film scholar I.Q. Hunter observes, the 'listless, pessimistic and poverty-stricken' nature of *Permissive* also 'achieves an unusual level of grubby authenticity' (2010, p. 1). This observation could be applied to both films in which life on the road is characterised by tedium, discomfort, and bad weather. Joy Farren's account of her own experiences on the road bears striking resemblance to these fictional recreations:

[33] Canadian director Lindsay Shonteff was 35 years old. British director Derek Ford was 38 years old.

> I used to travel from place to place with various groups. Not for long. The discomfort is appalling. Mile after rotten mile of back shaking agony in ancient transit vans driven by crazed and overtired drivers. The ugliness of empty ballrooms when the audience have all gone home, leaving only their discarded rubbish covering the floor. Tiny, spartan dressing rooms. And always that long journey home through a sleeping world ('Star Gazing' *IT* 17 November 1972 p.18)

Permissive also features live performance footage shot on location with real groups and real audiences, and stars real-life prog-rock group Forever More*. Groupie Girl,* on the other hand, featured a title track by British psychedelic rock group Opal Butterfly. Its screenplay was co-written by Derek Long and Suzanne Mercer, who was married to the drummer from prog rock group Juicy Lucy at the time (Hunt, 1998, p. 99). As a woman romantically involved with a member of a group, Mercer's creative involvement in the development of *Groupie Girl* complicates any attempt to dismiss the film entirely as an 'outsider' view of the groupie phenomenon.

Shonteff also collaborated with the young people he sought to represent in his film *Permissive.* When Dorrian interviewed Roger Wootton, whose group Comus had contributed to the film's soundtrack, Wootton described working with Shonteff:

> He always seemed a little lost and wanted to know what our generation felt about the story and how authentic it was. It ended up having quite a lot of resonances with its time… As far as the seedy life of the underground is concerned, it was close to real life […] there was a lot of drug desolation at the time (Dorrian, 2010, p. 12).

Wootton's testimony suggests that at least some of those involved in underground rock may have seen elements of their own experiences reflected in Shonteff's vision.

By focusing upon the poverty-stricken nature of the existence of rock's mid-tier touring groups and their hangers on, and the tedium of life on the road, *Permissive* and *Groupie Girl* draw upon the conventions of visual realism to present a deglamourized vision of the rock world. But the efforts of both directors to harness underground authenticity by collaborating with musicians and women directly involved with the rock scene suggests these films were not intended exclusively for an older male audience with a prurient interest in sexually active young women. It was perhaps also hoped they would appeal to the younger generation with which these films were concerned.

Permissive begins with the arrival of protagonist Suzy (Maggie Stride) in London; she immediately seeks out her old school-friend Fiona (Gay Singleton) who is the established girlfriend of Lee (Allan Gorrie), lead singer in prog group Forever More. Fiona gives Suzy 'groovy' clothes to wear, shares her bed with her, and introduces her to

groupie culture. Initially the relationship between the girls is warm and even playful on occasion, but other groupies are openly hostile towards Suzy; the groupie community is 'characterised by its mutual distrust and ruthless treachery – hair-pulling, knicker-flashing fights are *de rigeur*' in both *Permissive* and *Groupie Girl* (Hunt, 1998, p. 99). At an after-show party in a hotel room, Suzy has her first groupie experience when she has sex with Forever More's sleazy manager, Jimmy (Gilbert Wynne), but she is disappointed to find herself callously discarded after the act. When Fiona goes on tour with Forever More, Suzy must fend for herself, and falls into a tender, platonic relationship with folk musician Pogo (Robert Daubigny). By day the pair walk the streets together, Suzy collects change while Pogo busks, while at night, they sleep huddled in bombed out ruins. Though mentally disturbed, and often incoherent, Pogo is the only character in the film to display any remnants of sixties idealism; his status as an impoverished folk musician on the fringes, meanwhile, connotes authenticity and provides a counterpoint to the apolitical corrupt commercial rock world. At the film's midpoint, he enters a church and delivers his own impromptu sermon from the pulpit, chastising the 'fat cats' that 'make bread' while the homeless live in 'rat-infested shacks', and the politicians who 'sell arms while starvation and the stench of death fills their nostrils'. His own death, in a road accident shortly afterwards, marks a turning point in the narrative; Suzy returns to Fiona and Forever More and begins her ascent through the groupie hierarchy by seducing each member of the group in turn, before callously discarding him in favour of the next, higher-ranking member. As Hunter observes, Suzy becomes a 'social vampire, whose unflinching availability unsettles even the predatory band members', but she 'succeeds as a groupie because she understands the band's misogyny […] and learns to beat the men at their own game of strategic promiscuity' (2010, p. 5). When Fiona's boyfriend Lee begins an affair with Suzy, Fiona, who is by her own account in love with Lee, loses her cool and in a fit of jealousy attacks Suzy at an after-show party. A catfight ensues. In the aftermath of Fiona's emotional outburst, she is discarded by Lee who instates the cool, emotionless Suzy as his established girlfriend. In the film's final scene, Suzy encounters Fiona with her wrists slit in a hotel bathtub – she is on the brink of death. By this point, Suzy's descent into cold-blooded, ruthless individualism is complete, she regards Fiona without emotion and leaves without a word, slamming the door behind her.

Death features prominently in both groupie films, but in *Permissive* it is pervasive; in a stylistic move derived from *Easy Rider* (Dir, Hopper, USA, 1969), the imminent deaths

of Pogo and Fiona are prefigured by flash-forward inserts earlier in the film. [34] In the ruthless rock 'n' roll world of *Permissive,* Fiona and Pogo are the only characters who are not entirely self-serving, but love, idealism, and kindness are all punished by a narrative which instead rewards ruthlessness, treachery, and emotional detachment. The deaths of these two characters not only mark the respective onset and culmination of innocent Suzy's utter corruption, they stand in for the death of hippie idealism and community.

While Suzy appears to have nowhere else to go, *Groupie Girl's* Sally (Esme Johns) wishes to escape her provincial origins. 'It's so boring up here', she complains at a local dance in the opening scenes of the film*,* 'People are boring and there's nothing to do'. In a scenario reminiscent of *Melody Maker's* 'A Plea from a Scrubber', Sally stows herself away in the van belonging to touring group Orange Butterfly. Shortly before, she puts her money in her bra and her Post Office Savings book in her knickers, 'a singularly blunt image of how she takes on exchange value' (Hunt, 1998, p. 99). Before long, she finds herself in London, where she is passed from one group member to another. When Orange Butterfly's lead singer Steve (Donald Sumpter) becomes possessive about Sally, he is mocked by the rest of the group, a scene which culminates in the group's decision to pass a terrified Sally from their own transit van, going at high speed, to a second transit van belonging to another group, The Sweaty Betty. As Hunt observes, Sally's function as an object of exchange and currency of esteem within what Mark Simpson describes as a male 'homosocial economy' is brutally hammered home during this disturbing sequence (Hunt, 1998, p. 100). Parallels can also be drawn between the scene in *Almost Famous* (Dir, Crowe, USA, 2000) in which groupie Penny Lane (Kate Hudson) is traded between two groups for beer, events which lead directly to her failed suicide attempt. But *Groupie Girl* is a far more brutal and far less sentimental film than this later Hollywood recreation. This reckless stunt ultimately ends in a fatal motorway accident for the transit van containing Orange Butterfly. In the aftermath, an inquest is held. Aware that Sally is a key witness whose testimony could put his own group in jail and lose him money, The Sweaty Betty's ruthless manager, Morrie (Richard Shaw) places Sally in a dilapidated country house for its duration. Here Sally evades a version of the Rolling Stones' Redlands drugs bust, experiments with LSD, and embarks on a tender love affair with folk musician Wes (Billy Boyle) who tells her 'You're a groupie, and groupies get used: and then they get thrown away.' But when The Sweaty Betty's manager returns and makes unwanted and

[34] *Easy Rider* is a landmark independent American road movie which, like these British groupie films, takes sixties hippie culture and shows its unravelling.

entitled sexual demands on Sally, her new boyfriend, dependent upon Morrie for his own music career, fails to intervene and Sally is raped off screen. In the final scene, in her first act of agency since stowing away in Orange Butterfly's van, Sally departs from the country house on foot, leaving the rock world behind. A car pulls up, it is Wes, but rather than leave with her, or beg for forgiveness, he guiltily hands her some money.

For Dorrian the unflinching depiction of degrading sex and female exploitation in *Permissive* 'helps reinforce a conservative middle-aged view of the so-called "permissive society"' (2010, p. 7). This critique could be applied to both films. Hunt suggests that *Groupie Girl's* unflinching depiction of rock misogyny could be interpreted as a feminist condemnation of groupie culture, but he counters that any such reading is cancelled out by the mileage the film gets out of Sally's exploitation: 'she is as a character, an absolute blank space' (Hunt, 1998, p. 100). The same can be said of *Permissive's* Suzy; both characters are afforded no inner life; like the media-constructed figure of the scrubber/groupie, they are entirely vacuous, their motivations obscure. Female pleasure, desire and fandom are also entirely absent from these films; in fact, at no point in either film does any character, groupie or musician, express any enthusiasm for, or interest in, the music.

Despite the involvement of Suzanne Mercer and Forever More, *Groupie Girl* and *Permissive* can hardly be held up as accurate portrayals of the groupie experience; what they do reflect is attitudes at the time. The mainstream media's condemnation of the rock 'n' roll world as inherently squalid, decadent, and immoral was well established, but, as we have seen, by the early seventies this critique was gathering some traction within the underground itself where it took the form of a lament for what could have been. The insistence on portraying the rock world in *Groupie Girl* and *Permissive* as entirely amoral can be interpreted as an effort to appease censors and viewers while capitalising upon prurient public interest in the groupie phenomenon. But the involvement of young people who were actually involved in underground rock culture, and the damning testimonies of those who were there, suggest that these films also tapped into a general sense of malaise within the underground itself. The mobilisation of the figure of the groupie as metaphor for rock's debasement in both the underground press and these films, illuminates a coalescence of New Left and conservative unease around ideas of rock decadence, but also female sexual agency as a threat to interrelated and parallel dominant and countercultural systems of patriarchy.

By the mid-seventies, the figure of the groupie had been firmly entrenched in rock 'n' roll mythology as accessories to this particular form of male achievement and woven into a now familiar narrative of rock excess. 'A pop star's lifestyle is littered with fast cars, big houses, boozy parties', writes Deborah Thomas in her article on the group Slade for the *Daily Mirror,* 'groupie girls are generous with their favours, drugs suddenly become easy to obtain, champagne flows like bitter tasting water' ('SLADE: still the old routine' 10 July 1973 p.28). Two years later, Slade would star in the cinematic realisation of this narrative, *Slade in Flame* (Dir, Loncraine, UK, 1975), a surprisingly gritty 'pop' film, which charts the rise of fictional group 'Flame' (played by Slade) from the back rooms of pubs to the big time. At the film's climax, a champagne-soaked hotel room after-party complete with groupies, Flame implodes, as commercial pressures tear the group apart.

Another pop film that looks back on the sixties, *Stardust* (Dir, Apted, UK, 1974), follows a similar rock excess narrative, charting the rise of musician Jim MacLaine (David Essex) from Merseybeat combo the Stray Cats to solo superstardom, downfall, and in this case, death. Jim loses his sophisticated girlfriend Danielle (Ines Des Longchamps), who has defended his musical integrity in the face of commercial interests, when she catches him participating in a groupie orgy at a recording session. In the aftermath, and the final act of the film, MacLaine withdraws to a castle in Spain where he becomes a paranoid recluse, and ultimately succumbs to a drug overdose.

In both films, the figure of the groupie appears at a key moment in the narrative. Associated with excess, commercialisation, and corruption, she signals the onset of dissolution on the road to ruin in *Stardust* and disillusionment and defeat in *Slade in Flame*. Although groupies are not always featured, this familiar trajectory from youthful idealism and aspiration to creative/commercial success and social adulation, to excess, downfall, and defeat, often ending in death (but sometimes also redemption), still constitutes the narrative template for music biopics today.[35] More broadly speaking, the rise-and-fall narrative that plays out in these films also runs through popular and historical accounts of the British counterculture, and indeed, the sixties. It also inflects Jenny Fabian's oral history. In our interview, she described the mid-seventies:

> The music was fizzling out, wasn't it? […] the music I liked. Jimi was dead. Janice was dead. You know? The Beatles weren't there, anymore. The Stones were motoring on. There was music, but it was, it was contained within a certain

[35] For recent examples, see *Elvis* (Dir, Luhrmann, US/Australia, 2022) and *Bohemian Rhapsody* (Sir. Singer, UK/US, 2018).

> timeframe, and once we got beyond, once punk arrived, you know, the punks didn't like the hippies at all, did they? (2019)

Around 1975, Jenny Fabian, then in her early thirties, realised she 'never wanted to go to another music gig again, never wanted to be involved in anything like that again […] Since I was like "that was it"' (ibid.). By this time, her recreational drug use had spiralled into a ruinous and debilitating cocaine habit. 'I went through a dreadful period, in London of just all my money was spent on drugs, all of it', she told me, 'Awful. What a waste. […] coke is the worst. I don't mind smoking dope and something. Coke – you think it improves your writing, but it doesn't, it makes it worse. Dreadful stuff' (ibid.). She also had to remove herself from Billy's orbit, because he was always coming round again and causing her pain. Fortunately, she had befriended Sir Mark Palmer, a 'privileged hippie' among the 'posh dropouts' who regularly dropped by when she was staying at Hilton Hall (ibid.). Upon learning she had experience with horses, Palmer had offered her work at his stables in Gloucestershire if she ever needed it. In a return to her roots, she took him up on the offer in 1975 and retreated to the country a second time to work as a groom for several years:

> When you work with horses, I tell you, […] and you weigh six-and-a-half stone because you've been taking a lot of coke, you're very, well, unfit, basically. Horses are quite difficult creatures. […] that was my cold turkey and […] I really had to physically, well not work at it, because you can't work at something, it just has to happen, doesn't it? Your body has to like, mend itself. But I had […] the most incredible saddle sores on my bottom, I had blisters on my hands. I was absolutely knackered, but it cured me of wanting to snort a gram of coke a day. And it brought me back to my senses, in a way, and although I have dabbled since, I've never been, I've never gone back to that. (Fabian, 2019)

By drawing upon her middle-class capital, seizing an opportunity provided by a wealthy friend, and immersing herself in physically demanding work with horses, Jenny Fabian was able to survive the excess, downfall, and defeat, which defines the second part of her personal narrative. She lives to tell her tale, but not all underground hard drug users and addicts were so lucky. While high-profile drug casualties like Jimi Hendrix have been enshrined in the cult of wasted youth and tortured genius, other casualties, the hangers-on, the groupies, 'who hung on to the myths and ended up in the squalid rat-infested squat shooting up' (Widgery cited in Green J. , 1998, p. 434) are forgotten. They can no longer speak for themselves.

It is also interesting to note that, while Jenny Fabian's life story narrative roughly corresponds with the rise-and-fall narrative that runs through popular and historical

accounts of the British underground, and more broadly the sixties, Emma's does not. This is perhaps because Emma is eight years younger than Jenny Fabian; her enthusiasm for pursuing the groups was unabated at a time when Jenny Fabian was becoming disenchanted with the group scene. It is also, perhaps, because Emma did not have the economic capital with which to indulge in the underground's greater excesses, drugs did not feature at all in her oral history, nor did she witness the underground's dissolution first-hand. When she 'lost' Tina to pregnancy and relocation in 1970, and Susan to her controlling husband in 1973, Emma was able to find a new friend with whom she continued to pursue the groups well into the seventies.

Resignation, diversification and cementing an anachronism.

While *Stardust, Slade in Flame, Permissive,* and *Groupie Girl* presented a bleak vision of the rock 'n' roll world, *Confessions of a Pop Performer* (Dir, Cohen, UK, 1975) was different. Rather than condemn the permissive society, this film counted among 43 sex comedies produced in Britain between 1971 and 1975 (Sandbrook, 2011, p. 449), which sought to celebrate the permissive society. The second instalment in the '*Confessions*…' franchise, *Confessions of a Pop Performer,* starred sex comedy stalwart Robin Askwith.[36] There had always been a farcical element to groupie representation, but it had also gone hand in hand with moral condemnation. By the mid-seventies sexual attitudes appear to have relaxed to the extent that *Confessions of a Pop Performer* was able to capitalise upon the groupie phenomenon for the sake of laughs and titillation without adopting any moralistic tone to appease censors and viewers.

This film presents the figure of the groupie as simply another highlight in a kaleidoscopic fantasy image of Britain, where all women, from suburban housewives to dolly birds, are sexually available. Established groupie tropes are in evidence; groupies display either passive sexual availability or aggressive sexual behaviour; the groupie pattern of behaviour is framed as an extension of fan hysteria complete with chase scenes reminiscent of *A Hard Day's Night*. The groupie's status as duped consumer is literalised in one scene when a groupie mistakes Askwith's Timmy for Mick Jagger 'making a come-back' and threatens to scream for the police if he doesn't have sex with her.

[36] The *Confessions* franchise also included *Confessions of a Window Cleaner* (Dir, Guest, UK, 1974), *Confessions of a Driving Instructor* (Dir, Cohen, UK, 1976) and *Confessions from a Holiday Camp* (Dir, Cohen, UK, 1977)

When he complies, she exclaims ‘my friends will never believe me!’. The groupie is also commodified; while Timmy lusts after middle-class reporter Jill (Carol Hawkins), the working-class groupies he encounters are interchangeable and disposable. Drawing upon Dyer’s essay on ‘Entertainment and utopia’ (1981), Hunt suggests the ‘sexcom’ presents a utopian genre ‘in its discovery of numerous opportunities for sexual conquests to compensate for the 'lacks' (exhaustion, scarcity, dreariness, manipulation, fragmentation) associated with work (and, less directly, class) and home’ (1998, p. 126). This cinematic vision of groupie abundance works to exploit both male fantasies of an infinite variety of sexual partners and capitalist fantasies of plenty.

But, as Hunt notes, these sexcoms also tend to ‘prescribe sexuality along fairly narrow lines’ (Ibid. p. 125). *Confessions of a Pop Performer* is ‘much more uncertain when irrepressible male randiness has to negotiate the intricacies of actual female desire’ (ibid. P.26). In this film ‘the lurking fear of the female sexual appetite' is personified by the nymphomaniacal groupie (1998, p. 125), but subversion, transgression, exploitation, and resistance are also eradicated. This film, perhaps more than any of the other groupie films discussed in this study, reflects the ultimate inability of the groupie pattern of behaviour to effect real structural change. Instead, the phenomenon’s radical aspects appear, by 1975, to have been reconciled with an evolving patriarchal structure, which, in cognizance with the new ethic of consumption, had shifted the onus from female chastity to female sexual availability.

Elsewhere, media interest in the groupie phenomenon was waning as the frequency of references to the groupie phenomenon declined slightly in the seventies, and articles dedicated to the subject gave way to increasingly cursory references. In December 1974, the *Daily Mail* listed ‘Groupies’ among the lifestyles which were ‘out’ for 1975 (‘In and Out 1974–1975’ 31 December 1974, p.6), but the phenomenon was also, according to the media, ubiquitous; as the deepening recession narrowed opportunities within the music industry, and many music critics considered pop to be at a creative impasse, the media claimed the groupie phenomenon had simply infiltrated other cultural fields. 'Even the "groupies" who remorselessly followed their idols around the country and wrote novels about the experience have switched their allegiances', writes Verity in *the Sunday Telegraph*, ‘rather than disappear altogether, their loyalties have moved from the footlights to the football field’ (‘Pop goes the image of teenage idols’ 13 February 1972 p.11). Football is linked to pop, as ‘two key industries of upward mobility’ (Hunt, 1998, p. 120) for both stars and their consorts, and there was much talk of football

supplanting pop as the new national obsession. The antics of George Best were well documented in the press, 'Fan mail started pouring in including lots of "propositions" from girls', Best told *The People*:

> By the time I was twenty girls were hanging around my digs in Chorlton all day, hanging around the boutique I had in Manchester, hanging round in Old Trafford. But I never went out with the "groupies" who follow some football teams around ('Georgie's nights out with 1000 birds ' 12 May 1974 pp.6-7)

Media claims of football groupies were not unfounded; my own mother recalls working at a catering business in Swindon in the mid-seventies with a 'football groupie' who would excitedly regale the other girls with details of her latest sexual conquest at Swindon Town FC. But the *Daily Mirror* also reported on wrestling groupies – 'Girls around wrestlers are like groupies with pop singers. At first it's fantastic, knocks you out, then you get used to it' ('Why wrestling has a stranglehold on women' *Daily Mirror*, 21 November 1970 p.9) – tennis groupies – 'The raw material for off court play comes from a growing horde of tennis "groupies": head hunting girls with long legs and largely nit witted minds who chase after international tennis players as if they were pop stars' ('Conquests…?, Heard about the 'points system' for sex' ? *Daily Mail,* 2 July 1971 p.11) – and even chess groupies: 'His King's Sicilian defence failed before the world's first chess groupie' ('The chessboard jungle' *Daily Mirror,* 13 July 1972, p.9).

Groupies were also identified as accessories to male achievement beyond the sporting world; The *Sunday Independent* reported that some women working in the book PR business 'behave like literary groupies – collecting the bedroom scalps of touring authors' ('Media Mania' 30 June 1974 p.12); film and television critics also described the consorts of famous men portrayed in historical recreations as 'groupies', such as Julie Ege's character Voluptua in the film *Up Pompeii* (Dir, Kellett, UK, 1971) ('The lecherous lurking of Frankie ' *Harrow Observer*, 9 April 1971, p.3). It would appear then, that the label could now be applied to any woman who expressed sexual interest in a famous or accomplished man. Even illusionist Uri Geller confided to *The People* that he was being 'followed around by a kind of psychic groupie […] they think I can do something special for them with my powers. They often go away disappointed' ('People Talk' 3 November 1974 p.10).

Across these accounts, the groupie stereotype remains largely intact. This evidence suggests the groupie stereotype worked to stigmatise not only women exhibiting the pattern of behaviour, but all female sports fans and even female

professionals. But the tone of moral indignation, which defined groupie representation in the sixties, is muted in these fleeting accounts. In 1974, *The Mirror* featured a cartoon of two young women examining a paperback novel (Fig. 8.2): 'it's about a girl who falls in love with a homosexual, he commits suicide, so she runs off and becomes a groupie with a Rock Band', one says to the other, 'a typical love story' ('Virginia Books' *Daily Mirror*, 19 July 1974, p.7). By 1974, outrage appears to have largely shifted to resignation, perhaps because, by the mid-seventies, 'moral individualism was no longer the prerogative of the avant-garde and the rich', but increasingly 'the dominant ethic' (Haste, 1992, p. 222).

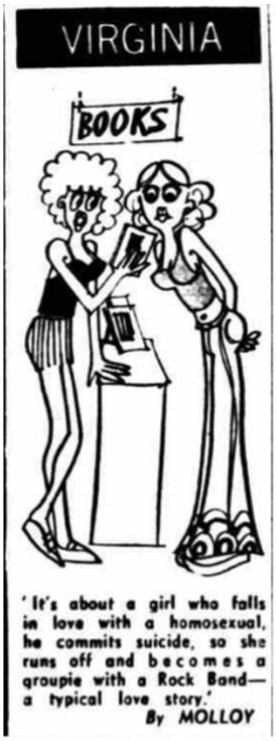

Fig 8.2 Resignation at the pace of social change in Molloy, (1974) 'Virginia Books', *Daily Mirror* (19 July), p.7.

While the sexual component in these examples appears to be intact, there were also a small number of examples where the groupie label was applied to describe desexualised fanatics. 'GROUPIES, those fanatical followers of pop stars, have tracked down New Seekers' singer Lyn Paul's Theale address', misleadingly begins one report on how female vocalist Lyn Paul's younger sister had been corresponding with young fans on her behalf ('When pop is a family affair' *Reading Evening Post*, 26 July 1973, p.5). In a review of a small festival, another journalist described a 'groupie' 'who watched every performance and who had learnt all the songs and dance routines before we left. She was seven' ('ATIT in Edinburgh ' *Buckinghamshire Examiner*, 28 September 1973, p.25). These two isolated examples prefigure the use of the groupie label 'detached from its roots in music and sexuality' to describe uncritical fanatics with which we are familiar today (Gerrard, 2022, p. 1045).

Conclusion

The analysis of groupie representation in the media and cinematic recreations produced between 1970 and 1975 suggests this period saw a shift in attitudes towards the groupie within both the counterculture and the dominant culture. Against the backdrop of countercultural decline and disillusionment, and feminist ascendency, the more political element within the underground reappraised the figure of the groupie in relation to the forces of commercialisation, elitism, and decadence, seen to undermine hippie core values and threaten the foundations of rocktopia.

Groupie films produced at the turn of the decade, meanwhile, sought to exploit cultural anxieties and latent desires surrounding female sexual delinquency, but also tapped into a general sense of malaise within the underground. By examining groupie representation in both the mainstream and underground press, alongside cinematic recreations, it has been possible to trace the evolution of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll mythology from its utopian origins to a darker, nihilistic mythology, characterised by decadence, exceptionalism, and untimely death.

Archival evidence discussed in this chapter suggests that by the close of this cultural decade, sexual attitudes had relaxed; the tone of groupie representation in the mainstream media had shifted from moral outrage to resignation. Under such conditions, *Confessions of a Pop Performer* was able to unapologetically capitalise upon the groupie phenomenon in the service of male fantasy without any obligation for moral condemnation. As such, the groupie pattern of behaviour appears to have been partially reconciled with an evolving patriarchal structure, which was increasingly shifting focus from the onus on feminine chastity to female sexual availability.

Chapter 9 Resurgent feminism and the groupie phenomenon

The groupie phenomenon, like the sexual revolution, remains a divisive issue for different kinds of feminists. The first part of this chapter draws upon groupie representation in the music, underground and feminist press to argue that, while some individualistic feminists and underground women were prepared to accept, and even celebrate, the groupie phenomenon, collectivist feminists and other underground women rejected it. The first half of the seventies also saw female musicians begin to make some headway in rock culture. By examining the representation of all-female American group Fanny in the British press and drawing upon the mediated testimonies of other female musicians, this chapter explores the reasons why, with the rise of female-fronted rock, there does not appear to have been a male equivalent to the groupie phenomenon. The final part of this chapter returns to groupie oral histories to examine how Emma and Jenny Fabian made sense of feminism, and whether the movement had any impact on how they understood their own groupie experiences, both at the time, and today. Before moving to discuss how feminists made sense of the groupie, and groupies made sense of feminism, it is important to first give some background on the women's liberation movement itself.

The Feminist Movement

In the United States, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963/1965), which dealt with the plight of the American housewife, was instrumental in mobilising and recruiting American women to the feminist cause and led directly to the establishment of the National Organisation for Women (NOW) in 1966. But *The Feminine Mystique* failed to make a significant impact in Britain. The real political initiative for the British Women's Liberation Movement would instead come from the labour movement (Rowbotham, 1990, p. 27). The demand for equal pay was spearheaded by women in the trade union movement. Most notably, in June 1968, Rose Boland led a three-week strike at Ford's Dagenham plant in demand for access to higher grade work. In the wake of this industrial action, the National Joint Action Campaign Committee for Women's Equal Rights was established at top trade union level, strengthening Employment Secretary Barbara Castle's efforts to push through an equal pay bill (Wilson, 2014, p. 283).

That spring, a women's rights group formed around a group of fishermen's wives in Hull, led by Lil Bilocca, who organised a successful campaign for improved safety at sea

after two trawlers were lost in bad weather (Rowbotham, 1990, p. 15). At the same time London's female bus conductors demanded equal opportunities to become bus drivers (Marwick, 1998, p. 689). In May 1969, the National Joint Action Campaign Committee for Women's Equal Rights organised a demonstration of trade-union women for equal pay and a thousand trade unionists marched upon Trafalgar Square. The emergent Women's Liberation Movement of the seventies would owe a lot to the efforts of women campaigning within the trade union movement in the sixties, who ultimately prepared the ground for one of the feminist movement's most significant legislative gains – the Equal Pay Act, implemented in 1970.

Among women involved in existing radical left-wing groups, there was a growing sense of dissatisfaction with their secondary role as 'typists, tea-makers and sexual objects' (Mitchell, 1971, p. 32). This was brought home to many when Black Power leader Stokely Carmichael famously put women down to a 'prone' position within the liberation movement (ibid. p.20). There was also growing frustration with the failure of existing Marxist theory to adequately account for the nature of women's oppression. In 1966, Juliet Mitchell produced one of the earliest texts of the British second-wave, 'Women: The Longest Revolution', which appeared in the *New Left Review* (Mitchell, 1966). Like other emerging socialist feminists, such as Rowbotham, Mitchell saw the condition of women as complex, and central to a class-based analysis, rather than tangential and automatically 'solved' by communism. Recruited in 1968 as a founder editor for radical paper *Black Dwarf*, Rowbotham pushed for an entire issue dedicated to the Marxist analysis of women's oppression, which would proclaim 1969 'Year of the Militant Woman' (9-10 January 1969). That spring, the secondary role of women on the Left was raised at the Revolutionary Socialist Student Federation (RSSF) provoking further discussion among leftist groups (Rowbotham, 1976, p. 416). Women's liberation and socialist groups began to appear soon after at Essex University and in Peckham Rye (Coote & Campbell, 1982, p. 16) and two papers had appeared: *Socialist Woman* and *Shrew* (Rowbotham, 1976, p. 416).

The early signs of a resurgent interest in feminism also owed something to American influences; American student expats involved in the British VSC played a key role in establishing one of the earliest women's liberation groups in Britain, the Tufnell Park group, in 1968 (Rowbotham, 1990, p. 17). But there were notable differences between the American and British feminist movements. In the United States, a new, more radical strand of the feminist movement had emerged in 1967, when women split from

the national student activist organisation, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), to form a women's group (Hole & Levine, 1971, pp. 111-115). But in Britain, the feminist movement's emergence from radical left-wing groups and the labour movement would inflect emergent feminist theory and analysis with a particularly socialist slant (Coote & Campbell, 1982, p. 31).

If the period between 1968 and 1969 saw the first tentative signs of a feminist resurgence, the first National Women's Liberation Conference at Ruskin College in February 1970 is the moment 'a movement could be said to exist' (Rowbotham, 1990, p. 22). This landmark event came about when a women's history study workshop at Ruskin College, the trade union affiliated college in Oxford, quickly turned into a weekend-long conference dedicated to not only women's history, but the contemporary lives of women (Mitchell, 1971 p.44). The conference was attended by over 600 participants including not only students and academics, but also housewives and working women. Out of the conference came the Women's National Coordinating Committee, which put forward the Movement's four initial demands – free 24-hour nurseries, equal pay, equal education and job opportunities, and free contraception and abortion on demand (Coote & Campbell, 1982, p. 24). In its wake, women's groups began to spring up across the UK, and on the first International Women's Day on the 6th March 1971, an estimated four thousand women walked in support of the demands agreed at Ruskin, raising the Movement's profile further (Ferguson, 2018).

Countercultural women also played a key role in the emergent women's liberation movement. In December 1971, *Oz's* Louise Ferrier organised the first meeting of Women in the Underground; out of this meeting emerged *Spare Rib*, founded by Rosie Boycott and Marsha Rowe (Rowe, n.d.). This was not Britain's first feminist magazine, but it was its most successful; the circulation of its first issue alone was 20,000, and its readership was perhaps double its print run (Winship, 1986, p. 166). *Spare Rib's* reach extended far beyond the underground, and far beyond London, as Boycott recalls: 'The letters we got there were from a hell of a lot of ordinary people' (cited in Green J. , 1998, p. 416), and unlike the underground press, *Spare Rib* outlived the counterculture, only ceasing publication in 1993. Within the pages of this publication, feminist journalists addressed a whole range of issues, from sexism in the workplace and DIY to fashion and music.

Like the women behind *Spare Rib,* Germaine Greer also transitioned from the underground press to the mainstream in the early seventies. In her best-selling feminist text, *The Female Eunuch* (1970), Greer developed the idea that female sexuality was a

revolutionary force and implored her readers to reclaim their sexuality, and in doing so, liberate themselves socially. 'Woman could begin not by changing the world but by re-assessing herself' (1971, p. 14), she asserted, and this individualistic approach, coupled with a highly accessible format, contributed to the popularity of *The Female Eunuch* among many ordinary women not directly involved with the feminist movement as collective struggle. In the wake of her book's huge success Greer immediately shot to national fame; she became a media star overnight, appearing on talk-shows and in newspapers. As the media positioned her as the face of the British Women's Liberation Movement, there was consternation among many feminist activists who fundamentally opposed the emergence of any 'leader', let alone one who, it was observed, did not appear on marches or involve herself in campaigns (Kleinhenz, 2018, p. 152). Greer's emphasis on the individual woman's efforts to 'liberate' herself also proved divisive among her feminist peers. In her review of *The Female Eunuch,* for example, Rowbotham described Greer as a 'scarecrow radical': they 'can look very impudent but they can't do anything' ('How to get your man' *Oz* November 1970 p.18).

Wilson has identified 'two contradictory and possibly incompatible socialist traditions' which have 'always borne in on women's liberation': the 'sometimes romantic but always highly militant and usually vanguardist notions of revolution as embodied in Trotskyism', to which it could be argued socialist feminists, such as Rowbotham and Mitchell, subscribed; and 'the "libertarian" and partly anarchist emphasis on personal liberation' (Wilson, 1980, p. 206). Greer's individualistic and libertarian brand of feminism more closely corresponded to the latter, although, as we shall see, she was not beyond criticising other women for what she saw as their lack of political discipline. The tension between these ideological strands, which could perhaps be more broadly described as a conflict between collectivism and individualism, also gave rise to divergent feminist perspectives on the groupie phenomenon.

Germaine Greer: Individualistic feminist perspective(s) on the groupie

Greer was perhaps the only UK-based feminist to publicly self-identify as a groupie, and publicly voice her approval of the groupie phenomenon. In Australian magazine *Pol* in 1972, Greer praised groupies for obeying 'no rules but their own' (Cited in Wallace, 1997, p. 145), and in many ways the figure of the groupie remained compatible with the utopian sexual theories she developed in *The Female Eunuch*; for Greer, the groupie could

be embraced by feminism because she reclaimed her sexuality, acted out her desires, and transgressed the boundaries of the traditional passive feminine role. But the risks involved for women who followed this path are downplayed in Greer's writing, probably because she herself was cushioned by her own success. Not all women attempting to navigate the sexual revolution as sexually emancipated individuals were in such a position of prestige and security. As time went on, the risk of pregnancy and abandonment, sexual violence, and STDs would be seized upon by protectionist feminists and eventually, as we shall see, by Greer herself, to critique the sexual revolution.

Greer's superficial embrace of the groupie phenomenon was also far from unconditional or unchanging. In *The Female Eunuch,* Fabian and Byrne's *Groupie* came under fire:

> Even in a book as flat and documentary as *Groupie* embodies the essential romantic stereotype in Grant, the masterful lover who supplants all Katie's other fucks. He tells Katie when she may call, how long she may stay, commands her to make the bed and perform all his other requirements without demur and she loves it. She persuades herself that this is love-in-disguise…and ends the book on a hopeful note, waiting for him to return from America and go on ordering her about. The book is based on experience, and often positively dreary in its fidelity, but the character of Grant is a genuinely unconscious falsification of the original. If female liberation is to happen, if the reservoir of real female love is to be tapped, this sterile self-deception must be counteracted. (Greer, 1971, p. 188)

This passage appeared in a chapter titled 'Romance', which was concerned with 'the cheap ideology of *being in love'.* Katie's self-possession when undertaking domestic chores, and her constant self-surveillance of her emotions to 'not get hung up' are ignored. Instead, Greer dismisses *Groupie*, and the real-life events which inspired it, as a product of false consciousness. As her biographer Christine Wallace observes:

> Greer was trenchantly critical of individuals at times, and of hype generally, but she continued to idealise the counterculture, the underground itself, even as its unattractive underside was becoming obvious. Her harshest criticisms were for those who had in some way betrayed revolutionary purity, and for those who lacked any sense of the spiritual dimension she herself perceived in the underground (1997, p. 146).

For Greer, Jenny Fabian had failed to 'achieve the spiritual and sensual unleashing' that she, Greer, 'felt the counterculture – particularly rock culture – was really all about' (Wallace, 1997, p. 147). Greer's brand of feminism may have been predominantly individualistic and anarchistic, but it was at the same time inflected with vanguardist notions of revolution embodied in Trotskyism, which gave her license, on occasion, to

judge the actions of others according to what she perceived as their revolutionary correctness.

In her withering critique of countercultural rock, disguised as an obituary for Jimi Hendrix, Greer complained how 'the groupies had always been further into prestige-fucking than honest sensuality' ('Hey Jimi, Where you gonna run to now?' *Oz,* October 1970, p.8). But she fails to consider that while some women, such as herself, were socially and financially secure, most were not. The libertarian, partly anarchist emphasis in Greer's work during this period can be seen at play here, since anarchism fights for the freedom of every individual from hierarchic organisation, and 'every anarchist validates his or her revolutionary politics in his or her private actions in every aspect of his or her personal life' (Mitchell, 1971, p. 68). For Greer, the groupie's pursuit of vicarious status was not a response to gender inequality but a question of personal failure which ultimately upheld the hierarchic organisation; the trading of sexual capital was only correct in revolutionary terms if it negotiated pleasure and pleasure alone.

Elsewhere, Greer describes romanticised scenarios in which idealised women possessed of high levels of sexual capital and (sub)cultural capital, much like herself, were in the privileged position where they could adopt the traditional passive feminine role in groupie/musician relations. In her 1972 article for *Pol,* for example, Greer claimed the term 'groupie' had not initially been pejorative (cited in Wallace, 1997, p. 145). It was used first, she said, to describe the young women who were sought out by bored rock musicians on endless tours of middle America 'funny girls, crazy girls, beautiful girls' (ibid.). According to Greer, these groupies were not into name-dropping: they had names of their own the musicians used to drop (ibid.) Taken alongside her self-identification as a 'supergroupie' who doesn't 'have to hang around hotel corridors' but is 'invited backstage' ('Germaine Greer- Opinions that may shock the faithful', *The New York Times*, 22 March 1971, n.p.) Greer appears to celebrate and uphold the very rock elitism she had previously lambasted.

In the same article, Greer acknowledged that musicians have bad-mouthed groupies and turned the label into an insult, but again, forestalled any feminist analysis of the phenomenon. Instead, in an elitist rationalisation, she argued that 'most musicians who did this were small-time types; you never heard Eric Clapton or Jimi Hendrix or Mick Jagger going on like that' (Cited in Wallace, 1997, p. 146). Mick Jagger *did*, however, mock groupies in equally elitist, and overtly classist, terms when he complained to the *NME* that the 'groupie girls who followed [the Rolling Stones] around' in the sixties 'were so

ugly. The dreadful Northern ones came with long black hair, plastic boots and macs' ('Jagger tells of sex and drugs' *Newcastle Journal,* 6 February 1974 p.6). Meanwhile, members of established groups, such as the Bee Gees and The Kinks, who could hardly be dismissed as 'small time types', condemned groupies and so-called 'scrubbers' in the music press.

But what about those groupies possessed of low subcultural capital? Greer may have dismissed the figure of the 'scrubber' as an exploited victim ('The Universal Tonguebath: A Groupie's Vision' *Oz*, 19 March 1969 pp.30-33), but as a working-class groupie with feminine cultural capital of low convertible value within the underground field, Emma was at liberty to pursue the object of her sexual desire (on the condition she was able to successfully navigate the category of respectability). This approach perhaps corresponds more closely with Greer's ideal of 'honest sensuality' and countercultural utopian ideas of 'free love' than Jenny Fabian's strategizing or Greer's own self-appointed 'supergroupie' status.

Spare Rib: Collectivist feminist perspectives on the groupie

While Greer accepted an idealised version of the groupie, on the condition she lived up to her utopian ideals, but eschewed any serious feminist analysis of the phenomenon, other feminists denounced the groupie phenomenon and made attempts to undertake its analysis. In 1973 a series of articles penned by Marion Fudger concerned with the position of women in rock appeared in *Spare Rib.* Fudger also reported on *Melody Maker's* conference for women in rock music, which was held on the 5th October 1973 and attended by the cream of emerging female musicians, frontline singers, and industry insiders, among them Elkie Brooks, Marsha Hunt, Yvonne Elliman, Maddy Prior of Steeleye Span, and Susie Watson-Taylor, manager of the Incredible String Band. When a Women and Music Collective was established in 1974, Fudger, again, reported on the first meeting for *Spare Rib*. 'Where do we start in trying to answer all the questions which leave women 1) emotionally and financially supporting male musicians 2) reduced to being used as objects of male satisfaction (groupies)?', she wrote in her subsequent report ('The ideas, the questions the answers and the experiences from the first meeting of the women and music collective' June 1974 pp.45–46). When reading this series of articles, one gets the impression that after so many years of silence, these young

feminists were now rushing to challenge so many aspects of rock culture which had previously been taken for granted.

Although *Spare Rib* encompassed different feminist viewpoints, the feminists who wrote about the groupie phenomenon generally saw the figure of the groupie as an object of sexual exploitation. 'Given the sexist lyrics of most songs, why do female fans continue to idolise the bands, and why do groupies continue to knock on the dressing room doors after the show?', asked Fudger ('Women in Music' January 1974 pp.44–45). Margaret Geddes, meanwhile, pre-empted this question in her analysis of misogynistic rock lyrics, and suggested it was this open contempt for women which 'had finally consolidated the Stones' position in the pop world. They were saying what every teenage fan was saying to herself – "All women are shit" – but she added, "Except me"' ('Roll over and Rock me Baby' May 1973 pp.6–8).

As the misogynistic subtext of rock rebellion and the exclusion of women from so many roles in the music industry finally came under feminist scrutiny, the groupie phenomenon was perceived as a direct product of rock misogyny. While Geddes and Fudger acknowledged the groupie was one of the only roles available to women in rock, they saw the pattern of behaviour as a form of collusion borne of internalised misogyny and false consciousness, rather than resistance. 'Are groupies an indication of sexism in the pop business?', asked Fudger rhetorically. 'Are the only present existing roles for women in the business, fans, groupies, and a few artists?' ('Women in Music' January 1974, pp.44–45). Within the pages of *Spare Rib,* the groupie phenomenon was reconfigured as a barometer of sexism in the music industry.

A similar view was expressed by American feminist Arlene Brown in her essay for *IT*: 'A woman can relate to rock music now only if she is a groupie', she wrote, 'if not literally, then figuratively. As the drooling sex-hungry little girl dying for it from Pigpen, Jim Morrison, Pete Townsend' ('Has anyone reading this article met a woman bass player? ' 23 August 1970, p.13). In these feminist accounts, commercial manipulation is equated with sexual exploitation. 'Fans are not groupies', Fudger writes in *Spare Rib*, 'A groupie is someone who frequents groups, not because they respect their art or idolise them as a fan would, because they move from group to group. The plaster casters weren't in there because someone had a good record' ('Women in Music ' January 1974 pp.44–45). In her efforts to reinstate the legitimacy and authenticity of female fandom, Fudger draws upon the by then well-established media construction of the groupie as duped consumer. In doing so, she demarcates groupies as 'different' from other women.

The voices and perspectives of groupies are absent from these feminist accounts. Groupies are denied agency, female desire and female pleasure are unacknowledged, or in Brown's brutal account, ridiculed and condemned in language which could be drawn from the mainstream press. Groupies are, in a sense, *re*-objectified and *re*-othered by their feminist peers.

Despite *Spare Rib's* refusal or inability to understand the groupie phenomenon from the perspective of the groupies themselves, the magazine was not anti-sex; its contributors advocated the right of women to pleasure on their own terms; from the beginning of the women's liberation movement, many British feminists drew out what they saw as similarities between men's and women's sexuality. As Beatrix Campbell wrote in 1973, 'acknowledgement of lust, acceptance of so-called promiscuity must be recognised as potentially inevitable stages in women's escape from sexual conformity' (cited in Segal, 1992 p.4). But an important theme in the early years of the women's liberation movement was also 'against sexism in the media, against the way in which stereotyped ideals of beauty were forced on women, and against the way in which women were seen only as sexual objects, not as people' (Wilson, 1985, p. 230). From the outside, then, the groupie phenomenon too closely resembled female submission, objectification, and sexual exploitation, and for feminists like Fudger, Geddes and Brown, this necessitated feminist critique.

Some radical feminists would develop these arguments, defining men as the oppressors of women and the construction of female sexuality as the core of female subordination (ibid. p. 231). The American feminist Susan Griffin, for example, would assert that all male sexuality can be analysed in terms of a continuum of violence, and the basic elements of rape are involved in all heterosexual relationships (Segal, 1992, p. 3). Such arguments were accompanied by a necessary shift in feminist understandings of female sexuality towards the inverse of men's: 'gentle, diffuse and egalitarian' (ibid. p.4). Political lesbianism became the logical sexual ideal for this strand of protectionist radical feminism, which would be seized upon by an antagonistic media keen to portray all feminists as extremist, unattractive, man-hating lesbians.

What is striking from the archival record is the ease and speed with which feminist language and feminist critique could also be co-opted and watered down by conservative male commentators in the mainstream media. 'The whole pop scene is male chauvinist pig', wrote Roderick Gilchrist in the *Daily Mail, '*and if the girls are treated as sex objects – no more valuable than disposable plastic cups – they've only themselves to blame' ('The

Most Dangerous Pop Star of them all' 21 May 1973 pp.18–19). Gilchrist's moralistic condemnation is devoid of empathy or understanding. It also highlights the way in which the strand of protectionist feminism could be compatible with puritanical conservative values and perhaps prefigures the unholy alliance between radical anti-pornography feminists and New Right moralists that was to come in the late seventies and early eighties. This alliance was, of course, hotly criticised by anti-censorship feminists, who subscribe to an ideology of individualism and free choice, and who saw the anti-pornography campaign as foreclosing on women's right to explore pleasure on their own terms (Church Gibson, 2014, p. 202).

Feminist critique also made a mark on the underground. 'Rock culture has evolved its own sickness; it is the Chick Groupie Consciousness', wrote Barry Miles in *IT* ('$100 a Night' 25 March 1971, p.11). But unlike Gilchrist, Miles' critique of rock misogyny does not figure the groupie as a masochist complicit in her own exploitation. Rather, Miles squarely addresses the paper's male readers, attacking 'the de-humanisation of women by regarding them as sex-objects and housekeepers…the dollies, broads, girlies. Wives, cunts, chicks and groupies – ALL PEOPLE!' (ibid.). This piece is perhaps testimony to the revolutionary influence of feminism in Britain, which has over subsequent decades definitively transformed not just how women see themselves, but how men see women.

Other female perspectives on the groupie

There were also some female journalists, writing in the underground and music press against the backdrop of the second-wave feminist movement, who offered a different view of the groupie. 'Many women's lib supporters, mainly Americans, hold to the view that rock music is on the whole an insult, not to say an exploitation of women', wrote Joy Farren in *IT*.

> Certainly, they have a point. The lyrics of many songs are hardly complimentary. Women are seen as bitches, whores, deceivers, and in the case of the Rolling Stones, apparently masochists as well. But then, who wants to be a nice girl at a rock concert? These 'sexist' lyrics are simply part of the whole music man/lonesome stranger dream. If you are interested in a rock star you do not want him to be like the boy next door. The whole attraction for many girls being that the man on the stage is almost, but not completely, unobtainable. Far from feeling oppressed by rock bands, I am fascinated by the whole thing. I like watching pretty young men. ('Star Gazing' 17 November 1972 p.18)

Farren did not identify herself as a groupie or a feminist, but as a woman married to a male musician, who had evidently been on tour with groups, she was well placed to speculate on why groupies might put themselves in positions, which, from the outside at least, could appear exploitative.[37] The themes of fantasy, female desire, and pleasure without responsibility present in Farren's account all correspond with groupie testimonies. Rather than demarcate the groupie as 'other', she suggests that the only thing which separates groupies from many other female fans, for whom sexual desire converges with fandom, is their willingness to act upon those desires.

While Farren acknowledges that rock is, on the surface, misogynistic, she opposes the radical feminist assertion that its misogyny renders it irredeemable. Instead, she emphasises rock's hedonism, fantasy, and erotic potential. Although Farren's analysis is not explicitly feminist, these two views correspond with two ways of understanding culture within feminism; the first is 'a whole-hearted condemnation of every aspect of culture that reproduced sexist ideas and images of women and femininity, all of which came to be seen in some sense as "violent" and "pornographic"; the second, 'a populist liberalism which argued that it would be elitist to criticise any popular pastime which the majority of women enjoyed' (Wilson, 1985, p. 230).

These two views are mutually inconsistent, and this unresolved tension, between the 'authentic' approach, which emphasises woman's relationship to nature, and the 'modernist' approach, which is founded upon the belief in the social construction of the gendered self, has marked feminist debates around heterosexual relationships, pornography, popular culture, and fashion over subsequent decades (ibid. p. 231). As Wilson notes, 'the alternatives posed are between moralism and hedonism; either doing your own thing is okay, or else it convicts you of false consciousness. Either the products of popular culture are the supports of a monolithic male ideology, or they are there to be enjoyed and justified' (ibid. p. 232). These tensions can be seen at play in the efforts of feminists and other women to make sense of the groupie phenomenon. For Brown, rock culture is oppressive, the groupie a product of patriarchal oppression, her desire false consciousness. For Farren, rock is pleasurable, and groupies should be free to pursue their desires wherever they lead.

Writing in *Melody Maker,* Caroline Coon also acknowledged the reality of rock misogyny. Speaking of the rock musician's sexualised performance style she writes:

[37] Joy Farren was married to Mick Farren

> Rock musicians welcome a girl's response to all this as long as it is at arm's length, sells records, and is the ultimate proof of their virility to other men. If you think this is unjustly cynical then how do you explain the words 'slag', 'scrubber', 'toerag' and 'groupie' ad nauseum, which are used to describe the girls who respond to the Come On of Rock.... ('Rock musicians have much in common with bunny girls' 15 June 1974, p.48)

Coon was also not a groupie, but like Farren, she too offered a more sympathetic perspective on the phenomenon:

> Many women's disappointment at being rejected by rock 'n' roll is compounded by the fact that, as the great Germaine Greer once said, 'all women are working class'. It is this fact, their second-class status in society, which is responsible for rock 'n' roll music having such an impact on women. It is why of all the men available in society today the life and style of a rock 'n' roller is the most appealing. Women identify with the freedom expressed in the music and they want to be involved in it – at almost any cost. Musicians should realise that just because a girl fan hangs on outside the dressing room or puts herself about in the most demanding and unattractive way, is not to say that she wants what she seems to be asking for. Sure, she's asking for that, but hasn't it ever occurred to you that this girl can be laid by any man she chooses? She has chosen rock and roll. And for the same uplift and inspiration as her male counterparts (ibid.)

The notion that 'all women are working class' is problematic; as this thesis argues, women may have been ascribed 'second-class status in society', but the system of patriarchy intersected with the structure of class to determine the social positioning and regulate the lived experiences of groupies from different social backgrounds. Nevertheless, in this passage, female desire, and identification with ideas of freedom are both foregrounded; pleasure without responsibility is implicit. Like Fudger, Coon recognises the groupie phenomenon as a response to rock misogyny, but in exercising empathy, and attempting to see the phenomenon from the point of view of the women themselves, she moves towards the reinstatement of groupie agency, and a conceptualisation of the groupie pattern of behaviour as a form of resistance to the subordinate position of women in rock culture and wider society.

But not all underground women could relate to the groupie. One woman who dated a top musician in the sixties, told me in an informal conversation that groupies were the reason 'I fell out of love with the counterculture – we weren't strong enough to say we don't like this […] groupies were part of the reason I left London... it wasn't women doing it for themselves' (field notes, 25 April 2018). One gets the impression here that this woman felt groupies were not only letting themselves down but letting women down collectively. Elsewhere, in the 'Women in Music' series of articles for *Spare Rib*,

female trailblazers from across the music industry spoke of how the groupie phenomenon had made it more difficult for them to be taken seriously. 'Most women in this business are really taken advantage of; men automatically think they're groupies and in order to get on they have to use subtle means', Gail Colson, the only female label manager in the UK, told *Spare Rib* ('Women in Music Part 1: Three women talk about their work in the business' October 1973, p.45). British journalist Penny Valentine, meanwhile, described how 'It got difficult at one time, when a lot of women got into it in the States, for more than journalistic reasons, and the American bands would come over and think I was another groupie' ('Women in music Part 2' November 1973, p. 45). Industry insider Lisa Denton reported a similar experience:

> I did have problems, for instance, when our artists were appearing live, it was my job to be there, so I'd go round to the stage door and try to explain that I was PR for the act, but they'd just laugh thinking I was a nothing groupie, it was infuriating. The groups would give me a hard time too, they were used to girls running after them, they'd think I was fair game ('Women in Music Part 1: Three women talk about their work in the business' October 1973 p.45)

Female musicians were also mistaken for groupies; 'when asked by a French journalist if she was a genuine London groupie, Fairport Convention's Sandy Denny replied, "I don't have the time"' ('Snide comments, vicious rumours and downright lies' *IT,* 9 May 1969 p.11), while guitarist Inger Johnson found 'that men in the music business want groupies but not girls in their groups. I answer ads in the music papers for lead guitarists and when they hear a girl's voice on the phone, they can't believe it. They think there must be some mistake' ('Guitarist? No mere woman need apply' 1 November 1970 p.5).

For Emma and Jenny Fabian, the groupie pattern of behaviour may have been an individualistic form of female resistance, but these testimonies lend credence to the vanguardist feminist argument that the phenomenon could also be collectively damaging for women. They suggest that by the early seventies the groupie stereotype had come to dominate understandings of woman's relation to rock, which appears to have contributed to the further devaluation of feminine cultural capital's convertible value for all women in rock culture. This has ultimately reinforced rather than challenged systems of patriarchal power. For collectivist feminists, then, the groupie phenomenon could be judged a counter-revolutionary affront to female solidarity and the collective social advancement of all women, rendering it subject to the kind of feminist critique found in the pages of *Spare Rib*.

Female musicians and male groupies

During this period, American group Fanny were widely hailed as the first all-female rock group. This was, of course, not the case, but the group received considerable media attention in the UK, where earlier groups like the Liverbirds and Goldie and the Gingerbreads had not. Fanny did not top the charts, but they did pave the way for all-female acts such as American group The Runaways (1975–1979), and British punk band The Slits (1976-1982), both of which made a bigger cultural impact later in the decade. Predictably, discussion of Fanny's music was buried in the British press beneath journalistic musing over the sheer novelty of women playing rock music, and their sexual objectification. 'I wish they'd play topless', wrote one male reviewer, 'What little yummies' (Cited in Doggett, 2007, p. 419).

Media interest in Fanny also exhibited a preoccupation with the sex lives of the group members, particularly on the road. Again and again, journalists pondered whether Fanny had male groupies; 'the more adventurous boys are posting notes under the dressing room doors with *their* phone numbers', reported *The Observer* ('Top of the Popsies' 29 April 1973 pp.38-41), while another male journalist wondered 'if they'll let me be a groupie?' ('Hendrix fades into history' *Reading Evening Post*, 20 March 1973 p.6). But the predominant view was that 'there does not seem to be a male equivalent' to the groupie (''Old lady' Lou's cool eye on life' *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, 14 February 1974 p.4). The suggestion that male groupies for female musicians were generally conspicuous by their absence was supported by Fudger's report on *Melody Maker's* conference for women in rock music. As already noted, this event was attended by the cream of British female musicians, but in her report, Fudger concluded 'there are very few male groupies':

> Young guys are mainly intimidated by female success. Men artists who are established generally become male groupies – they are in a position to approach you. Any guy off the street won't have balled six woman artists, women make themselves less susceptible to it, because they feel sexually exploited anyway. Women consciously want to please other women musically, not just men. A woman's upbringing and her orientation to sex does not result in her wanting to ape the male sexual attitude to women ('Women in Music' *Spare Rib,* January 1974, pp.44–45).

Interviews with Fanny elsewhere in *Spare Rib* support Fudger's suggestion that female musicians did not make themselves susceptible to male advances in the same way that male musicians evidently did. 'It's difficult, for me anyhow', Fanny drummer Alice de Buhr

told *Spare Rib*, 'To be able to go to bed with somebody I just met. I have to kind of care for a person. I'm sure a lot of men would like us more than just musically if the opportunity arose. But that never happens because we're celibate on the road' ('Carmel Koerber talks to Fanny, the all girl American rock band…honkey tonk women' December 1972, p. 9). 'I think we're more romantic', added bassist Jean Millington, 'Chicks are a bit more romantic as a rule. Besides you can catch too many things, you know. You get down to the practical realities of life: fuck romanticism' (ibid.).

According to Hakim male interest in sex outweighs female interest (2010, p. 499), but this is debatable; while Coon suggests that for young women, male sexual availability is generally abundant and therefore devalued ('Rock musicians have much in common with bunny girls' *Melody Maker,* 15 June 1974 p.48), Millington and de Buhr's testimonies suggest that women's perceived disinterest might be linked to an awareness that the risks attached to impersonal sexual encounters are far greater for women than men. As successful musicians, Fanny possessed artistic capital which would have made it possible for them to approach sexual encounters with the men they met on tour from a greater position of equivalence, if not a superior position. But Millington and de Buhr's testimonies suggest that female musicians, like groupies, could still find it difficult to achieve the emotional detachment necessary to engage in impersonal ephemeral sexual encounters without getting hurt.

Evidence suggests that groupies had to conform to a regime of constant self-surveillance to regulate their emotions if they were to successfully negotiate subcultural capital and advance their vicarious status. Fanny, on the other hand, had achieved autonomous status through the accumulation of artistic capital; nevertheless, Millington and de Buhr exhibit an awareness that their autonomous status did not exclude them from the same risks faced by all sexually active women. Weighing up the risk of STDs, heartache, and unplanned pregnancy, all of which could have a detrimental effect on the hard-won success of the group, against the possibility of negotiating sexual pleasure, Millington and de Buhr appear to have opted out of trading their sexual capital altogether.

While Fanny had accrued artistic capital, this does not appear to have enhanced the group's sexual capital in the same way that it did for male musicians suggesting two parallel structures of desire, or heterosexual female and male systems of valuation. Certainly, Fanny were sexually objectified by male journalists, and their sexual capital was exploited by their record label for commercial gain, but as Fudger suggests, men

possessed of lower capitals may have been reluctant to approach successful female musicians from the disempowered traditionally feminine position; sexual encounters with female musicians, therefore, do not appear to have worked as a form of subcultural capital for men. Finally, men traditionally take the active role in sexual relations with women; where the female pursuit of the male musician presented a transgression of traditional gender roles, and was classified as deviant behaviour accordingly, if equivalent behaviour was exhibited by men, it may well have been assigned to the traditional male role, rather than seen as evidence of a male groupie phenomenon.

Groupie perspectives on feminism

Emma and Jenny Fabian have never been involved with the feminist movement. Neither recall reading popular feminist texts from the period, such as *The Female Eunuch* or *Spare Rib*, and neither felt the feminist project had any real impact on their lives at the time. Despite these similarities, their perspectives on the feminist movement diverge. When I asked Jenny Fabian what she thought of the feminist movement in the late sixties and early seventies she responded 'not a lot. I couldn't see the benefits of it at that stage. Well, I'm still not that keen on it, really, because, I don't know how to put this, I didn't really know what they wanted' (2019). Evidently, Jenny Fabian did not know what the feminist movement stood for and could not see how it related to her own situation. The feminist movement manifested itself in various forms of activism, from marches and women's groups to feminist grass-roots community initiatives. These were all collective endeavours. But Jenny Fabian was, by her own admission, too individualistic to identify with the feminist movement. 'I wasn't interested in that form of progress', she expanded, 'I was very selfish and wasn't speaking for women in general at all, I was only representing myself I'm afraid' (ibid.). Her approach to the groupie pattern of behaviour appears to have more closely corresponded with the preoccupation of neo-feminism with 'the individual woman acting on her own, in her best interest, in which her fulfilment can be understood as independent of her social milieu and the predicament of other women as a class' (Radner, 2011, p. 11).

During our interview Jenny Fabian also found it difficult to give what she felt were satisfactory views on the movement and was reluctant to identify herself, or be identified as a feminist:

> I don’t have an attitude, I like to have an attitude to stuff, and I don’t really have an attitude to it. Because I feel I ought to condone it, or be in favour of it, which in a sense I am, but at the same time, I don't like the fact that it's, in a box. I don’t like these boxes that people are put in (2019)

Her ambivalence seems, in part, to come from a perception of feminism as extremist and puritanical, ‘a certain militancy, maybe Andrea Dworkin sort of thing’ (ibid.).[38] She described the feminists she encountered first-hand in the sixties as ‘rather a strident bunch’, but also reflected that her impression of the movement may well have been influenced by the media:

> It's, what I keep seeing it, as some other people see it, so many people see it in a bad light, that I feel that, it possibly has coloured my judgement as well, so I’m not quite sure then how I truly feel about it. And I get very annoyed about some of the things that I read about it, or that feminists start spouting out about it, so they annoy me as well. I’m not in favour of all the things they babble on about, so it's difficult, ambivalent is the word, isn’t it? You can say that (ibid.)

This attitude is not uncommon for women of her generation; the media-crafted feminist stereotype worked to alienate many women from the movement before they really had a chance to find out what it was all about. But as a groupie who moved in underground circles, Jenny Fabian was also able to observe some feminists first-hand. In *One too Many Mornings* (Fabian & Byrne, 2002), the burgeoning feminist movement’s underground manifestation is satirised. This novel features the characters Corintha Bean and Candida Pinney, both of which bear a striking, caricatured resemblance to Germaine Greer. Corintha has published a book called *The Lost Libido* and has ‘started going down The Joint lusting after rock stars like the rest of us’ (ibid. n.p). Candida, on the other hand, took a dim view of Corintha chasing after musicians. ‘I’m outraged, darling’, Candida said, ‘She’s letting us down badly' (ibid. n.p). Elsewhere in the novel, Jenny Fabian’s proxy Katie comes under direct fire from Candida:

> ‘You’ve sold your soul to men. Men who enjoy putting you through one big humiliation fantasy. Men who are repressed women haters and who encourage you to say spiteful things about us’. ‘That’s a bit strong,’ I said. ‘I’ve got nothing against women. In fact, I feel sorry for them.’ Girls like Candida could never understand why I chose to live in what she assumed was a snake pit of misogyny. She was pissing me off now, but there was no point arguing. (ibid).

[38] Andrea Dworkin was a controversial American radical feminist best known for her activism against pornography in the 1980s.

The implication here is that rock culture was, in fact, not the 'snake pit of misogyny' feminists assumed it to be. Written in retrospect, *One Too Many Mornings* demonstrates Jenny Fabian's awareness of how her behaviour may have been interpreted in terms of treachery and false consciousness by some feminists. Feminism's aims and concerns, meanwhile, are cast as extremist, and summarised as 'revenge on mankind'. The characters of Corintha and Candida respectively embody the libertarian and vanguardist elements, which inflect both the feminist movement and Greer's own contradictory and sometimes hypocritical appraisal of the groupie phenomenon. Jenny Fabian's confusion about what feminism stands for, and refusal to be fixed as feminist, appears to derive, at least in part, from the way in which her own behaviour has been the subject of conflicting feminist appraisals.

When I asked Jenny Fabian if she saw any relationship between the groupie phenomenon and feminism, she gave an insightful overview of these conflicting feminist perspectives:

> Well, some people say there is and that you're speaking for yourself, […] some people say, 'oh you're being an independent feminist and you're doing…' it's what I said earlier. Or are you just putting yourself in a position of being available for men, because you're free? And is feminism freedom? What is it? I don't know what feminism is. Well, I know what it's supposed to be, what is it supposed to be? Equality I suppose. But not everybody can cope with that. Some people need people to lean on. (Fabian, 2019)

As an individualistic libertarian, Jenny Fabian valued freedom over equality. She perceived feminism as the opposite of 'freedom': restrictive, 'difficult', and serious. 'Really all I wanted to do was have fun, and feminism strikes me as not being much fun' she reflected (ibid.). While the groupie pattern of behaviour did require its own kind of discipline – submission to a regime of self-surveillance and self-improvement – this was in the service of the individual's pursuit of sexual fulfilment and social advancement. The same post-war economic developments and emergent discourse of autonomy that produced the groupie phenomenon, also produced the feminist movement, but 'feminists in contrast, were in search of a moral universe in which the need for individual fulfilment was compatible with a desire for the larger social good, and for a civil society' (Radner, 2011, p. 24). From Jenny Fabian's perspective, then, the political discipline required by feminism, could appear to correspond with the old values of self-denial, restraint, and duty.

Joanne Hollows (2000) holds that feminist identity depended upon the rejection of feminine identity. As we have seen, for collectivist, protectionist, radical feminists this rejection extended to condemnation of the groupie's deployment of sexual capital. But the highly individualistic form of female liberation conceptualised by Radner through her neo-feminist paradigm, which developed in tangent with second-wave feminism, did not require women to reject femininity; instead, it offered women a means of preserving and retaining their femininity (2011, p. 195). The groupie pattern of behaviour can be interpreted in relation to neo-feminism, as a means by which individual women were able to embrace and exploit their sexual capital. Further, feminist utopianism calls for political discipline. Neo-feminism, and the groupie pattern of behaviour on the other hand, are pragmatic; rather than challenging existing systems of power, they provide models for women to pursue happiness and fulfilment, and to advance their social status, within the existing system. In these terms, it is possible to understand why someone like Jenny Fabian, who wanted the freedom to enjoy herself in the here and now, might reject feminist political discipline today, despite its promise of equality tomorrow.

Emma, like Jenny Fabian, did not feel that the women's liberation movement had much of an impact on how she lived her life or saw the groupie pattern of behaviour at the time. But her attitude to feminism today was far more receptive:

> EF: You mentioned, men always being on top, and being dominant and I was wondering what you thought of it, the feminist movement… whether that had any impact on you.
>
> Emma: Not really. The way I was, it had been drummed into me from an early life. Because I went to work for a dentist in '74, who was a right toff, you know, obviously he'd had a decent education, and he treated me like shit! He was a bastard. And I took it all, and I used I think, you know what? If I hadn't 've had my dad, treat me this way, then I wouldn't have stuck this. And I worked for him for thirty years, and it wasn't nice, but I loved the job. It was what I always wanted to do. I wanted to do nursing, and it was a next best thing. So, I think it's, I think it's helped women, no end. I mean nowadays, men and women are equal. Unless you get somebody, who is dominating and y'know, one of these bloody wife-beaters, y'know, mostly men are lovely, and I never realised you could be friends with a man, I thought there was such a big difference between the sexes, y'know? Things are better now.
>
> EF: So would you say feminism was something that perhaps you didn't engage with, but maybe, you feel you've benefitted from?
>
> Emma: Oh yes. Yes, yes, I, I think so. But you know, unless you've got a strong personality, which I haven't, if anything, you know like they say, 'oh if you can't beat 'em join 'em?' well with me, if I can't beat 'em I'll run away. I don't like

> conflict, I don't like anything like that, but, you know I mean, I've ended up on my own.

Evidently, feminism has influenced how Emma makes sense of her experiences. Where, in her youth, she accepted male dominance in the family, heterosexual relationships, and the workplace as an immovable fact of life, today she is conscious of the injustice she experienced and appreciates how feminism has played a key role in transforming social relations between men and women for the better. Just as Skeggs found that 'knowledge of feminism was useful for interpreting bad experiences' with the women she interviewed (1997, p. 157), feminism has made it possible for Emma to recognise oppressions and changes. Nevertheless, she did not self-identify as a feminist in our interview; instead, Emma suggested that, after years of social conditioning, she did not have a strong enough personality to engage in conflict with men. Feminism is in this account divided between what Skeggs has identified as an explanatory discourse and an identity (ibid.).

Jenny Fabian perhaps did have a 'strong personality', but rather than engage in conflict with men by lining up with other women, she identified with her male peers:

> JF: I was hanging out mostly with men, and men didn't think about it [the women's liberation movement], they didn't like it at all, did they? Really? They didn't want to know about it. To them, all feminists were, sort of, boiler suits and dungarees and, or even possibly were lesbians! You know? So, feminism was a bit of a dirty word amongst the men I knew.

Elsewhere in our interview she expanded upon the notion of hostile male attitudes towards the feminist movement:

> JF: It's quite hard work, being free, and being a feminist and standing up for yourself all the time because you're up against it all the time, you're still up against it. I mean, I like men, but some can be absolute shits, and you never quite know what sort of man you're dealing with half the time, do you?
>
> EF: Yeah
>
> JF: So, I'm wary of putting myself in a camp that might say I'm a feminist, because some men take that as an opportunity to really put you down, or to have a go at you, make you defend your position.

These extracts suggest that Jenny Fabian felt engagement with the feminist movement would have jeopardised her highly valued male friendships, her hard-won social status, and would have made her a target of male abuse. Despite their different dispositions, social backgrounds, and lived experiences, Emma and Jenny Fabian share the perception

that feminism was difficult in the respect that it demanded a kind of inner strength and independence from women for them to confront misogyny head-on in their day to day lives and interpersonal relationships. While Greer described female liberation as an 'exhilarating', 'nobler' way of life (Greer, 1971, p. 19), in her review of *The Female Eunuch,* Rowbotham acknowledged that female liberation could also be challenging:

> It is still terrible when all the walls are down and you're completely defenceless and he turns away. Women who break away from the established framework of things are left still very exposed and there's a high casualty rate. There have been many women who have shared the hope of self-reliance, who have struggled against dependency, but have suffered terribly for it ('How to get your man' *Oz*, November 1970, p.18)

Such emotional turmoil was the experience of groupies as well as nascent feminists. The difference is that, while feminism advocated independence from men, the feminist movement also worked as a community, or 'sisterhood' which encouraged women to rely upon each other instead. Evidence presented in this thesis suggests that for many groupies there was no such support network.

Jenny Fabian, like Emma, also expressed a belief that her social conditioning made it difficult for her to really embrace feminism, 'I come from, I come from too far back', she told me:

> I think, I come from an indoctrinated era where women are basically seen as submissive, even though, I mean I have been submissive, and I haven't, so I've been both things. So, I can see both points of view, but I wouldn't want to be a strident feminist (2019)

In Britain today, there is a general consensus forged by second-wave feminism that women are equal to men and should have the same rights and opportunities. But in the sixties, this was not so; many women, young and old, accepted a status quo in which men ruled and women served because they genuinely believed they were fundamentally inferior to men. In 1968, on the eve of the semi-centennial of some women winning the right to vote, Virginia Ironside interviewed six young women for *19* magazine ('Equality for Women!' May 1968 pp.46-47). For 20-year-old Nicky Davis, there were 'some jobs women do as well as men. But we still aren't equal mentally or physically'. Seven years later, working-class housewife Sally Jordan told Anne Oakley that she had 'always been led to believe that a man is the boss of the home, and I feel I can't get that idea out' (Oakley, 1976, pp. 143-4). The women's liberation movement has left a concrete legislative legacy, which has benefitted subsequent generations of women, but the slow

revolution in female consciousness is one of the great unsung legacies of second-wave feminism.

This revolution in female consciousness can be seen at play in groupie oral histories. Speaking from the vantage point of today, both women had a nuanced understanding of their behaviour. Emma recalled the heady effects of male affirmation, and her groupie experiences remain an overwhelmingly positive resource for her, but she also reflects that she and Tina 'was always getting used' (2020). Jenny Fabian too, could see both sides of the feminist debate, 'or are you just putting yourself in a position of being available for men, because you're free?', she asked rhetorically in our interview (2019). Despite her reluctance to be fixed as feminist, her later novels cannot help but acknowledge subsequent feminist criticism of the sexual revolution: 'There is much talk of free love, but myself, I find it hard to understand this contradiction. If love is free, why am I still here peeling Theo's shitty eggs?', 'Gisela' asks Katie in *One Too Many Mornings* (Fabian & Byrne, 2002, n.p). In the 1988 introduction to *A Chemical Romance,* Jenny Fabian reflected on the sixties and spoke of herself as part of a generation of women who were 'trying to fight our way out of the kitchen and looking for guys who loved us for our minds as well as for our bodies. The days of sitting on a cushion rolling joints for rock-gods in between blow jobs were coming to an end' (Fabian, 1971/1988, p. 7). The feminist movement looms large in this introduction, which suggests that, with rising feminist consciousness, women began to turn away from the groupie pattern of behaviour.

Greer has also reappraised the sexual revolution, and the groupie phenomenon in subsequent years. By the mid-seventies she was claiming the pill had made women too sexually available (Grant, 1993, p. 205). In 1999 she wrote that the sexuality which was 'freed' by the sexual revolution was male (Greer, 1999, p. 7). Meanwhile, in *Sex and Destiny* (1984), she conceded that men have less to lose from impersonal sexual encounters and are protected by the patriarchy. Significantly, she chose the groupie/musician encounter to illustrate her point:

> It used to be common practice for doctors treating rock stars to equip them with medical supplies before they set out on tour; conspicuous among them were massive single doses of broad-spectrum antibiotics. When I complained that this practice simply meant that the gentleman in question would be disseminating a more resistant brand of gonorrhoea along the concert circuit, it was pointed out that no multi-million-dollar operation could be abandoned because the lead-singer had a purulent greenish-yellowish discharge leaking through his tight white satin trousers. The fact that they were on the move meant that any infections

> they might pick up could not be treated methodically […] Many a young woman returns from her adventure sterile. (Greer, 1984, p. 59)

Though Greer's views on the sexual revolution and the groupie phenomenon have shifted over the years, she can hardly be described as a protectionist feminist. More recently she generated controversy by criticising the #MeToo movement, and women who have spoken out against Harvey Weinstein. 'If you spread your legs because he said "be nice to me and I'll give you a job in a movie"', she told the Australian media, 'then I'm afraid that's tantamount to consent, and it's too late now to start whingeing about that' (Flood, 2018).

Feminism is, of course, only one factor in how these women's attitudes towards their past have changed over subsequent years. In our interview, Jenny Fabian spoke of the effect the AIDS pandemic had on those around her in the eighties, and admitted that she, too, had become more cautious over recent years, particularly when it came to her own children and grandchildren: 'it's difficult to have a sort of rational attitude, because you're not who you were', she reflected, 'I mean you are, but you're not. You see, you can see all the horrors that could await you, when you're young you don't see any of that do you? You just plunge in' (Fabian, 2019). For Jenny Fabian, who made her fortune only to squander it on drug addiction, who suffered her own emotional unravelling, personal experience has changed her perspective. In 1966 she threw caution to the wind, left her husband, and plunged into the unknown; today she would rather look before she leaps. Although she acknowledges that the men she encountered in the sixties could be irresponsible, and perhaps even dangerous, she takes personal responsibility for her negative experiences, rather than using feminism as an explanatory discourse.

Conclusion

Jenny Fabian's middle-class cultural capital gave her the self-assurance to 'game the system' and secure herself a position of autonomous status within the underground. When she encountered the feminist movement, she didn't feel she needed it and, instead, felt she had more to lose than gain by lining up with other women. It would also appear that, despite much of the impetus for the British women's movement coming from the labour movement, feminism also failed to reach many working-class women like Emma who really did need it. But today, it is Emma, rather than Jenny Fabian, who can see how she might have benefitted from feminism, a situation which both confirms and

upends the well-established third wave indictment of second-wave feminism as 'too middle-class' (Aune & Holyoak, 2017, p. 186).

The divergent feminist perspectives discussed in this chapter reflect an intellectual rift. Contradictory messages about what feminism actually stands for, and the movement's demonisation in the media, also appear to have contributed to Jenny Fabian's refusal to be fixed as feminist. On the one hand, there have been feminists who subscribe to an ideology of individualism and free choice, who celebrate the groupie for acting out her desires in the pursuit of pleasure but neglect wider systems of power and structures of gender and class. On the other hand, there have been the feminists who subscribe to a coexisting tradition of puritanical moralism, who denounce the groupie pattern of behaviour as a form of female subordination which is collectively damaging for all women, but in doing so, risk infantilising groupies and denying them agency. These divergent feminist perspectives have defined and divided subsequent feminist appraisals of the groupie.

Chapter 10 Conclusion

As noted in Chapter 1, this study presents an academic narrative, a feminist narrative, and a narrative of narratives which encompasses not only biographical narratives, but also historical and media narratives. This chapter brings these interconnected narratives to a close with a summary of research findings, which addresses how research questions have been answered, how this body of work represents an original contribution to knowledge, and flags some potential avenues for further research, before returning to Emma and Jenny Fabian's respective life story narratives.

Media representation

By examining groupie representation across a range of sources, and recording the oral histories of groupies themselves, this thesis has developed an understanding of how different actors have made sense of the groupie phenomenon at different times. I have argued that the groupie phenomenon was the product of post-war affluence and changes in public and private morality. The groupie pattern of behaviour preceded the label; when the phenomenon was first brought to public attention by the mainstream and music press between 1965 and 1969, groupies were initially defined in relation to the traditional form of female working-class sexual deviancy embodied in the scrubber stereotype. This mode of representation drew upon middle-class anxieties regarding unregulated working-class female sexuality, and the Victorian definition of respectability, to construct the figure of the proto-groupie as a threat to the family and the social order. Cultural anxieties regarding the growing power of a young female working-class consumer demographic saw the long-standing left-wing critique of mass culture mobilized to construct the proto-groupie as the victim of manipulative market forces on the one hand, and disposable, interchangeable sexual commodity on the other. This mode of representation served to neutralize the threat to the system of patriarchy posed by female sexual agency, while simultaneously capitalizing upon latent male fantasies of an infinite variety of sexual partners and capitalist fantasies of abundance.

With the media's 'discovery' in 1969 that groupies could also be middle-class, the discursively constructed figure of the groupie underwent a process of bourgeoisification. This new kind of groupie was glamorised in the fashion press and underground press, and she was also taken more seriously in the mainstream media, where the phenomenon was

understood in relation to the wider disaffiliation of middle-class youth, rather than women as a group which crosses classes. Within the underground press, luminaries such as Greer and Neville initially drew upon rock's revolutionary connotations in cognisance with Reichian theory and male-defined ideas of female 'liberation', to construct the groupie as a sexual radical and component in the revolution. In the writings of Greer and Jenny Fabian, meanwhile, classist tropes and attitudes were reconfigured to demarcate sexual liberation as the province of a predominantly middle-class counterculture, which defined itself in opposition to a presumably sexually repressed working-class which did not have the same access to the politics of sexual liberation.

Against the backdrop of countercultural decline and disillusionment in the early seventies, the more political contingent within the underground reverted to traditional left-wing critiques of mass culture, which had more recently been rearticulated by Debord and Marcuse. They reconstructed the figure of the groupie as a victim of commercial manipulation and metaphor for revolutionary rock's commercialisation and debasement. As sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll began to shed their utopian associations, the figure of the groupie was also increasingly associated with an emergent, darker strain of rock mythology defined by decadence, excess, and untimely death.

Against a historical backdrop of rising crime rates and violence in the early seventies, British sexploitation groupie films, *Groupie Girl* and *Permissive*, capitalised upon cultural anxieties and latent desires surrounding rampant female promiscuity. But they also tapped into a sense of malaise within the underground. Coinciding with a period which also saw the emergence of the women's movement, I have suggested that these groupie films and underground reappraisals reflect the coalescence of anxieties regarding female sexual autonomy as a threat to both dominant and countercultural systems of patriarchy. But by the mid-seventies, the general tone of media reporting on the groupie phenomenon had shifted from outrage to resignation. *Confessions of a Pop Performer* suggests that the groupie phenomenon's more radical aspects had been reconciled with an evolving patriarchal structure, which had shifted the onus from female chastity to female sexual availability. Meanwhile, as the recession hit the underground, and rock hit a creative impasse, the groupie phenomenon was positioned in the media as an anachronism belonging to the sixties, while at the same time ubiquitous. As new disparate categories of groupie were identified, the groupie stereotype was deployed to discredit, not just female consumers, and producers of rock, but female professionals and sports fans.

Groupie lived experiences

Between 1965 and 1975, the figure of the groupie was made sense of by different actors in various contradictory, dynamic, iconic, and extreme ways; condemned, glamourised, intellectualised, and commodified, she was constructed as a working-class deviant, an object of desire and an object of disgust, a sexual radical, a duped consumer, an exploited victim, and a sexual aggressor. By recording these women's animated, sometimes hilarious, sometimes heart-wrenching testimonies for the first time, and seeking to understand how they retrospectively make sense of their own behaviour on their own terms, this study reinstates their humanity, demystifies the figure of the groupie, dismantles stereotypes, and restores the groupie phenomenon to women's history.

The groupie phenomenon crossed class positions; groupies belonged to a generation of women who were becoming 'disembedded' from the old, structured pathways and communities where gender roles were fixed. In correspondence with the new ethic of consumption, the groupie pattern of behaviour offered these women pleasure without responsibility. While Emma and Jenny Fabian's groupie experiences were markedly different, both women placed a high value on their personal freedom and pleasure, and articulated their groupie phase as a form of resistance which diverges from classic class-deterministic subcultural models. By drawing upon these women's lived experiences, it has been possible to foreground human agency in their struggle against what they perceived to be the restrictive and powerless nature of the traditional feminine role, and the oppressive nature of traditional heterosexual relationships and family life. This conceptualisation presents an intervention, which not only reappraises the groupie as a radical figure, but also helps to disrupt established assumptions regarding the tangential role of women and girls in post-war male dominated subcultures. In doing so, this thesis presents a contribution which helps to remediate an absence and reshape the terrain of subcultural scholarship.

Demythologising the sixties

Emma and Jenny Fabian's oral histories both incorporated and disrupted sixties mythologies. As a working-class young woman living in a town in the North of England,

Emma's life story narrative tended to counter sixties mythologies that centre upon the exploits of privileged minorities. Her recollections bring into focus how many young people across the country, who bought into the style, music, and ethos of the underground, must have been at the same time hopelessly shut out of its elite, metropolitan circles. As a figure immersed in the latter, heavily mythologised cultural milieu, Jenny Fabian, on the other hand, tended to incorporate elements of sixties mythology. Her life story narrative corresponds closely with historical narratives of the sixties which characterise the period as a 'party' and the seventies as a period of aftermath and disillusionment. Both women also traced the impetus for their groupie phase to their early lives; for Emma the pattern of behaviour was understood as an escape from an oppressive adolescence, for Jenny Fabian, it was an attempt to return to an idealised childhood, which she admitted had not been her personal experience. As Atkinson asserts, this process of moving from a unique story to a universal story is one of personal mythmaking (1998, p. 63). These personal mythologies also suggest that, while the groupie pattern of behaviour presents a highly individualistic form of female liberation, these women were also motivated by a conflicting desire for acceptance, belonging and community.

Groupie testimonies undercut the mythology that an all-encompassing 'sexual revolution' changed the face of British society forever. Emma's oral history is testimony to the fact that the introduction of the contraceptive pill did not eradicate the risk of unplanned pregnancy and suggests that attitudes towards illegitimacy and female premarital sexual activity in working-class communities had shifted very little since the post-war period; groupies risked social ostracism and parental wrath in their pursuit of pleasure. Within the libertarian underground, meanwhile, female sexual liberation was defined in terms which were of direct benefit to men while groupies whose behaviour deviated from the passive sexually available feminine ideal risked reputational damage. Just as femininity was devalued in the dominant culture, so it was within the male-dominated counterculture where feminine cultural capital had low convertible value. By drawing upon groupie testimonies this study has developed an understanding of how groupies and other underground women were able to advance their social status by trading their sexual capital for subcultural capital and field-relevant social capital.

By drawing contrast between Emma and Jenny Fabian's lived experiences, this study has also consistently undercut the mythology of the classless society and reinstated the concept of class as absolutely crucial to any analysis of the British groupie

phenomenon. While Emma's sexual behaviour was regulated by the category of respectability, rendering her resistance necessarily covert, Jenny Fabian was untroubled, because her respectability was always recuperable. Jenny Fabian's testimonies have also been indispensable in formulating an understanding of how structures of class, as well as gender, established the hegemonic currency of subcultural capital within the underground, and how this worked to position and regulate which groupies were able to successfully advance their social status within this highly competitive field, and which groupies were not.

Groupie testimonies also disrupt golden age mythologies of the sixties as the decade of 'peace and love' and undermine the hippie core values of community and free love by illuminating a coded parallel set of elitist and highly individualistic values at play within the British underground. While Jenny Fabian's class background made it possible for her to occupy the economic and cultural conditions necessary for her to engage in constant work on the self, not all groupies were equally equipped to succeed under the new regime of self-surveillance, self-improvement, and self-reliance; heartache, breakdowns, loneliness, and a general sense of disillusionment were not uncommon.

Feminist perspectives

By examining groupie representation in the feminist press and other feminist texts, this study has explored how the actions of groupies were observed by different kinds of feminist. On the one hand are feminists such as Germaine Greer, who subscribe to an ideology of individualism and free choice, who celebrated an idealised version of the groupie for acting out her desires in the pursuit of pleasure and deviating from the traditional feminine role. Although this 'modernist' approach is founded upon a belief in the social construction of the gendered self, it can also neglect wider systems of power and structures of gender and class. On the other hand, there are collectivist feminists, like Fudger and Geddes writing in *Spare Rib,* who denounce the groupie pattern of behaviour as collectively damaging for all women because it reinforces systems of patriarchal power. These feminists see the groupie as an object of sexual exploitation and product of rock misogyny, born of internalised misogyny and false consciousness. Although this approach places value on authenticity and the discovery of the 'true' nature of female sexuality, it can also risk infantilising and re-objectifying groupies. These tensions have

inflected subsequent polarising feminist appraisals of the groupie, the oscillating nature of which it has been possible to trace to some extent through Greer's own writing on the subject.

Neither Jenny Fabian nor Emma felt the feminist project had any real impact on their lives or how they saw their actions at the time. Nevertheless, both women exhibited a nuanced and insightful understanding of how their behaviour might be interpreted in relation to feminist debates around sexuality. While Emma recalled the personal sense of power attached to a sexual encounter with a musician, she also acknowledged that she may have, at the same time, been 'used'. Jenny Fabian made a similar observation when she suggested that the 'total freedom' she so highly prized might ultimately have been of more benefit to men than women. Although both women drew upon conflicting feminist debates to make sense of their behaviour, they were ultimately ambivalent when it came to the question of how their actions might be appraised in relation to feminism.

Today, neither woman identifies as a feminist, but they also have markedly different attitudes towards feminism itself. Emma was more receptive – she acknowledged that feminism has changed society for the better and articulated an awareness of how she might have benefitted from feminism personally, if it had touched her life. Jenny Fabian was more ambivalent. The media-constructed feminist stereotype and confusing messages about what feminism means contributed to her refusal to be fixed as feminist, both in the sixties, and today. Jenny Fabian's class privilege made it possible for her to advance her social status within the underground field; she was unable to see how feminism related to her own situation and felt she had more to lose than gain by lining up with other women.

Significantly, these women shared a perception of feminism as difficult, in the respect that it demanded a kind of inner strength and resilience, which both women felt they had not been equipped with by their upbringing. I have argued that Emma and Jenny Fabian shared some of the same goals as individualistic feminists: the redefinition of traditional gender roles, female sexual liberation, and economic independence. But feminist utopianism demands political discipline today with the promise of equality for all women tomorrow. The groupie pattern of behaviour, on the other hand, provided a pragmatic model for women to pursue happiness and fulfilment, and advance their social status in the present, within the existing system.

On this basis, I have therefore suggested that the groupie pattern of behaviour corresponds more closely with Radner's conception of neo-feminism, a highly

individualistic form of female liberation, which developed in tangent with both second-wave feminism and the groupie phenomenon. Despite claims that the social dynamics of reflexive modernisation have led to a greater capacity for agency, structures of class and the system of patriarchy continued to regulate which groupies were able to thrive under the new regime of constant self-surveillance, self- improvement, and self-reliance. Indeed, 'freedom' under conditions of inequality can be its own kind of oppression. Neo-feminism may appear to offer women things that feminism cannot: a means to retain their femininity and engage with consumer culture; it may also seem more 'fun'. But what it does not offer is the conceptual frameworks derived from collective experience, which are necessary for women to recognise the challenges they face, as not just a matter of personal failure, but political injustice. Nor does it offer women a means to challenge that injustice in a meaningful way.

It is, of course, a huge challenge to determine whether, in the light of contemporary feminist concerns, a reconciliation can be reached between different feminist interpretations. In her assessment of the tensions which divide feminism over issues such as sexual behaviours and popular culture, Wilson writes, 'thesis and antithesis can never dissolve into synthesis; the dialectic simply leaves a wound' (1985, p. 232). At the outset of this research project, as noted in the introduction to this thesis, I was troubled by my own conflicting feelings about the groupie phenomenon. Like Geddes and Fudger, I could see how, from the outside looking in, the groupie phenomenon might appear exploitative for the women concerned, and collectively damaging for all women. At the same time, like Farren and Coon, I could also see how the groupie pattern of behaviour, might, from the perspective of the groupie, be empowering. Writing this conclusion, I find that, after five years immersed in this subject and its complexities, my ambivalence has not resolved into certainty. But it has been reflected by groupies themselves, who, in attempting to make sense of their behaviour from the vantage point of today, also experience a degree of cognitive dissonance.

This intellectual rift might also be understood as a divergence in perspective, which reflects the willingness of some feminists to put themselves in the shoes of those they seek to analyse, and those who maintain distance in order to understand how the actions of others relate to broader systems of power. Faced with this impasse, perhaps the best course of action is not to attempt to force a resolution but accept and seek to legitimise ambivalence. I have found that, by drawing upon different kinds of data, it is

possible to maintain a degree of balance between insider and outsider perspectives on the groupie phenomenon. By privileging groupie testimonies and oscillating between the hermeneutics of faith and suspicion in their analysis, it has been possible to reinstate and retain groupie agency, to understand how these women make sense of their own experiences, while at the same time mounting a critique of wider systems of power. Based on groupie testimonies, I have argued that the groupie pattern of behaviour was not just a means of negotiating pleasure on interpersonal terms and advancing one's social status. It can also be understood as a form of resistance to the powerless and restrictive nature of the traditional feminine role, the oppressive nature of traditional heterosexual relationships, and ultimately, patriarchal power. On these grounds, I suggest that rather than castigate groupies, who resisted patriarchal power on their own terms, feminists should reclaim the groupie and reinstate this figure in feminist histories of the sixties, but not uncritically.

Attention must be paid to the socio-historical context. By examining groupie representation in the media produced at the time, it is possible to build an understanding, and mount a critique, of how wider systems of power, and structures of class and gender, worked to, in the words of Skeggs, frame, constrain, and produce groupies (Skeggs, 1997, p. 44). The nature of groupie resistance was highly individualistic and therefore imperfect, while both women's struggles to conform to different restrictive feminine ideals ensured that it would remain so. Rather than challenge structures of gender and class inequality, the groupie pattern of behaviour offered a model for individual women to advance their own interests within the existing system. But this approach could also end up reinforcing existing systems of power, as the groupie pattern of behaviour played into class and gender stereotypes, which would become the default understanding for the relation of all women to rock. Meanwhile, groupies could find themselves back in the domestic role, disempowered in their relationships, and vulnerable to the gendered imbalance of sexual and social risk.

To return to contemporary post-#MeToo appraisals of the groupie, these women are not victims, they are not traitors to the feminist cause, nor are they feminist heroines; Emma and Jenny Fabian are complex human beings who rejected the traditional feminine role of self-denial, and accepted personal risk in the courageous pursuit of their desires under conditions which were not of their creating. In presenting this multi-faceted feminist interpretation of a complex subject, I might be accused of 'having my cake and eating it too'. But it is my hope that this feminist reappraisal moves away from polemic,

towards a deeper nuanced understanding of its subject matter, one which always balances critique with respect and empathy for its subjects and their life choices.

Scope for further research

The parameters of this study have been necessarily limited in scope. Further research might examine the representation and lived experiences of groupies in another historical period. Picking up where this thesis has left off in 1974, a researcher might wish to examine the groupie phenomenon under the shadow of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s or investigate the groupie phenomenon's manifestations in the present day. In order to contextualise this study, the twenty-first century revival of the sixties groupie in popular and fashionable culture, and parallel feminist reappraisal(s), were touched upon in the introduction to this thesis. These fascinating developments might also merit further academic investigation.

Evidence gathered in the early stages of this research project has also shaped the parameters of this study. Confronted with two richly contrasting oral histories, I made the decision to cease actively searching for additional participants in order to do these women's stories justice. As noted in the introduction to this thesis, both of these women are white. While race is largely absent from this study, further research might attempt to expand the search for participants by engaging with different networks. If fruitful, such a project might seek to develop an understanding of how structures of race, as well as class and gender, positioned groupies within the underground field, or, indeed, another taste culture, which is perhaps not dominated by white middle-class young people, such as the post-war jazz scene flagged by *Encounter* as a potential site of earlier groupie activity in Chapter 4, or more recent hip-hop subcultures.

Epilogue; What next for Jenny and Emma?

The scope of this thesis effectively terminates in 1974. Nearly fifty years have elapsed since then. Emma and Jenny Fabian are now both in their seventies. Their respective groupie phases, given so much attention to in this thesis, constitute a relatively brief, yet significant, chapter in each of their lives. To close this thesis, I return to them both, with a rudimentary sketch of their post-groupie years, which I hope will give the

reader a sense of closure after spending an extended period of time in the company of these women.

Jenny Fabian met her second husband, Maldwyn Thomas, while working at the stables in Gloucestershire. In 1976, they moved together to Ireland to breed and train Greyhounds for coursing for the record producer Denny Cordell ('The trip of a lifetime', *The Sunday Telegraph Magazine*, 15 June 1997 pp.28-29). The couple had two more children. They returned to the UK, to East Sussex, in 1980, to take over the hunt kennels at another aristocratic friend's estate (ibid.), during which time Jenny Fabian wrote about coursing for country and field sports magazine *The Field* and won the Waterloo Cup twice (for coursing) (Fabian, 2022). She continued to work with her good friend journalist Ann Barr, who had been 'so generous with her time and friendship', right up to Barr's death in 2015. Today, Jenny Fabian lives alone in southwest London, and enjoys a hands-on role in the lives of her grandchildren. She remains good friends with Penny Slinger and Nicholas Gormanston, the man who broke her heart at Hilton Hall. She thinks of her old friends often, many of whom, like Thom Keyes and Johnny Byrne, are now deceased. She likes to remember how it felt to enjoy spending time with them.

The success of her novel *Groupie* proved difficult to replicate. After falling out with Byrne, she penned its sequel, *A Chemical Romance,* solo; it received mixed reviews. Before Byrne's death in 2008, the pair reconciled and co-authored a second sequel, *One Too Many Mornings* (2002), which at the time of writing is unpublished. For Jenny Fabian, fame and fortune were fleeting; her hoped-for successful career as a novelist failed to materialise, but her passion for language and literature prevails. In recent years she has successfully completed a degree in English Literature as a mature student; she did not tell anyone on her course that she herself was the author of a best-selling novel.

Emma found rewarding work when she began her long career as a dental nurse in 1974. As the seventies wore on, her focus shifted from musicians to dating bikers, but eventually she left the biker scene as well, heartbroken. She has not married or had children. After her father passed away, she moved home to care for her mother, with whom she had a close and loving relationship. In recent years her mother went to live in a home and passed away, which has been heart wrenching for Emma. But she has also rekindled old friendships; Susan's marriage ended in divorce, and she and Emma have been reunited, although she and Tina have not spoken in many years. Emma remains passionate about the music of her era; she attends sixties revival gigs and mod rallies

where she has made friends with members of a younger generation who share her love of music from the sixties and seventies. She enjoys posting old photographs on social media and reminiscing about the music of her youth, and the concerts she attended. Social media has also put her back in contact with some of the musicians she followed as a groupie, and their roadies. 'It was funny, I was talking to the roadies recently, from Vagabond' she told me:

> and I said 'oh did you remember us then? I thought you wouldn't have bothered'. They went 'oh god yeah!', he said, 'd'you know, when we were on the road, we met *so* many people, *so* many girls, *so* many girlfriends and everything', but he said, 'y'know we never forgot you, you was our mates, you were *different*' […] They used to come and visit us in the week when they didn't have a gig. They would come and see us. It was *brilliant,* y'know? (Emma, 2020)

These women have held onto their groupie experiences: 'I've thought about it, and relived it, and remembered it so much, that it doesn't leave your memory', Emma told me (Emma, 2020). When I visited Jenny Fabian in her home to interview her, I was struck by the transportive power of memory, when she told me of how, following her creative partner's death she had dug out old promotional photographs of herself with Byrne from the *Groupie* days, and displayed them around her home. 'I wanted to, sort of, see him with me, as it were, for a bit'' she told me (Fabian, 2019). For both Jenny Fabian and Emma, the act of reminiscence, whether in private solitude, public space, between old friends and new, and perhaps even with myself, keeps the past alive. It is my hope that in recording these women's experiences, this thesis does so too.

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Appendices

Appendix i: Oral History interview themes

- Early Life
    - Family
    - School
    - Work
    - Hopes for the future
- Earliest groupie experiences
- Positive/negative groupie experiences
- Groupie Motivations
- Female friendship and groupie competition
- The groupie label
- Political views
- The Feminist Movement
- Life afterwards

Appendix ii: Emma (2020) Oral history interview with Emma. Interviewed by E. Foden, 16 June.

Redacted

Appendix iii: Fabian, J. (2019) Oral history interview with Jenny Fabian. Interviewed by E. Foden, 29 April.

Redacted

Appendix iv: Fabian, J. (2022). Conversation with Ellie Foden, 6 September. Field notes.

Redacted

Appendix v: Fabian, J. (2021). Email to Ellie Foden, 2 Feburary.

Redacted

Appendix iv: Redacted. (2018). Conversation with Ellie Foden. 25 April.

Redacted